

**Behaving as a Convert:
Moral Teaching in Ephesians
Against Its Traditional and Social Backgrounds**

By

Peter William Gosnell

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Department of Biblical Studies
University of Sheffield

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The study examines Eph 4:1-5:20. Consisting of five chapters, it probes the following five passages: 4:1-16; 4:17-24; 4:25-5:2; 5:3-14; and 5:15-20. Each chapter investigates the relevant verses exegetically, focussing on behavioural aspects. This overview is then compared with issues raised in chapters 1-3, with similar notions of morality from antecedent Pauline writings and with selected Jewish and Graeco-Roman writings. The final section of each chapter builds and then applies a social science or social history model.

Though exhibiting differences from Paul's undisputed writings, the basic moral view of these verses is Pauline. Various Jewish writings (LXX, Greek versions of OT Pseudepigrapha and relevant passages from Josephus, Philo and Qumran) are brought to bear on these verses. Certain Graeco-Roman writings, (Plato's *Laws*, Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* and discourses from Dio Chrysostom and Epictetus) are also examined. Though a remarkable number of affinities exist between Ephesians and these other writings, no evidence of direct influence is detected. Rather, Ephesians appears to be a product of its age, expressing similar ideas because it shares elements of a common world view. Ephesians differs from most of the non-Pauline writings examined by linking morality with religious devotion.

Social network and exchange theories (chapter 1), New Religious Movements theories (chapters 2 and 3), principles from honour and shame cultures (chapter 4) and a social model from *symposia* (chapter 5) were applied to relevant passages. Though historical circumstances behind the letter are unknown, Ephesians' moral teaching portrays human situations. The NRM theory applied in chapters 2 and 3 proved to be particularly helpful in explaining how Ephesians' rejection of gentile immorality (4:17-19) does not contradict its acceptance of gentile social structures.

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Introduction

1 The Need for Such a Study

Those who believe in Christ must behave differently from those who do not. So says the writer of Ephesians. This message is often recognized by commentators. Yet monographs rarely provide in a sustained way detailed descriptions of the various emphases of this message as it is portrayed throughout Ephesians' moral teaching.¹

Some attention has been given to the exhortation to unity (4:1-16), though this has tended to focus on conceptual issues within the passage rather than on the passage as a statement of moral teaching.² General aspects of Ephesians' overall ethical presentation have been discussed.³ One important study provides a detailed exegetical overview of much of the material found in Eph 4:1-5:27, but does so as part of an overall study attempting to explore the relationship between baptism and ethics as portrayed by a variety of NT passages, without focussing solely on Ephesians.⁴ Perhaps the most extensive treatment of a given segment of Ephesians' moral teaching explores the statements on marital responsibilities in Eph 5:21-33.⁵

Sustained analyses of combined sections of Ephesians' moral teaching are rare, particularly for the block that is treated in this study, Eph 4:1-5:20.⁶ Studies

¹ Though the moral teaching in Ephesians runs from 4:1-6:20, the present study is restricted to Eph 4:1-5:20 for reasons explained below, p 17.

² K Usami, *Somatic Comprehension of Unity: The Church in Ephesus*, (Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1983), offers one exception to this, exploring Eph 4:1-16 and its relationship to the first half of the epistle, especially 2:11-22. There are other studies that focus on the nature of unity and church leadership, most notably KM Fischer, *Tendenz und Absicht des Epheserbriefes*, (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1973), and H Merklein, *Das kirchliche Amt nach dem Epheserbrief*, (München: Kösel-Verlag, 1973). These two are concerned primarily with ecclesiastical order.

³ RR Jeal, "The Relationship between Theology and Ethics in the Letter to the Ephesians," (Unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Sheffield, 1990), offers a rhetorical analysis of the epistle as a whole, rather than an exploration of ethical material in itself; MY MacDonald, *The Pauline Churches*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 86-122, describes how Ephesians' and Colossians' ethical teachings fit in a trajectory from Paul's undisputed epistles to the Pastorals, without focussing in a detailed manner on what Ephesians alone conveys.

⁴ H Halter, *Taufe und Ethos*, (Freiburg: Herder, 1977), 242-286. He treats only those parts that he considers to be baptismal, namely: 4:1-6; 4:17-24; 4:25-5:2; 5:3-14; and 5:25-27.

⁵ JP Sampley, *"And the Two Shall Become One Flesh." A Study of Traditions in Eph 5:21-33*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971).

⁶ Halter, *Taufe und Ethos*, would seem to be an exception, though his ultimate concern is with baptism in the NT, not with Ephesians' overall message. Also see J Gnlika, "Paränetische Traditionen im Epheserbrief," in *Mélanges Bibliques*, ed by A Descamps and A de Halleux, (Gembloux: Duculot,

abound on various theological issues such as the "descent" of Christ in 4:7-11,⁷ church leadership and ecclesiology in 4:11-16,⁸ the concepts of the old and new persons in 4:22-24⁹ or the various exegetical complexities of the statements in 5:12-14.¹⁰ These only cursorily treat the moral argument that surrounds the statements under discussion.

The straight-forward appearance of the moral teaching no-doubt contributes to this minimal treatment; simple injunctions such as those against stealing (4:28) or angry expression (4:26, 4:31) lack profundity. At least two additional factors also contribute to the sparse treatment.

1.1 Ephesians and Traditions

One term often used to describe the moral teaching of Ephesians is "traditional."¹¹ Those who apply this epithet generally mean that the remarks found

1970), 397-410. This short study is quite detailed, but organizes the material in Eph 4:1-6:9 thematically under the titles of Conversion Terminology, Light-Darkness Dualism and Household Teaching ("Bekehrungsterminologie," "Licht-Finsternis-Dualismus," "Haustafeln"). His main interest is in showing where certain statements are paralleled in various OT Pseudepigrapha, Qumran writings and Apostolic Fathers, rather than explaining how each contributes to moral teaching in Ephesians. A general, homiletical rendering of Ephesians' moral teaching is found in NL Baker, "Living the Dream: Ethics in Ephesians," *Southwestern Journal of Theology* 22 (1979): 39-55.

⁷ See, most notably, GB Caird, "The Descent of Christ in Ephesians 4:7-11," *Studia Evangelica* 2, (TU 87 Berlin: Akademie, 1964), 535-45; and WH Harris, "The Descent of Christ in Ephesians 4:7-11: An Exegetical Investigation with Special Reference to the Influence of Traditions about Moses Associated with Psalm 68:19," (Unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Sheffield, 1988).

⁸ KM Fischer, *Tendenz und Absicht des Epheserbriefes*; HP Hamann, "Church and Ministry: An Exegesis of Ephesians 4:1-16," *Lutheran Theological Journal* 16 (1982): 121-28, and "The Translation of Ephesians 4:12--A Necessary Revision," *Concordia Journal* 14 (1988): 42-49; H-J Klauck, "Das Amt in der Kirche nach Eph 4,1-16," *Wissenschaft und Weisheit* 36 (1973): 81-100; H Merklein, *Das kirchliche Amt nach dem Epheserbrief*.

⁹ J Jervell, *Imago Dei*, (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1960), 231-256; RA Wild, "Be Imitators of God': Discipleship in the Letter to the Ephesians," in *Discipleship in the New Testament*, ed by FF Segovia, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985), 127-43.

¹⁰ NA Dahl, "Der Epheserbrief und der verlorene, erste Brief des Paulus and [sic] die Korinther," in *Abraham unser Vater*, ed by O Betz, M Hengel, P Schmidt (Leiden: EJ Brill, 1963), 65-77; T Engberg-Pedersen, "Ephesians 5,12-13: ἐλέγχειν and Conversion in the New Testament," *Zeitschrift für die Neutestamentliche Wissenschaft* 80 (1989): 89-110; B Noack, "Das Zitat in Ephes. 5,14," *Studia Theologica* 5 (1952): 52-64.

¹¹ M Barth, "Traditions in Ephesians," *New Testament Studies* 30 (1984): 3-25, especially 12, 17-19; RA Culpepper, "Ethical Dualism and Church Discipline: Ephesians 4:25-5:20," *Review and Expositor* 76 (1979): 529; KM Fischer, *Tendenz und Absicht des Epheserbriefes*, 147-172; J Gnlika, "Parännetische Traditionen im Epheserbrief," 397-410; E Käsemann, "Epheserbrief," in *Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, (Tübingen: JCB Mohr, 1958) II: 518; A van Roon, *The Authenticity of Ephesians*, tr by S Prescod-Jokel, (Leiden: EJ Brill, 1974), 394-412; JP Sampley, "Scripture and Tradition in the Community as Seen in Ephesians 4:25ff," *Studia Theologica* 2 (1972): 101; A Verhey, *The Great Reversal*, (Grand Rapids: William B Eerdmans, 1984), 125.

in the second half of the epistle are dependent not simply on material from Christian communities,¹² but also from Hellenism or from various strands of Judaism. Usually writers on the subject concentrate on one of these proposed traditional sources, but the conclusions are remarkably alike: similarities between remarks in Ephesians and remarks found elsewhere indicate that the writer of Ephesians must have been influenced by these materials, or others like them, in framing his moral teaching.

There are only two sources of traditions that can claim definitive influence in the composition of Ephesians: Pauline thought as presented both by the corpus of Paul's undisputed writings and by Colossians; and the Jewish Scriptures. The latter is provable by the direct quotes found within the letter.¹³ The former source is derivable from the epistle's own assertion of Pauline authorship and authority (Eph 1:1, 15-16; 3:1-12; 4:1, 17; 6:21-22). Though Eph 5:14 directly quotes an unknown source, one can neither prove its origin nor demonstrate that it is not a part of a hymn commonly sung in Pauline churches. Any other proposed sources for origins of statements in Ephesians' moral teaching can at best be speculation. As will be demonstrated throughout this study, much of what is found in Ephesians resembles a lot of material from a lot of different backgrounds. Does this indicate dependence or simply that Ephesians is a product of its age?¹⁴

But a second, more fundamental issue grows from this. Such approaches tend to place unwarranted claims of originality on New Testament writings in general, and the moral teaching in Ephesians in particular.¹⁵ The basic insinuation seems to be that ideas that appear to be taken over are not to be as highly regarded as

¹² See especially CL Mitton, *The Epistle to the Ephesians: Its Authorship, Origin and Purpose*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1951); and P Carrington, *The Primitive Christian Catechism. A Study in the Epistles*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1940).

¹³ See AT Lincoln, "The Use of the OT in Ephesians," *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 14 (1982): 16-57.

¹⁴ P Benoit, "Qumran and the New Testament," in *Paul and the Dead Sea Scrolls*, ed by J Murphy-O'Connor and JH Charlesworth, (New York: Crossroad, 1990), 1, issues a "warning against an imprudent tendency to accept as immediate contacts arising from direct influence what in fact may be no more than independent manifestations of a common trend of the time." Notwithstanding, he accepts the conclusion of others that certain Qumran writings exerted a "literary influence" on Ephesians (p 17).

¹⁵ W Meeks, "Understanding Early Christian Ethics," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 105 (1986): 10, warns about "the temptation to think that only what is unusual or unique about the Christian moral universe is important."

those that appear to be fresh.¹⁶ Perhaps since, in the minds of some scholars, much of the moral teaching in Ephesians has a traditional flavour, and hence lacks profundity, it does not warrant in-depth examination.

When writers focus on resemblances that exist between NT and non-Christian writings outside of the LXX, they can lose sight of the religious and ethical thought-systems that prompt the behavioural teaching in the first place.¹⁷ In the case of Ephesians, this goes beyond recognizing the important relationship between theology and ethics. Though a certain view about God does stand behind the moral teaching, a special religious motivation also undergirds it. The religious motivation makes the morality quite distinct from other teachings outside of the NT. For example, both Aristotle and the writer of Ephesians may uphold the value of giving to the needy, but if one advocates this to promote balance in living and the other as following the pattern of love in Christ, the two advocate a different sense of morality.¹⁸

An approach to studying Ephesians' moral teaching requires a dual sensitivity. It must not only recognize similarities in common with other traditions. It must also recognize how religious motivations make the behaviour different, particularly from non-Christian traditions. Moral behaviour according to Ephesians is also religious behaviour.¹⁹ The writer of Ephesians appeals to his readers as religious

¹⁶ See, for example, R Schnackenburg, *The Moral Teaching of the New Testament*, tr by J Holland-Smith and WJ O'Hara, (London: Burns and Oates, 1975), 258. In discussing NT teaching for slaves, he notes how slaves "should look on their servitude as though they were serving Christ the Lord, who will one day give them their reward. These are significantly weaker motives: one senses the influence of secular ethics. But at 1 Peter 2:18-25 the exhortation once again rises to truly Christian heights: slaves when treated unjustly should remember their innocent but suffering Lord."

¹⁷ ES Fiorenza, "Cultic Language in Qumran and in the NT," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 38 (1976): 159-64, issues such a caution for people who claim influence of various Qumran writings on aspects of the NT. Since both groups of writings represent different approaches to religion, one must account for transformations from one different thought world to another before one can concentrate on other ideas that are similar.

¹⁸ See the discussion in Chapter 3, §4. W Schrage, *The Ethics of the New Testament*, tr by DE Green, (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1988), 199: ". . . motivations normally tend to influence the nature of conduct and to imply specific meanings. One may remain celibate out of convenience or a sense of resignation rather than by accepting charismatic celibacy for the sake of the Lord and the special opportunity it provides for service, or one may practice hospitality based on hedonism rather than love; these motivations affect the action itself."

¹⁹ This is highlighted with reference to Pauline ethics in general by LH Marshall, *The Challenge of New Testament Ethics*, (London: MacMillan, 1946), 232-43. Note, also, the brief comments of AJ Malherbe, "Exhortation in 1 Thessalonians," in *Paul and the Popular Philosophers*, (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990), 61: Paul "insists that Christian ethics be grounded in religion. Philosophical traditions are used, but without their preoccupation with the use of reason or the nature of character development. Paul is concerned with the sanctified rather than the rational life."

converts to a new way of life - i.e. life in Christ. They are to live worthily of this calling (4:1); maintain the unity of the Spirit (4:3); grow into Christ (4:15); live no longer as gentiles who are alienated from God (4:17-18) but according to the truth in Jesus (4:20); orient their lives to the new humanity created by God (4:24); not allow the influence of forces that compete with the divine (4:27); not grieve God's Spirit (4:30); forgive as God forgives (4:32); imitate God (5:1); emulate Christ's love out of devotion to God (5:2); live as light in the Lord (5:8); discover what pleases the Lord (5:10); know the will of the Lord (5:17); be filled with the Spirit (5:18). The moral instruction demands that its adherents focus on their response to God or to Christ or to the Spirit.

1.2 Ephesians and its Setting

Various attempts to suggest a situation or a purpose for the writing of the letter present an additional problem to the overemphasis on traditional influences. A number of different proposals exist, both in shorter studies and in monographs. These are not necessarily mutually exclusive and have included: a loss by gentiles of the sense of their indebtedness to Judaism and the overall solidarity of gentile churches with Jewish-Christians;²⁰ a problem of disunity between rival factions within a community or set of communities;²¹ a correction to the inroads of gnosticizing tendencies in Asia Minor;²² a reversion on the part of the readers to their former way of life associated with magic;²³ a need to string together a series of baptismal confessional statements for liturgical purposes in commemoration of Paul;²⁴ a need to introduce post-Pauline Christians to the teaching of Paul but in terms of the current issues of the day.²⁵

These various suggestions create a unique difficulty with regard to most of the moral teaching found in the letter. Only with extra explanation can they readily

²⁰ Henry Chadwick, "Die Absicht des Epheserbriefes," *Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft* 51 (1960): 145-153.

²¹ Usami, *Somatic Comprehension of Unity*, 60-66.

²² As one representative, see RP Martin, "An Epistle in Search of a Life-Setting," *The Expository Times* 79 (1967-68): 300.

²³ CE Arnold, *Ephesians: Power and Magic*, (Cambridge: University Press, 1989).

²⁴ JC Kirby, *Ephesians: Baptism and Pentecost*, (London: SPCK, 1968), especially 169.

²⁵ See CL Mitton, *The Epistle to the Ephesians: Its Authorship, Origin and Purpose*, (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1951), and *Ephesians*, (London: Marshall, Morgan & Scott, 1973), 14.

account for all of the moral teaching that appears in Eph 4-6. Attempts to do so cannot be supported by overt statements found in the text and remain as speculative inferences.²⁶ Though in theory the final two suggestions would seem to allow a more plausible inference for the appearance of the moral teaching, they are dissatisfying because they ignore the life-like issues that underlie the text.

A specific life-setting or a historical circumstance may be next to impossible to prove for the epistle. Nevertheless, it is erroneous to think of the moral teaching presented within Ephesians as detached from human situations altogether. Embedded within the language of 4:1-6:20 are certain social and cultural devices that belong to genuine human circumstances.²⁷ The moral teaching in Ephesians cannot be a mere pastiche of catechetical or confessional statements.

1.3 Summary

At its heart, then, the current study is one of appreciation. It is offered as a perspective that differs from those that relegate the moral teaching in Ephesians to the realm of the unoriginal. It is offered as a perspective that recognizes the human situations within the moral teaching without attempting speculation on what historical circumstance might have prompted this in the first place. The moral teaching is directed to believers in Christ. It is religious. It is human. It advocates that believers in the faith live a life that is in line with their profession of faith as an aspect of their devotion to the object of their faith.

2 Assumptions for This Study

In exploring the moral teaching as exhortation directed to converts several assumptions must be made. Some of these refer to the direction the study takes. Others refer to problems specific to Ephesians. The assumptions involve: 1) the nature of conversion; 2) the extent to which Ephesians discusses baptism; 3) the nature of ethics; 4) the relationship between theology and ethics; 5) the author of the letter; 6) the letter's situationlessness and the concept of general paraenesis;

²⁶ The following comments on the purpose of the moral teaching in Ephesians are typical of the kind of explanations necessary to incorporate the teaching within a grand theory for the purpose of the letter. Kirby, *Ephesians: Baptism and Pentecost*, 141: "We may almost say that the ethical admonitions throughout these three chapters are an expansion of that one phrase ['eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace'], for all the sins that are mentioned destroy unity in one way or another;" Arnold, *Ephesians: Power and Magic*, 165: "The believers needed instruction and encouragement on how to cope with the continuing influence and attacks of the sinister cosmic 'powers'."

²⁷ For the role that language generally plays in expressing an assumed reality, see P Berger and T Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality*, (London: Penguin, 1967), 50-56.

and 7) the extent to which Ephesians may reflect a primitive catechism.

2.1 Conversion

In viewing Ephesians' moral teaching as exhortation aimed at religious converts, one must have a concrete understanding of what is meant by conversion. A number of studies exist that attempt to define what this would have involved in a first-century setting. One definition distinguishes conversion,

the reorientation of the soul of an individual, his deliberate turning from indifference or from an earlier form of piety to another, a turning which implies a consciousness that a great change is involved, that the old was wrong and the new is right,

from "adhesion,"

an acceptance of new worships as useful supplements and not as substitutes, . . . not involv[ing] the taking of a new way of life in place of the old.²⁸

According to this assessment, "adhesion" better describes the acceptance of religions other than Judaism and Christianity in the first century and before, while "conversion" better describes those who became Christians and Jews.²⁹

Some reject the notion that Paul and his followers be called converts.³⁰ Paul the Jew affirmed many aspects of Judaism without totally denigrating it. Though he urged all his readers to live differently in view of their faith in Christ, he spoke more in terms of a "transformation" rather than a sudden, radical reorientation. This appraisal comes primarily from examining the vocabulary Paul used to describe the changes, both in his life and in the lives of his followers, stemming from belief in Christ. However, when modern sociological theories are combined with historical analyses of Jewish and Christian situations, conversion as a radical religious reorientation can be considered an appropriate designation both for Paul and for his followers.³¹

²⁸ AD Nock, *Conversion*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1933), 6-7.

²⁹ Nock, *Conversion*, 164-86, indicates that "conversion" can also apply to those who joined certain philosophical schools. R MacMullen, *Christianizing the Roman Empire. A.D. 100-400*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1984), 4-5, takes issue with Nock over the point that ancient conversions to Christianity must have involved total commitment in order to have been genuine, yet basically affirms his definition of conversion, calling it "that change of belief by which a person accepted the reality and supreme power of God and determined to obey Him" (p 5).

³⁰ Two main objectors are K Stendahl, *Paul among Jews and Gentiles*, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1976), 7-23, who argues for "Call rather than Conversion," and BR Gaventa, *From Darkness to Light*, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986), 1-51, who is more comfortable with the term "transformation," which signifies an intensified understanding of a new concept, than with "conversion," which signifies a "pendulum-like swing" from one belief, now thought to be wrong, to a new, now thought to be the most correct.

³¹ See AF Segal, *Paul the Convert*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990), 3-33, 72-114, 285-300. Though appreciating the work of Gaventa, he provides a large amount of data to demonstrate

Those who stress that Paul was merely a Jew whose messiah has come have missed Paul's point. Paul was a Jew who did not have to convert to become a Christian. Theoretically, he could have just slid over as an adherent by claiming Judaism was fulfilled by the messiah's arrival. In that case, he would have insisted that the rules of Jewish life be imposed on all Christians, as did the Jewish Christians. Or he would have insisted that the gentiles remain God-fearers and not become part of the community. But Paul, though Jewish, and because he had been a believing Pharisee, had to go through radical reorientation to enter Christianity. Paul then said that everyone needs radically to reorient his or her way of thinking in order to become a Christian.³²

What is considered to have been true for Paul in this regard is also relevant for those Christians under Paul's influence. This same concept of "radical reorientation" is accepted within this study as having been operative for the writer of Ephesians in his insistence that his readers behave as converts. He addresses people whom he regards as having committed themselves to faith in Christ at some point in their past,³³ telling them to live in accordance with their belief.

2.2 Baptism and Ephesians

Many writers on Ephesians regard baptism as a major underlying motif for numerous expressions found throughout Ephesians.³⁴ Notwithstanding, the term baptism itself appears only once in the entire epistle.³⁵ The moral teaching depicts the kind of conduct that is to ensue from the readers' new, radical reorientation in Christ. This new orientation is best described as conversion, even though that term does not appear in Ephesians at all.

Though baptism has an intimate connection with conversion, one cannot assume that only this rite denotes conversion for the writer of Ephesians.

the point that "transformation" is, in fact, "conversion."

³² Segal, *Paul the Convert*, 147.

³³ See Eph 1:13. By making this assumption in this way, any potential problems arising from observations on the speed of conversion vanish. According to the various studies on conversion already cited, the ancient world in some cases was highly skeptical about quick conversions, which is partly why Gaventa *From Darkness to Light*, 40-46, prefers the term "transformation" over "conversion." For further discussion, see Segal, *Paul the Convert*, 16-18, 20-30, 72-105.

³⁴ One of the most influential articles, often cited by others in defense of their own baptismal presuppositions for Ephesians, is NA Dahl, "Adresse und Proömium des Epheserbriefes" *Theologische Zeitschrift* 7 (1951): 241-64. This is in spite of the conjectural nature with which Dahl makes his baptismal suggestion in the first place (pp 263-64). See, also, M Barth, *Ephesians 1-3*, (New York: Doubleday, 1974), 135-39; J Gnlika, *Der Epheserbrief*, (Freiburg: Herder, 1971), 33; H Halter, *Taufe und Ethos*; Kirby, *Ephesians, Baptism and Pentecost*, 144-59; A Patzia, *Ephesians, Colossians, Philemon*, (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1990), 132, 138-39. Many commentators, rather than discuss the issue, simply refer to baptismal motifs in commenting on specific verses where they are said to occur.

³⁵ Eph 4:5. This point is made by C Caragounis, *The Ephesian Mystery*, (Lund: CWK Gleerup, 1977), 46, in arguing against baptism as a principal subject within Ephesians. For further comments that suggest alternatives to a baptismal understanding of various comments in Ephesians, see, also, M Barth, *Ephesians 1-3*, 139-43, and AT Lincoln, *Ephesians*, (Dallas, TX: Word Books, 1990), lxix.

Ultimately it is not the main topic of discussion within Ephesians, however much one may wish to label certain statements as baptismal.³⁶ The writer focusses on the new life associated with what the readers are said to be "now."

When deemed appropriate in this study, certain statements in Ephesians that are considered to be baptismal will be discussed in that light. Generally, the non-discussion of baptismal elements is not intended to be a questioning of established views about baptism in the NT world.³⁷ Rather, it is to emphasize the main thrust of the moral teaching in Ephesians.

2.3 Ethics

Referring to "moral teaching" rather than ethics is an attempt to highlight the observation by many that "ethics" is not necessarily the most appropriate term to use in NT studies.³⁸ One is hard-pressed to find attempts within the NT to systematize behavioural norms derived exclusively from reasoned principle in the same way as existed, for example, among Greek philosophers. Within Pauline literature certain notions and motifs have been identified that stand behind some ethical statements - the indicative-imperative schema;³⁹ theological, eschatological and christological foundations;⁴⁰ love⁴¹ - to name just a few. Much of this is

³⁶ R Schnackenburg, *Baptism in the Thought of St. Paul*, tr by GR Beasley-Murray, (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1964), 13, on discussing Paul's use of baptismal washing imagery, is instructive here: "The Pauline thought, as indeed the N.T. as a whole, is distinguished by the fact that it is not concerned with constantly fluctuating ideas inspired by the symbolism of the water. Paul holds certain clearly defined teaching, and he links it with symbols and symbolic events when the opportunity offers itself; but with him the didactic content remains the chief thing."

³⁷ Established views are reflected in works such as GR Beasley-Murray, *Baptism in the New Testament*, (Grand Rapids: William B Eerdmans, 1962); O Cullmann, *Baptism in the New Testament*, tr by JKS Reid, (London: SCM Press, 1950); R Schnackenburg, *Baptism in the Thought of St. Paul*. Some who begin to question aspects of these are: CJA Hickling, "Baptism in the First-Century Churches: A Case for Caution," in *The Bible in Three Dimensions*, ed by DJA Clines, SE Fowl and SE Porter, (Sheffield, JSOT Press, 1990), 249-67; MJ Moreton, "A Reconsideration of the Origins of a Christian Initiation Rite in the Age of the New Testament," in *Studia Biblica 1978*, ed by EA Livingstone, (Sheffield, JSOT Press, 1980), III: 265-75.

³⁸ See discussions in HD Betz, "Introduction," in *Plutarch's Ethical Writings and Early Christian Literature*, ed by HD Betz, (Leiden: EJ Brill, 1976), 1-10; VP Furnish, *Theology and Ethics in Paul*, (Nashville: Abingdon, 1968), 208-212; JL Houlden, *Ethics and the New Testament*, (Oxford: Mowbrays, 1975), 5-24; W Schrage, *The Ethics of the New Testament*, 2-8.

³⁹ Furnish, *Theology and Ethics in Paul*, 224-27; Schrage, *The Ethics of the New Testament*, 167-72; Verhey, *The Great Reversal*, 104-05.

⁴⁰ Furnish, *Theology and Ethics in Paul*, 212-24; Schrage, *The Ethics of the New Testament*, 172-74, 181-86; Verhey, *The Great Reversal*, 106-07.

⁴¹ Furnish, *Theology and Ethics in Paul*, 199-203; Schrage, *The Ethics of the New Testament*, 211-17; REO White, *Biblical Ethics*, (Exeter: Paternoster Press, 1979), I: 157-60.

applicable, to a certain degree, to Ephesians.⁴² Yet none of these can be appealed to as standards that could build a Pauline ethic from the ground up. Rather they stand behind certain statements as operating principles only.

The expression "moral teaching" is used here to convey the concern of the writer of Ephesians for his readers to behave in a morally appropriate manner. As will be seen, this concern moves beyond the mere listing of regulations stipulating what is right and wrong. An organizational pattern exists, expressed by the writer's plea for his readers to "walk worthily of the calling" (4:1), to "walk no longer as gentiles" (4:17), to "walk in love" (5:2), to "walk as children of light" (5:8) and to "walk. . . wisely" (5:15).⁴³ Ephesians does not contain a formalized ethic. It does display a broad outline of the kind of moral conduct expected of its readers.

2.4 Theology and Ethics

Writers in the area of NT ethics in recent years have highlighted the relationship between theology and ethics. This is partly an attempt to demonstrate what sorts of foundations do exist for the kinds of behaviour promoted. The theological, eschatological and christological motifs mentioned above, for example, reflect the results of such efforts.

In Pauline studies the attempt to delineate this relationship is applied to theology and ethics within individual epistles. Three basic patterns have emerged from this. Some writings move back and forth freely from theological statement to ethical norm within the same passage.⁴⁴ In other writings there is a noticeable break between theology and ethics, prompting some scholars to refer to theological and ethical portions of an epistle. With regard to Romans, it has been argued that certain ethical statements in the latter half of the letter are actually expressed in the language of previous theological arguments.⁴⁵ However, Galatians is notorious

⁴² For a comparison of Ephesians' overall ethics with the Pauline ethic, see Schrage, *The Ethics of the New Testament*, 244-57.

⁴³ The translations are mine.

⁴⁴ This is most noticeable in 1 Corinthians and in Philippians. For a study that discusses one aspect of this in Philippians, see SE Fowl, *The Story of Christ in the Ethics of Paul*, (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1990), 77-101.

⁴⁵ One of the first to recognize this is VP Furnish, *Theology and Ethics in Paul*, 99-106, especially in relationship to Rom 12:1-2 and aspects of Rom 1-2. A similar relationship between the two halves of an epistle is proposed for 1 Thessalonians by AJ Malherbe, "Exhortation in 1 Thessalonians," 50-56. In this particular case the similarity comes not from applying theological reflection to moral behaviour but from Paul's own example in chapters 1-3 being mirrored in his exhortations to the Thessalonians in chapters 4-5.

for its paraenesis that seems to have no foundation in prior theological statement. A relationship between the two has been proposed principally on the basis of how each is directed at a specific situation that the epistle addresses:⁴⁶ the first part of the letter attacks false teaching, while the paraenesis handles the dissension stemming from the intrusion of that teaching.

As an epistle in the Pauline tradition, Ephesians is closest to the third model.⁴⁷ The letter does fit into two halves, the first of which can appropriately be designated theological and the second ethical or moral. Within the moral section there are ethical statements that are based on theological points made immediately in the passage (e.g. 4:3-6; 5:2). However the two halves are related minimally, with the first half preparing the way for the second. As will be seen, the discussion of unity in 4:1-16 builds from what is developed in 2:11-22, but does not constantly refer back to it. Likewise, various statements in 4:17-5:20 grow from the once-now contrast portrayed in 2:1-22.

2.5 Authorship

The epistle explicitly claims Paul as its author. Notwithstanding, various linguistic, stylistic and theological differences between Ephesians and those letters indisputably recognized as Paul's⁴⁸ have led a growing number of writers to question the assertion of Eph 1:1.⁴⁹ The current study makes no attempt to enter this debate. Accordingly, the basic assessment of a growing majority of writers that someone other than Paul wrote the letter is assumed here for the purpose of

⁴⁶ See JMG Barclay, who works out his methodology in "Mirror-Reading a Polemical Letter: Galatians as a Test Case," *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 31 (1987): 73-93, and applies it in detail in *Obedying the Truth: A Study of Paul's Ethics in Galatians*, (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1988).

⁴⁷ This has been worked out in detail by RR Jeal, "The Relationship between Theology and Ethics in the Letter to the Ephesians." His results are accepted here in this study with only minor points of disagreement.

⁴⁸ I.e. - Romans, 1 and 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Philippians, 1 Thessalonians and Philemon.

⁴⁹ The basic outlines of this debate can be found in most NT introductions, as well as in the introductions to most commentaries. The following are particularly useful in their clarity and detail: RP Martin, "An Epistle in Search of a Life-Setting," *Expository Times* 79 (1967-68): 296-302; JB Polhill, "An Introduction to Ephesians," *Review and Expositor* 76 (1979): 465-79. Valuable discussions against Paul's authorship are found in Lincoln, *Ephesians*, lix-lxxiii, and R Schnackenburg, *Der Brief an die Epheser*, (Zürich: Benziger Verlag, 1982), 20-26. The case for Paul's authorship is made by M Barth, *Ephesians 1-3*, 36-50, and D Guthrie, *New Testament Introduction* (Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press, 1965), 490-507, with a detailed variation by A van Roon, *The Authenticity of Ephesians*. That the concept of epistolary authorship in the Pauline corpus in general needs further exploration is suggested by the recent work of M Prior, *Paul the Letter-Writer*, (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1989), 37-57, who questions the appropriateness of the model of single individual authorship in the Pauline letters in building a case for the authenticity of 2 Timothy.

argumentation. It is hoped that adherents to Paul's authorship can mentally insert the word "Paul" for the words "the writer of Ephesians" without being offended.

In this regard two other points require clarification. The word "Pauline" is used mostly throughout this study in its narrowest sense, referring to those writings indisputably recognized as Paul's. However, moral teaching both in these writings and in Colossians is compared with what is found in Ephesians to observe both continuities and dissimilarities of Ephesians with the Pauline tradition. Whenever the label "Pauline" is applied either to Ephesians or to Colossians, it is not a comment on authorship; rather it is a recognition of the continuities of tradition.⁵⁰

Second, no attempt is made in this study to identify a specific set of historical circumstances occasioning the writing of the epistle. Certain other studies, in presupposing non-Pauline authorship, also presuppose historical settings that would give rise to the kinds of argumentation found in Ephesians.⁵¹ According to such reasoning non-Pauline authorship of Ephesians allows a late dating of the epistle, and a late date gives licence to fitting the arguments of the epistle into known historical details from that period. It is one matter to adduce that Ephesians expresses notions that fit within a certain time-period,⁵² and another to assume a time-period based on pseudonymity to prove points not explicitly found in the text of Ephesians itself. Consequently, only the broad features of general human situations referred to by the letter are treated,⁵³ not a specific historical setting.

2.6 Situationlessness and General Paraenesis

Though many have attempted to uncover some sort of historical situation giving rise to the epistle, no single proposal has gained the status of consensus.

⁵⁰ See D Meade, *Pseudonymity and Canon*, (Grand Rapids: William B Eerdmans, 1986), who develops the thesis that claims of authorship are principally claims of standing in the tradition of an author rather than claims of literary attribution.

⁵¹ Most notable in this regard are KM Fischer, *Tendenz und Absicht des Epheserbriefes*, and MY MacDonald, *The Pauline Churches*. Fischer takes the combination of pseudonymity with his reconstruction of the ecclesiastical setting of Asia Minor for his date of Ephesians to propose that Ephesians attempts to set back the clock to the halcyon days of Paul's ministry. MacDonald, much more carefully, suggests that Ephesians shows developmental tendencies that are in line with a historical trajectory leading from the situations found in the undisputed Pauline epistles to the pseudonymous Pastoral epistles.

⁵² See, e.g., Schnackenburg, *Der Brief an die Epheser*, 23-26.

⁵³ See Lincoln, *Ephesians*, lxxiii-lxxxvii. His use of rhetorical analysis helpfully clarifies how general statements can fit within the post-Pauline period without necessitating historical circularity. Further, his general analysis of the setting and purpose of Ephesians does not depend on pseudonymity, but rather shows how pseudonymity can fit within the broad scene that is presented.

The pastoral dimension of much of Paul's moral teaching is often recognized as that which would lead him to respond to specific ethical situations existing in his church communities.⁵⁴ The tailoring of the "coherence" of the gospel to the "contingencies" presented by the diversity of church settings has even been identified as an integral part of Paul's theological presentation.⁵⁵ If this analysis is correct, the omission on the part of a Pauline imitator of such an essential aspect of the Pauline message poses a unique problem. Yet it is a problem that must be endured in the face of no convincing solutions on the one hand and no overt statements depicting a problem within the epistle on the other.

Situationlessness may present a difficulty for Pauline theology, but it does not for the concept of moral teaching within the New Testament world. Moral exhortation, or paraenesis, though addressed to life-like problems, could often take the form of general advice given with no specific situation in mind.⁵⁶ Sometimes it could be addressed to specific circumstances. Both elements are present in Paul's writings.⁵⁷ Occasionally it is difficult to decide whether the advice is general or prompted by specific circumstances.⁵⁸ In such cases it is best to examine the overall epistolary argument rather than rely on exhortations alone.

The moral teaching in Ephesians does use some of the vocabulary found in

⁵⁴ Schrage, *The Ethics of the New Testament*, 190-195; Verhey, *The Great Reversal*, 103.

⁵⁵ See JC Beker, *Paul the Apostle: The Triumph of God in Life and Thought*, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1980). The concept is introduced in pp 11-19 and applied to Romans and to Galatians in pp 23-131.

⁵⁶ SK Stowers, *Letter Writing in Greco-Roman Antiquity*, (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1986), 94-106, refers to Libanius' definitions: paraenetic letters either exhorted readers to a special behaviour or dissuaded them from the improper. Primarily, such letters were written either by a friend or "moral superior", recommending "habits of behavior and actions that conform to a certain model of character and [attempting] to turn the recipient away from contrasting negative models of character" (96). Sometimes these could be occasional. Often they exhorted on "traditional" topics as reminders. Paraenesis should not teach anything new. For a detailed, technical presentation of the features of paraenesis as appearing in Graeco-Roman, Jewish and Christian worlds, see JIH McDonald, *Kerygma and Didache*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), 69-100. Useful comments also appear in D Aune, *The New Testament in Its Literary Environment*, (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1987) 183-225.

⁵⁷ Compare, for example, Rom 12:10-21, which does not seem to be linked overtly with any expressed situation in that letter, with 2 Cor 12:20-21.

⁵⁸ AJ Malherbe, *Social Aspects of Early Christianity*, 2nd ed, (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983), 26-27, identifies the difficulty of deriving points about the Thessalonian situation from the exhortations in 1 Thess alone, while elsewhere he emphasizes how the advice that appears especially in 1 Thess 4:1-12 is standard advice that can be found echoed especially in various Stoic and Epicurean writings. See "Exhortation in 1 Thessalonians," 60-64.

Greek paraenesis.⁵⁹ Though other NT writings may display more paraenetic features and terminology,⁶⁰ the moral teaching in Eph 4:1-5:20 certainly belongs in this category. One cannot conclude from this that the exhortation given in the letter is automatically general.⁶¹ However, the lack of overt statements about a specific situation to which the writing may have been addressed points in this direction. Ephesians would certainly be at home in the Graeco-Roman world in providing general instruction that is not directed to an identifiable circumstance.

2.7 The Primitive Catechism Theory

Though Ephesians has been regarded as a "mosaic" of traditions,⁶² the influence of early Christian moral traditions is rarely discussed. Most effort in relation to Christian traditions has been expended in identifying hymnic, liturgical and confessional elements found principally in the first half of the letter.⁶³ Perhaps the most extensive attempt to link the paraenesis of Ephesians with early Christian traditions is the Primitive Catechism theory.⁶⁴ This theory suggests that the moral

⁵⁹ Most pertinent are the terms *παρακαλῶ* in 4:1, *μαρτύρομαι* in 4:17, and perhaps *μακροθυμία* in 4:2, and *μυηταί* in 5:1. Malherbe, "Exhortation in 1 Thessalonians," 51, identifies eight other terms "characteristic of hortatory speech" that appear in 1 Thess, none of which have an exact frequency, counterpart or usage in Eph, with the possible exception of the reference to teaching in 4:20-21.

⁶⁰ Again, see Malherbe, "Exhortation in 1 Thessalonians."

⁶¹ J Barclay, *Obeying the Truth*, 10-12, rightly corrects the assumptions, beginning with the form-critic M Dibelius, that paraenesis would always have been general advice, never directed to a specific situation.

⁶² E Käsemann, "Ephesians and Acts," in *Studies in Luke-Acts*, ed by LE Keck and JL Martin, (London: SPCK, 1966), 288: "The entire letter appears to be a mosaic composed of extensive as well as tiny elements of tradition, and the author's skill lies chiefly in the selection and ordering of the material available to him."

⁶³ Again, see Käsemann, "Ephesians and Acts," 289-292. In an earlier article, "Epheserbrief," in *Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, (Tübingen: JCB Mohr, 1958), II: 518, he regards the "Diaspora-Synagogue" traditions to be the most significant. M Barth, "Traditions in Ephesians," 8-15, also refers to Christian hymnic traditions as the most notable, appearing in the first half of the letter. Though he does mention the influence of Christian traditions in the paraenetic portion, he refers mainly to other Pauline epistles and to 1 Peter. Though he does refer to "structure and details of Matt 16-20" reflected in Ephesians 4-6, he provides no evidence of this. Resemblances between 1 Peter and Ephesians are a major facet of the Primitive Catechism theory under discussion.

⁶⁴ The principle originator of this theory was P Carrington, *The Primitive Christian Catechism*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1940). The heart of his theory is a combination of two main observations: 1) that certain basic teachings appear to be repeated in Eph, Col, 1 Pet and James; 2) that these teachings appear in relatively similar order with quite similar vocabulary. This, he feels may have its roots in Jewish ethics, particularly in the holiness code of Lev 19, as well as Lev 17-21 inclusively. He sees other similarities in the "Two Ways", *Herm Man*, *Pseudo-Phocylides*, Sir and *T 12 Patr*. He also sees traces of this pattern in Hebrews, as well as in other Pauline letters, particularly Rom 12-13 and 1 Cor, especially 16:23. His theory is refined even more by EG Selwyn, *The First Epistle of St. Peter*, (London: MacMillan, 1946), 361-466, and accepted by AM Hunter, "The Paraenetic Tradition," in *Paul and His Predecessors*, (London: SCM Press, 1961), 52-57.

teaching in Ephesians was dependent on an early Christian catechism, also said to be reflected in Colossians, James and 1 Peter. Recent commentators on Ephesians hardly mention it, but the theory is still appealed to occasionally.⁶⁵ Some briefly refer to its invalidity, without highly detailed argumentation.⁶⁶ The issue needs addressing here for two reasons.

First, it is the most detailed theory attempting to explain the moral teaching of Ephesians in terms of general Christian tradition. Second, some commentators refer to catechetical traditions in Ephesians' moral teaching without meaning a formal catechism postulated by the above-mentioned theory.⁶⁷ The term "catechism" can refer both to casual, basic instruction and to a formal, fixed form of instruction intended for verbatim memorization.⁶⁸ The latter use is promoted by the primitive Christian catechism theory; the former is implied by the commentators mentioned above. The former, more provable concept must not be confused with the latter.

The major proponents of the catechism theory claim to have detected a similar pattern in the teaching of several NT writings. This pattern is said to take the basic form of "put off all evil," "be subject to one another," "watch" and "resist the devil."⁶⁹ Because of the appearance of this pattern in different NT writings, it is argued, there must be a common source to account for the similarity. The argument depends on the existence of such patterns within Judaism, especially with regard to proselytes. Various writers on Judaism, however, only affirm catechesis as general instruction, not as a fixed form of instruction.⁷⁰

⁶⁵ See, most notably, GE Cannon, *The Use of Traditional Materials in Colossians*, (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1983), 73-82.

⁶⁶ Barclay, *Obedying the Truth*, 70; JDG Dunn, *Unity and Diversity in the New Testament*, (London: SCM Press, 1990), 143-45; JIH McDonald, *Kerygma and Didache*, 91, 99-100.

⁶⁷ See, e.g. J Gnllka, *Der Epheserbrief*, 227; Schnackenburg, *Der Brief an die Epheser*, 202-03.

⁶⁸ McDonald, *Kerygma and Didache*, 99.

⁶⁹ Carrington, *Primitive Christian Catechism*, 90. He uses the Latin terminology, "Deponentes igitur omne malum;" "Subiecti estote;" "Vigilate" and "Resistite diabolo."

⁷⁰ See especially, D Daube, "A Baptismal Catechism," in *The New Testament and Rabbinic Judaism*, (London: The Athlone Press, 1956), 122-25, who speaks of the need for instruction to vary from individual to individual, saying, "There never was a single *Ur*-catechism" (p 125). WD Davies, *Paul and Rabbinic Judaism*, (London: SPCK, 1955), 128, says, after listing the elements that are common to Ephesians, Colossians, 1 Peter and James: "The variations both in order and in matter prevent us from assuming the existence of a single fixed source which was regarded as universally authoritative. . . "

Though the existence of a fixed-form Jewish proselyte catechism would undergird the argument for a Christian one, its apparent non-existence does not rule out the possibility of one for early churches. However, no fixed-form, first-century Christian catechism has been found, even though traditions of apostolic teachings are certainly preserved, principally in the New Testament, but also in the *Didache* as well as in certain snatches of historical writings. Similarities do exist between various Christian writings, but other explanations can account for these based on the available data.

The similarities between Ephesians and Colossians are certainly a special case. But other similarities need not suggest anything more than the idea that different Christians in different communities did interact with each other, whether or not they shared the same founders.⁷¹ It is known from analysis of present-day religious groups that various communities develop and acquire their own distinctive vocabularies and linguistic patterns of expressions, even across geographical boundaries.⁷² Furthermore, the resulting linguistic expression not only promotes group solidarity,⁷³ but it tends also to be maintained by the group in proportion to its corporate strength.⁷⁴

Another factor may also be involved. Studies on "oral cultures" have indicated that memorization takes place not through verbatim learning but through formulaic patterning.⁷⁵ Societies such as those existing in urban centres of the

⁷¹ The NT alone provides sufficient evidence for this. Note for example, the relationship between Colosse and Laodicea (Col 4:16); the tradition of mobility of people such as Priscilla and Aquila (Acts 18:18, 24; Rom 16:3; 1 Cor 16:19); Paul's awareness of the possibility that Cephas could have influence over the Corinthians (1 Cor 1:12); the declared interaction and agreement in certain issues between Paul and the leaders in Jerusalem, including James, "Cephas" and John (Gal 2:9); the acceptance of Pauline teaching within Petrine circles (2 Pet 3:15-16); the territorial overlap between known Pauline establishments and Petrine addressees (1 Pet 1:2 - especially Galatia and Asia); the geographical circulation of "Johannine" writings assumed in the letters to the seven churches of Rev 2-3. See RB Williams, "Reflections on the Transmission of Tradition in the Early Church," *Encounter* 40 (1979): 275-76, who affirms the kinds of conclusions made here in his description of "the common communication of the church's tradition" (p 276).

⁷² WJ Samarin, "The Language of Religion," in *Language in Religious Practice*, ed by William J Samarin (Rowley, MA: Newbury House, 1976), 3-13.

⁷³ Samarin, "The Language of Religion," 7.

⁷⁴ See L Milroy, *Language and Social Networks*, (London: Sage, 1987). Though discussing this in relation to closed communities, Milroy's principles are applicable to minority groups that relate to each other as fellow minorities. Whether the language is passed along by weak ties existing between groups or by a sense of solidarity, the sense of identity promotes a commonality of language.

⁷⁵ Walter Ong, *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word*, (London/New York: Methuen, 1982), 34-35.

Roman Empire cannot accurately be designated "primary oral cultures," but they appear to have contained "high oral residue."⁷⁶ Thus, while reading and writing would be common enough phenomena, the legacy of orality would be expected to persist in certain forms. The existence of an informal pattern utilizing a special vocabulary and common topics of discussion, but inconsistent both in the order of its presentation and the nuances of its common terminology, fits certain expectations for such a setting.⁷⁷

The oral tendency of Jewish and Hellenistic cultures coupled with the known interaction between various Christian communities better explain the similarities between Ephesians-Colossians and other writings. The primitive Christian catechism theory will not be applied to any of the moral teaching in Ephesians. The adjective "catechetical" as used by commentators to refer to basic instruction is considered to be legitimate, even though it is not used in this study.

3 Procedures for Undertaking the Study

3.1 Limitations

This study is offered primarily as one to fill a gap in secondary literature. It does not purport to examine all of the moral teaching in Ephesians. It deals only with Eph 4:1-5:20, all of the material that precedes the household instructions.

Current interest in NT household instructions precludes the inclusion of Eph 5:21-6:9 for both practical and scholastic reasons. Practically, to pursue the household material along with Eph 4:1-5:20 would dramatically increase the size of this study. Scholastically, the need to do so is greatly reduced by the extensive studies already existing on various aspects of the household in the NT world.⁷⁸

⁷⁶ The terminology is from Ong, *Orality and Literacy*, 38. For evidence from Graeco-Roman writings, see L Alexander, "The Living Voice. Skepticism towards the Written Word in Early Christian and in Graeco-Roman Texts," in *The Bible in Three Dimensions*, ed by DJA Clines, SE Fowl and SE Porter, (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1990), 221-247.

⁷⁷ Ong, *Orality and Literacy*, 134: "With print came the catechism and the 'textbook', less discursive and less disputatious than most previous presentations of a given academic subject. Catechisms and textbooks presented 'facts' or their equivalents: memorizable, flat statements that told straightforwardly and inclusively how matters stood in a given field. By contrast, the memorable statements of oral cultures and of residually oral manuscript cultures tended to be of a proverbial sort, presenting not 'facts' but rather reflections, often of a gnomic kind, inviting further reflection by the paradoxes they involved." The teaching in Ephesians and in the other letters is hardly "gnomic" in detail, but the appeal to metaphor in terms of "put off" or "watch" coupled with the everyday life situations addressed in "submit" instructions do provide a certain amount of graphicness.

⁷⁸ For Ephesians, mention has already been made of JP Sampley, *The Two Shall Become One Flesh*. With regard to Household material in Colossians, see JE Crouch, *The Origin and Intention of the Colossian Haustafel*, (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1972). Aspects of Paul's views of marriage are explored in OL Yarbrough, *Not Like the Gentiles*, (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1985). For

Stopping with Eph 5:20 is awkward. Grammatically the statement is in mid-sentence. Eph 5:18 contains the main verb on which participles found in 5:19, 20 and 21 all depend.⁷⁹ Further, the participle in 5:21 is assumed, un-repeated, as the main verbal thought in 5:22.⁸⁰ Nevertheless, Eph 5:22-6:9 (i.e. the household material) clearly conveys concepts differing from those that appear in 5:15-20. These earlier verses discuss proper behaviour using a wisdom-ignorance motif. This kind of dualism vanishes after 5:20.

One can argue for the household instruction as an expression of Christian wisdom, therefore requiring treatment in this study.⁸¹ Even so, its extensive elaboration alone warrants separate consideration,⁸² something that does not necessarily exclude recognition of continuity with a wisdom motif. This division is consistent with the general thematic criteria applied throughout this study to divisions within the moral teaching.

3.2 Approaches to the Text: Subdivisions

The argument within Ephesians appears deceptively obvious to outline. Though the book easily falls into two halves - 1:1-3:21; 4:1-6:24 - neither half is easily divisible. This has produced a variety of suggestions.⁸³ As stated in the preceding

household material in 1 Peter, see DL Balch, *Let the Wives be Submissive*, (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1981) and JH Elliot, *A Home for the Homeless*, (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990). For in-depth treatment of the issue of slavery, see SS Bartchy, *First-Century Slavery and 1 Corinthians 7:21*, (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1973); DB Martin, *Slavery as Salvation*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990); NR Petersen, *Rediscovering Paul*, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985). This list barely scratches the surface of the amount of studies available to pursue.

⁷⁹ ". . . be filled with the Spirit, speaking. . . singing and making melody. . . giving thanks. . . subjecting yourselves to one another in the fear of Christ, wives to your husbands as to the Lord. . ." (my translation).

⁸⁰ This, of course, accepts the standard text-critical assessment that the verb is missing from Eph 5:22. That reading is supported both by Vaticanus and by the Chester Beatty papyrus, though not by Sinaiticus and a large number of other texts. See discussions in Barth, *Ephesians 4-6*, (New York: Doubleday, 1974), 610; Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 351.

⁸¹ The connection of the participle in v 21 with the verb in v 18 allows for this. Additionally, the submission advocated in v 21 is to be done "in the fear of Christ," perhaps an allusion to the "fear of the Lord" motivation so strong in proverbial wisdom. Both Gnilka, *Der Epheserbrief*, 273, and Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 366-67, remark on the affinities such a statement has both with the OT notion of fearing the Lord and the concern for wisdom expressed in 5:15-18.

⁸² The "fear of Christ" statement is sometimes said to form an *inclusio* with the remarks about wives fearing their husbands (5:33). See, e.g., Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 352; Schnackenburg, *Der Brief an die Epheser*, 248.

⁸³ Thus, the claim by NL Baker, "Living the Dream: Ethics in Ephesians," *Southwestern Journal of Theology* 22 (1979): 44, that "Few of Paul's letters are easier to analyze than Ephesians," is hardly supportable, especially when one notes that his outline does not go further than to divide the letter into two halves. Perhaps the most elaborate proposal comes from PS Cameron, "The Structure of

paragraph, general thematic similarity is chosen as the main criterion around which to organize the various statements and exhortations.

Five general topics are identified: 1) behaving in unity (4:1-16); 2) refraining from gentile behaviour (4:17-24); 3) heeding certain behavioural guidelines for the benefit of others (4:25-5:2); 4) avoiding unrighteousness and behaving righteously (5:3-14); 5) refraining from foolishness and behaving wisely (5:15-20). These units revolve around the five exhortations using the Greek term *περιπατέω*, "walk:" 1) worthily of the calling (4:1); 2) no longer as gentiles (4:17); 3) in love, as Christ loved (5:2); 4) as children of light (5:8); 5) carefully, as those who are wise (5:15).

As will be argued in each chapter, the walk statements basically indicate the general thematic tendencies of the various assertions and exhortations appearing in each section. The writer does not present them as strict rhetorical summaries. Further, the first division, behaving in unity (4:1-16), is simply one example of walking worthily (4:1). It does not express the exhortation in the same way as do the other four sections in relationship to their respective "walk" statements. Rather, as will be argued, the exhortation to live worthily of the calling summarizes the overall thrust of the moral teaching. The readers are urged to behave as converts. Walking no longer as gentiles, walking in love as Christ loved, walking as children of light and walking wisely are also different ways that the readers are told to walk worthily of their calling.

Additionally, throughout this study the various affinities between passages will

Ephesians," *Filologia Neotestamentaria* 3 (1990): 3-18, who, based on linguistic phenomena rather than interpretive insights, divides the entire letter into "eight pairs of parallel panels, enclosed within a palistropic envelope (1:1-2//6:23-24); one of each pair of parallel panels is also constructed palistropically; and the letter as a whole itself forms a palistrophe." As intriguing as this idea is, it also appears to be overly ingenious. M Barth, *Ephesians 1-3*, 55-56, advocates a fourfold division of the letter, centred around the notion of "the present work and revelation of God and Christ" (p 55): 1:3-14; 1:15-2:22; 3:1-4:24; 4:25-6:20. However, within each section he understands there to be certain formulae that introduce traditional material. He identifies these formulae, using them as markers to delineate those subsections that do not have overt, thematically unifying statements. See especially *Ephesians 4-6*, 451-53, 525-26, 585-88. This, too, at times has the appearance of over-ingenuity. A more straightforward approach appears in J Gnllka, *Der Epheserbrief*, 29-31, who places 4:1-5:20 into four basic sections: exhortations to unity (4:1-16); practical rules for living (4:17-32); exhortations to live in love and as children of light (5:1-14); instruction about Christian wisdom (5:15-6:9). Some writers prefer to highlight Ephesians' statements on unity by giving separate treatment to 4:1-16 while placing all of the other paraenetic materials preceding the household instructions in one single section. See FF Bruce, *The Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians*, (Grand Rapids: William B Eerdmans, 1984), 247-48; JB Polhill, "A Study Outline of Ephesians," *Review and Expositor* 76 (1979): 481-83. The pattern followed in this study is the same as presented overtly by Lincoln, *Ephesians*, xxxv-xliv, and H Schlier, *Der Brief an die Epheser*, (Düsseldorf: Patmos-Verlag, 1957), 17. This is also adhered to in Schnackenburg, *Der Brief an die Epheser*, and varied slightly in GB Caird, *Paul's Letters from Prison*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976), 29-30, and JL Houlden, *Paul's Letters from Prison*, (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1970), 306-28.

be explored, mitigating any unintended implication that each section be regarded as a stand-alone unit. Four of the five units convey explicit concerns about what the readers are learning. Four of the five units heavily employ dualistic expressions. The exhortations in 4:25-5:2 are difficult to separate from what appears to be a summary statement in 4:21-24, while the exhortation in 5:2 provides a positive counterpart to the negative of 4:17. The exhortations in 5:3-5 directly recall language from 4:19. Love is an important concept both to 4:1-16 and 4:25-5:2. These and other elements of continuity will be properly observed.

3.3 The Approach to Each Passage

Five chapters will follow, corresponding to the five thematic units just identified. Each chapter itself contains five subunits of study applied to the passage at hand: 1) exegetical and behavioural issues in each passage; 2) affinities of each passage with Eph 1-3; 3) each passage in comparison with aspects of Pauline moral traditions; 4) each passage in comparison with various traditions outside of the NT; 5) the application to each passage of various social science or social history models.

The subsequent study is principally exegetical and comparative. The exegesis of each passage forms the basis of a sustained presentation of the moral argument found in Eph 4:1-5:20. This argument is then compared with ideas found in Eph 1-3 to understand the kinds of continuities between the two halves of the letter as well as to acknowledge certain conceptual bases that undergird the moral teaching. Comparisons with Pauline moral teaching are then made both to highlight continuities between Ephesians and Paul's writings as well as to point out dissimilarities. The affinities with teaching found in Colossians also receive special treatment in this third subsection.

The fourth subsection of each chapter explores similarities between Ephesians and various Classical, Hellenistic and Jewish writings. This section is not designed to discover unknown parallels through an exhaustive search of all available literature. Rather, it is to point out resemblances between Ephesians and various other writings from a variety of settings that existed near that time. The moral teaching in Ephesians should be appreciated as a product of its age. Ephesians conveys basic notions of morality already present in various aspects of Jewish and Greek thought. It presents new perspectives through media and ideas that would

be recognized as familiar and not disturbingly novel.⁸⁴

The material found in each passage dictates what receives emphasis in the fourth subsection of each chapter. Thus, the use of "body" as a metaphor to express unity in various Graeco-Roman and Jewish works is examined with regard to Eph 4:1-16. Assorted Jewish stereotypes of gentiles are examined with regard to Eph 4:17-24. Various writings by Plato, Aristotle, Dio Chrysostom and Epictetus are appealed to as representatives of a cross-section of Greek moral thought when various commonplace exhortations in Eph 4:25-5:20 are studied. Plato and Aristotle are representatives of earlier Classical thought. Dio and Epictetus represent mixtures of Stoic and Cynic thought prevailing closer to the time of Ephesians' writing. Any topic found in all four of these individuals' writings probably enjoyed an even wider discussion throughout the Graeco-Roman world.

The LXX and Greek versions of OT Pseudepigrapha⁸⁵ form the core of Jewish writings that are examined. These writings are all varied enough to provide a cross-section of Jewish thought to compare with Ephesians, as well as to evince any possible linguistic similarities. 1QS and CD are specially addressed in Eph 5:3-14 since a number of studies and commentaries assert some sort of affinity between these and Ephesians. Philo and Josephus are discussed when relevant. Though significant in themselves, their works do not substantially broaden the kind of cross-section of thought already attained in the writings above.

The fifth and final subsection of each chapter builds and then applies various social science models to the material at hand. Four basic models are used. In Chapter 1 Social Network, Social Exchange and Group theories are employed to illumine the moral argument contained in Eph 4:7-16. In Chapters 2 and 3 various theories related to the study of New Religious Movements are discussed to explore how a religious perspective can simultaneously reject some aspects of the surrounding culture while accepting others. In Chapter 4 the anthropological model of honour and shame helps to sharpen the poignancy of the moral argument found in Eph 5:3-14. In Chapter 5 a social history model is drawn, based on

⁸⁴ AD Nock, *Conversion*, 9-12, remarks on the minimal reception the novel religious thought would gain as opposed to that which expresses a latently developing idea. See, also, JJ Collins, *Between Athens and Jerusalem*, (New York: Crossroad, 1986), 25-51; R MacMullen, *Christianizing the Roman Empire*, 21-22.

⁸⁵ These include *1 Enoch*, *Testament of Abraham* (both recensions), *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*, *Joseph and Aseneth*, *Psalms of Solomon*, *Testament of Job*, *The Letter of Aristeas*, *Sibylline Oracles* 3, 4 and 5, *Life of Adam and Eve*, *Pseudo-Phocylides* and, occasionally, *3 Baruch*.

ethical standards prevailing at *symposia* in order to appreciate the contrast in 5:18 as one that could have been perceived to have been normal for people living at that time.

These models are developed not to add interpretive insights but to illumine the possibilities of human circumstances underlying the text. The basic validity of using social sciences in NT interpretation has been widely discussed.⁸⁶ Still, potential hazards exist in applying modern theories to situations where data are sparse. One of the main fallacies to be avoided is the "functionalist assumption" that all cultures at all times have the same basic underlying structures.⁸⁷ Patterns drawn from modern data and appearing to fit ancient expressions need not indicate that the same phenomena are operating in both eras.

This study attempts to appeal to relevant ancient data when possible. The various models presented are offered principally to demonstrate how the moral teaching in Ephesians can be expressing life-like settings. They are offered as alternatives to attempts to suggest a specific historical setting for the epistle.

3.4 Summary

As stated from the outset, the study that follows is one of appreciation. The moral teaching in Eph 4:1-5:20 has too often been overlooked. By examining the meanings of individual statements and comparing these to similar ideas found in Pauline and various non-Christian traditions, the kind of behaviour being advocated is more clearly understood. By applying different social models to these interpretive conclusions, the human realities underlying the moral teaching are emphasized. From this should emerge a better understanding of how the writer of Ephesians urges his readers to behave as converts.

⁸⁶ See, especially, HC Kee, *Knowing the Truth*, (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1989), 1-32; B Holmberg, *Sociology and the New Testament*, (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1990); MY MacDonald, *The Pauline Churches*, 19-28.

⁸⁷ B Holmberg, *Sociology and the New Testament*, 116.

Chapter 1

1 Eph 4:1-16 - Exegetical and Behavioural Issues

Eph 4:1-16 instructs its readers on the topic of unity both by overt (4:1-6) and implicit (4:7-16) exhortation. The concern with unity comes sharply into focus only after the opening entreaty: "I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called" (4:1, RSV).¹ Before discussing the two different ways in which behavioural unity is urged, the import of Eph 4:1 for the moral teaching in general will be examined.

1.1 Walking Worthily of the Calling

The exhortation in 4:1 represents an advance encapsulation of the central message of the moral teaching to follow in the rest of the epistle. It is also based on what has been discussed in the previous three chapters. These are hardly novel suggestions, yet they require specific elaboration.

The expression "I therefore. . . beg you" (*παρακαλῶ σὺν ὑμᾶς*) is widely recognized as a common Greek construction marking the transition from one segment of a letter to another.² Here in Eph 4:1 it introduces the beginning of the moral teaching. The mere appearance of this common expression itself can indicate logical dependence of what follows on what has preceded.³ But it is the concrete expression "lead a life worthily of the calling to which you have been called" that states what the writer is principally addressing. He has already discussed this calling in a variety of ways in the first half of the letter. That he has not dramatically changed the subject is indicated by his use of the term "calling"

¹ The RSV is curiously inconsistent in its translation of *περιπατέω*. Both 4:1 and 17 translate the term, respectively, as "lead a life" and "live." In 5:2, 8 and 15, however, the literal translation "walk" is used. So as to avoid confusion, the literal term will be used in discussing 4:1 and 17 whenever the RSV is not directly quoted.

² E.g. M Barth, *Ephesians 4-6*, (New York: Doubleday, 1974), 426; FF Bruce, *The Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians*, (Grand Rapids: William B Eerdmans, 1984), 333; A Lincoln, *Ephesians*, (Dallas, TX: Word Books, 1990), 226-27, 234; CL Mitton, *Ephesians*, (London: Marshall, Morgan & Scott, 1973), 137; R Schnackenburg, *Der Brief an die Epheser*, (Zürich: Benziger Verlag, 1982), 163-64. Also, see DE Aune, *The New Testament in Its Literary Environment*, (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1987), 188.

³ So Barth, *Ephesians 4-6*, 426; Bruce, *The Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians*, 333; J Gnllka, *Der Epheserbrief*, (Freiburg: Herder, 1971), 195-96; C Masson *L'Épître de Saint Paul aux Éphésiens*, (Neuchâtel: Delachaux & Niestlé SA, 1953), 184; Mitton, *Ephesians*, 137; H Schlier, *Der Brief an die Epheser*, (Düsseldorf: Patmos-Verlag, 1957), 179; Schnackenburg, *Der Brief an die Epheser*, 163-64.

(κλήσις) in 4:1, 4:4 and 1:18.⁴

The term "calling" has a well-established legacy in Pauline literature for referring to God's saving activities.⁵ Certain aspects of these are rehearsed in Eph 1-3. They are praised in the letter's opening (1:3-14). They have been portrayed not simply in the exaltation of Christ as the sovereign Lord who fills all things, with all things in submission to him (1:22-23) but with the co-exaltation of believers, who have been raised to the same heavenly places with Christ (2:4-6). They have been related further by Christ's acts of reconciliation, taking those without hope (i.e. gentiles, 2:12) and elevating them to a never-before-enjoyed status as members of God's household (2:14-22). God's saving activities even stand behind a major digression in 3:2-13 where the writer rehearses once more privileges in Christ currently enjoyed by gentiles.

The repetition in 4:4 of the wording found in 1:18 establishes the most overt linkage between Eph 4:1 and the first half of the epistle. The first point of the prayer in Eph 1:17-19 is that the readers know "what is the hope to which [God] has called [them]" (RSV). That this hope refers to aspects of their salvation is indicated both by the general content of what follows as well as by the writer's designation that his readers, prior to their salvation, had formerly been without hope (2:12). In 4:4 the writer states that his readers "were called to the one hope that belongs to [their] call" (RSV), this after having just exhorted them "to lead a life worthy of the calling to which [they] have been called" (RSV).

The writer allusively reminds his readers of the privileged status with which God has endowed them as believers in Christ. The realities of their conversion are the God-given advantages they enjoy in their lives now (2:5-6, 13, 19-22; 3:5-6) as

⁴ Note, in particular, D Garland, "A Life Worthy of the Calling: Unity and Holiness. Ephesians 4:1-24," *Review and Expositor* 76 (1979): 517-527; CL Mitton *Ephesians*, 137; Masson *L'Épître de Saint Paul aux Éphésiens*, 184; AC Patzia, *Ephesians, Colossians, Philemon*, (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1990), 229; R Schnackenburg *Der Brief an die Epheser*, 164.

⁵ Paul uses the verbal form *καλέω* more frequently than the nominal *κλήσις*. It would be erroneous to see these terms used exclusively to denote salvation. E.g. 1 Cor 7:20 uses the noun to refer to an occupation or life-situation, but uses the verb "call" to refer to faith; Phil 3:14 speaks of an "upward calling" as more indicative of the present goal of a believer than past conversion; Rom 4:17 points most directly to the calling of beings into existence at creation, a metaphor also often used to refer to salvation. However, Rom 8:30, 1 Cor 1:9, Gal 1:6 and 1 Thess 2:12 all explicitly denote the coming to faith in Christ. See, especially, L Coenen, "Call," in *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*, tr and ed by C Brown, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1975), 1: 275.

distinct from what they had known formerly (2:1-3, 11-13, 19; 3:5-6).⁶

Emphasis on conversion certainly prevails throughout 4:1-5:20.⁷ The "calling" language disappears after 4:4, but conversion is referred to in a number of different ways, each of which reflects different aspects that had been discussed earlier in the epistle. The "walk" imagery, introduced in 2:2 and 10 to summarize the orientation of the readers' lives both before and after their conversion, becomes the favourite vehicle for conveying this concern, (4:1, 4:17, 5:2, 5:8, 5:15). The entire first moral exhortation provides a rhetorical bridge linking what has preceded with what follows, not just the appearance of the expression παρακαλῶ οὖν ("I therefore beg").

1.2 Unity as an Overt Exhortation

While v 1 does contain a general, encapsulating exhortation, it also applies specifically to the statements that follow. Two prepositional phrases and two additional participial phrases all further define how the readers are to live worthily:⁸ "with all lowliness and meekness, with patience, forbearing one another in love, eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (RSV). Each of the first four qualities is a common Christian trait, with some attestation also in Jewish and Hellenistic literature: "lowliness" or humility (ταπεινοφροσύνη); "meekness" or gentleness (πραΰτης); "patience" (μακροθυμία); loving forbearance (ἀνεχόμενοι . . . ἐν ἀγάπῃ).⁹ Each of these is also a

⁶ See the discussion in §2.1 of the Introduction. This is a different perspective from K Stendahl's "Call rather than Conversion," in *Paul among Jews and Gentiles*, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1976), 7-23, a perspective formative for the notion of conversion defined in BR Gaventa, *From Darkness to Light*, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986), 9, 18. For the relationship between calling as divine initiative and human response, see Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 234-35.

⁷ Schnackenburg, *Der Brief an die Epheser*, 164.

⁸ See HAW Meyer, *Critical and Exegetical Hand-Book to the Epistle to the Ephesians*, tr by MJ Evans, rev and ed by WP Dickson, (Winona Lake, IN: Alpha Publications, 1979 reprint of 1884 edition), 437-38, for a clear defense of each phrase as modifying περιπατήσα. See, also, Schlier, *Der Brief an die Epheser*, 181. Schnackenburg, *Der Brief an die Epheser*, 161-62, does not believe that the participles in particular are grammatically connected to περιπατήσα, but rather are unconnected, independent statements in keeping with a paraenetic style.

⁹ On humility, see, especially, K Wengst, *Humility: Solidarity of the Humiliated*, tr by J Bowden, (London: SCM Press, 1988), whose detailed study overshadows that both of H-H Esser, "Humility, Meekness," in *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*, (NIDNTT), tr and ed by C Brown, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1976), 2: 259-64 and W Grundmann, "ταπεινός, κτλ.," in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, (TDNT), ed by G Friedrich, tr by GW Bromiley (Grand Rapids: William B Eerdmans, 1972), 8: 1-26. He argues that the term's negative connotations in Greek literature stemmed from its application by high-status people to their social inferiors. As the word underwent transformation first within Judaism and then Christianity, it began to express both human and divine solidarity with those considered by some to be inferior, combatting the unrighteous

fundamental ingredient for the maintenance of unity that becomes the central moral concern in this passage.¹⁰

As directed to members of NT communities, humility generally refers to a willing abrogation of claims to status.¹¹ Here, as occasionally in the LXX, it is linked with gentleness,¹² which conveys the notion of either circumstantial or willing abrogation of power, reflecting a calm support that avoids harming others while exercising restraint in preserving the potentially fragile.¹³ Longsuffering refers to a person's passive acceptance of difficult people or situations.¹⁴ It tends to denote

exploitation that made these people inferior in the first place. It involved a willing renunciation of status-consciousness. Only in post NT times, he contends, does it become associated with hierarchical self-subservience. On gentleness, see W Bauder, "Humility, Meekness," *NIDNTT*, 2: 256-59; F Hauck and S Schulz, "πραῦς, πραΰτης," *TDNT*, 6: 645-51. On longsuffering see U Falkenroth and C Brown, "Patience", *NIDNTT*, 2: 768-772. On forbearance see U Falkenroth and C Brown, "Patience", *NIDNTT*, 2: 765-67.

¹⁰ Commentators who discuss this are generally agreed that these four phrases build to the expression in 4:3 to be zealous in keeping the unity of the Spirit. See Gnilka, *Der Epheserbrief*, 197; Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 235-37; Mitton, *Ephesians*, 137-39; Schlier, *Der Brief an die Epheser*, 181; Schnackenburg, *Der Brief an die Epheser*, 164-65.

¹¹ See Wengst, *Humility*, 47-52. Later (p 53), he regards the statements in Eph 4:2-3 as an "admonition to ecumenical unity" rather than unity being expressed within local congregations as is the case in Phil 2:1-11. One cannot deny the universal scope throughout the epistle both of "the church" and "the body" (1:22-23; 2:16; 3:10, 21; 4:4, 12, 16). But the moral behaviour necessitated by mutuality - i.e. "forbearing one another in love" (RSV) - both in 4:2 and throughout the rest of the moral teaching requires first of all a local manifestation. Further, Wengst seems to have overlooked the status-leveling implied by 2:11-22. Though Jew-gentile problems are not stated as the heart of the matter in Ephesians, the stated reconciliation of Jew with gentile is often considered to be paradigmatic for the equal status before God uniting all Christians both in the local community and beyond. See K Usami, *Somatic Comprehension of Unity*, (Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1983), 137-38.

¹² See, especially, LXX Ps 146:6 - "The Lord lifts up the meek; but brings sinners down to the ground" (Tr by LCL Brenton, *The Septuagint with Apocrypha: Greek and English*, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, reprint of 1851 edition)); Prov 16:19 - "It is better to be of a lowly spirit with the poor than to divide the spoil with the proud" (RSV); Isa 26:6 "And the feet of the meek and lowly shall trample them [i.e. strong cities]" (Tr by Brenton); Zeph 3:12 - "For I will leave in the midst of you a people humble and lowly. They shall seek refuge in the name of the Lord" (RSV); Sir 3:17-18 "My son, perform your tasks in meekness; then you will be loved by those whom God accepts. The greater you are, the more you must humble yourself; so you will find favor in the sight of the Lord" (RSV). See, also, Ps 33:2, 18; Sir 10:14-15; 10:28, 11:12. *T Dan* 6.9 urges these qualities as moral behaviour for its readers: "What you have heard from your father pass on to your children, so that the father of nations may accept you. For he [i.e. Dan] is true and patient, lowly and humble, exemplifying by his actions the Law of God" (Tr by HC Kee, in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, ed by JH Charlesworth, (New York: Doubleday, 1983), 1: 810.)

¹³ This is reflected in a broad cross-section of NT as well as LXX uses. Paul contrasts a harsh, punishing attitude with a gentle one (1 Cor 4:21). This is also the attitude recommended for correcting an errant brother (Gal 6:1). Gentleness can be associated with forbearance (*ἐπιεικής*, Titus 3:2) as well as with restraint or fear (1 Pet 3:15). It also describes the lowliness of the king who comes riding on a donkey (Zech 9:9 and Matt 21:5).

¹⁴ C Brown, "Patience, Steadfastness, Endurance," 2: 764.

a lifestyle more than a virtuous characteristic.¹⁵ Forbearing, or putting up with someone, is a closely related concept, to be expressed mutually between others. The writer says it should be governed by "love."

Each of these four behavioural features, when present, lead individuals to a greater regard for others than for themselves. They involve a restriction of personal aspiration on the part of those who exhibit them. The writer of Ephesians lists them as foundations¹⁶ for harmonious, unified living within the Christian community. Because they focus on others, humility, gentleness, longsuffering and loving, mutual forbearance enhance the maintenance of the unity of the Spirit.

The writer does not just advocate behaviour that leads to unity, nor simply the maintenance of a unity said to have been produced by the Spirit. He promotes a zealous diligence to maintain that unity.¹⁷ He urges active behaviour. Just what forms of active behaviour are not spelled out explicitly. Instead, the writer proceeds to justify unified behaviour on confessional grounds (4:4-6).

Many commentators observe that the unity being discussed has been achieved by the Spirit.¹⁸ The process of this occurrence has been partially but vividly described in 2:11-22. There the readers are told how Christ's reconciling activity has given all believers equal access to God through the same Spirit (2:18). They also learn that, with all believers, they comprise part of a holy temple where God dwells in his Spirit (2:22). For the writer of Ephesians, maintaining unity involves acknowledging the role of God's Spirit. It is first of all a religious behaviour.

But second, the writer is ultimately concerned with the common interaction between fellow believers. The unity being spoken of assumes interpersonal relationship. The writer urges his readers to treat their fellow community members with respectful beneficence.

The concern for unity in 4:3 differs from a common hortatory pattern

¹⁵ U Falkenroth and C Brown, "Patience, Steadfastness, Endurance," 2: 771.

¹⁶ Gnllka, *Der Epheserbrief*, 197, notes how it is possible to argue grammatically that these three phrases modify the participle found in the fourth phrase. He is correct in asserting these as foundations to unity, rather than means to unity. The writer elaborates some specific ways that his readers should live worthily of the calling, of which unity is a part.

¹⁷ Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 237: "... the force of the participle *σπουδαζοντες* suggests that the maintenance of the unity is to be a matter of the utmost importance and urgency."

¹⁸ See, especially, Meyer, *The Epistle to the Ephesians*, 438; Schnackenburg, *Der Brief an die Epheser*, 166.

observed in Pauline literature. Some writers apply the indicative-imperative, "you are, therefore be," model.¹⁹ While on the surface this seems to be a plausible motif, it does not hold up on closer examination. The writer does not say, "You are unified, therefore act in a unified fashion." He says "You are a unity; therefore preserve it." The unity is to be maintained, not actualized.

In his writings Paul frequently appeals to what he considers to be a present reality in order to urge behaviour that conforms to that reality: e.g. believers have died to sin, so they must consider themselves as having thus died, refraining from sin (Rom 6:4-14).²⁰ Inherent in the argument is some sort of struggle that indicates how the reality is difficult to achieve. Though a believer may behave in a way that contradicts this reality, such behaviour does not undermine it. The imperative is often related to the future hope of believers, so that what is being worked out in the present will ultimately be resolved at the *parousia*. It expresses not-yet aspects of the already existing indicative.²¹

In contrast the writer of Ephesians shows no interest in the achievement of a present reality with his treatment of unity in 4:3. Rather, he is concerned with the continued existence of that reality. He is not bolstering his readers to persevere in the path of ultimate victory. Rather, he implies a potential for defeat. A unity that must be maintained can possibly be lost, or at least damaged. Though he does eventually assert a future, yet-to-be-achieved dimension to unity (4:13), he does so as a separate matter; Eph 4:3 is associated with the already, Eph 4:13 with the not-yet. The writer is not expressing a desire for his readers to actualize a

¹⁹ Barth, *Ephesians 4-6*, 423, 456; Mitton, *Ephesians*, 437. VP Furnish adds an interesting variation to this in relation to some aspects of Paul's writings, observing not simply imperatives based on indicatives, but imperatives implied by indicatives. The imperatives will then often make more specific what has been implied by the indicatives. See *Theology and Ethics in Paul*, (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1968), 97-98; 224-27.

²⁰ This passage is often regarded by Pauline theologians as an archetypal example of the indicative-imperative schema. See G Bornkamm, *Paul*, tr by DMG Stalker, (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1971), 202-03; H Ridderbos, *Paul*, tr by JR de Witt, (Grand Rapids: William B Eerdmans, 1975), 253-58; J Ziesler, *Pauline Christianity*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), 120-21.

²¹ Ridderbos, *Paul*, 257-58: "This relation of the indicative and imperative is altogether determined by the present redemptive-historical situation. The indicative represents the 'already' as well as the 'not yet.' The imperative is likewise focused on the one as well as the other. On the ground of the 'already' it can in a certain sense ask all things, is total in character, speaks not only of a small beginning, but of perfection in Christ. At the same time it has its basis in the provisional character of the 'not yet'. . . there is in the 'not yet' the necessity for increasing, pushing ahead on the way that has been unlocked by the 'already.'" Ziesler, *Pauline Christianity*, 121: "This results from the peculiar situation of those who belong to the New Age but still live in the old, the tension produced by Pauline eschatology."

dimension of their spiritual existence. Rather, he urges them to be certain that what is a reality for them remains a reality.

The writer reinforces this reality of unity by listing a series of items that exist as a single entity. The first three items relate directly to the unified behaviour advocated: "There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call" (4:4, RSV). Community, the Spirit and conversion are all either explicit or implicit issues in 4:1-3. The "one body," the "one Spirit" and the "hope of [their] calling" have all been referred to earlier in the epistle.²²

The remaining four items are less directly related to the content of vv 1-3: "There is. . . one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of us all, who is above all and through all and in all" (4:5-6, RSV). Whether these additional items appear through an existing creedal formulation, through the expression of Pauline and other thoughts, or through the ingenuity of the writer is immaterial.²³ These all continue to underscore the writer's point that unity is a foundational reality for believers. The readers should make every effort to remain in line with the pattern so closely a part of their belief. That each of these items relates to God, to Christ or to the Spirit also underscores further the religious dimension of their behaviour.

1.3 Unity as an Implicit Exhortation

After the specific behavioural instruction in 4:1-3 and its reinforcement in 4:4-6, one might expect further specific exhortations concerning unity, or perhaps a change to a new behavioural topic.²⁴ Instead, the writer initiates a discussion of Christ's giving of "gifts." That this relates to the unity discussed in the preceding verses is denied by nobody. But the lack of overt exhortation in these verses has

²² I.e. one body - 2:16; one Spirit - 2:18; the hope of their calling - 1:18. There is some discussion as to whether 2:16 refers to the church, Christ's physical body, or both simultaneously. See the summary in Schnackenburg, *Der Brief an die Epheser*, 117.

²³ None of these are necessarily mutually exclusive, as the explanations of the following writers demonstrate. Barth, *Ephesians 4-6*, 462-72; GB Caird, *Paul's Letters from Prison*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976), 72, thinks that these verses simply represent an embellishment on the Hebrew *Shema*, as seems to be the case in 1 Cor 8:6; Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 229, refers both to this possibility and to Rom 11:36, also noting that 1 Cor 12:4-6 mentions "Spirit," "Lord" and "God" in the same order as Eph 4:4-6; Schnackenburg, *Der Brief an die Epheser*, 168-69, also mentions in this regard the "baptismal" formula of 1 Cor 12:13. Note, also, the discussion by F Martin, "Pauline Trinitarian Formulas and Christian Unity," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 30 (1968): 200-210, who examines Eph 4:4-6 and other texts in the light of various Jewish and Greek unity formulations.

²⁴ HP Hamann, "Church and Ministry: an Exegesis of Ephesians 4:1-16," *Lutheran Theological Journal* 16 (1982): 121, suggests that one could proceed directly from the end of verse 3 to the argument that begins in verse 17 and not feel that one had missed anything.

led some commentators to consider them as a doctrinal digression, restricting their value as moral instruction.²⁵

Many explanations of these verses assume some influence of the thoughts on *charismata* expressed both in Rom 12:3-8 and 1 Cor 12:4-31.²⁶ These also assume that Eph 4:7-16 discusses the general topic of "diversity within unity" just as Rom 12 and 1 Cor 12 do. The reference to "grace" being given to each believer (4:7) is thought to indicate that the readers should maintain their unity with an awareness that each person is different - i.e. unity does not mean uniformity. This would explain the appearance of 4:7-16.

However, Eph 4:7-16 does not clearly teach about diversity within the body of Christ. Eph 4:7 does suddenly refer to "grace" being given "to each of us" and Eph 4:16 seems to echo thoughts found in Rom 12 and 1 Cor 12 when referring to the contributory efforts of individual body-parts in promoting the mutual welfare of believers.²⁷ But there is no emphasis on the diversity of these members the way there clearly is in Rom 12:3-8 and 1 Cor 12:4-31.²⁸ Both of those passages argue explicitly that though the body is a unity, the differences in bodily parts promote overall welfare when each part works together.

Instead of viewing Eph 4:7-16 as an assertion of diversity within unity, others have argued that the "gift" of church leaders rather than *charismata* is the topic of these verses.²⁹ Such reasoning tends also to assume a late date for the epistle with the writer of Ephesians defending an alternative ecclesiastical structure to what was currently prevailing. The passage states in v 7 that grace has been given, in v 8 that gifts have been given and in v 11 that apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors

²⁵ See, especially, Barth, *Ephesians 4-6*, 499; Bruce, *The Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians*, 354; Patzia, *Ephesians, Colossians, Philemon*, 248.

²⁶ E.g. FW Beare, "The Epistle to the Ephesians," in *The Interpreters Bible*, ed by GA Buttrick, (New York: Abingdon Press, 1953), 10: 687; Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 229-30; Mitton, *Ephesians*, 144; JA Robinson, *St. Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians*, (London: MacMillan, 1928), 179; Schnackenburg, *Der Brief an die Epheser*, 173, 176.

²⁷ Some commentators do link vv 7 and 16 as both discussing the issue of *charismata*. See Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 241-42, 263; Schlier, *Der Brief an die Epheser*, 208; Schnackenburg, *Der Brief an die Epheser*, 193.

²⁸ Note that Rom 12:6 talks about different *charismata* (χαρίσματα . . . διάφορα), while 1 Cor 12:4 speaks of allotments or varieties of gifts (διαρέσεις χαρισμάτων).

²⁹ See, especially, Masson, *L'Épître de Saint Paul aux Éphésiens*, 188-199; Schlier, *Der Brief an die Epheser*, 190-209; H Merklein, *Das kirchliche Amt nach dem Epheserbrief*, (München: Kösel-Verlag, 1973), 59-65.

and teachers have been given. What in v 7 is called grace, in v 8 gifts, is finally identified in v 11, not as *charismata*, but as people, considered to be church officials. According to this view, then, vv 7-16 are not discussing diversity within the body, but the special role church leaders play in maintaining unity.

Though I cannot agree that this passage does not discuss what other writings refer to as *charismata*, I must agree with these last writers in their arguments against an emphasis on diversity and for an emphasis on the role played by specific individuals within communities of believers. The main point of the passage is not to say that unity is upheld by recognizing a diversity of abilities. The passage argues that certain specific individuals play a significant role in promoting unity.

Several points work against the view that church officials, not *charismata*, are the sole subjects under discussion. V 7 very clearly states that grace is given "to each one of us." Both H Merklein and H Schlier, major proponents of the non-*charismata* point of view, suggest that this "us" actually refers to the writer of the epistle who is seeking to justify his authority.³⁰ This explanation contradicts the use of the first person plural in the rest of the epistle, with the only possible exception being in 1:12 where "us" is uniquely qualified by the phrase "who were the first to believe," which only with difficulty can be restricted to a small band of church leaders.³¹ Since grace is given "to each one of us," meaning to every believer, there must be some way that each believer benefits, not just a select few.

Because he is convinced that "to each one of us" refers to every believer, C Masson suggests that the "grace" alludes to the act of redemption discussed in 2:5 and 8, apportioned according to how each person is different, but in such a way that no one could possibly be envious and so disrupt the Spirit's unity.³² In addition to this grace, received by all, the church also benefits from gifts in the form of the church leaders. This view demands a radical change in subject. It also ignores how previously in the epistle grace that is "given" has referred to a special individual endowment from God, and that this endowment becomes synonymous

³⁰ Merklein, *Das kirchliche Amt nach dem Epheserbrief*, 60; Schlier, *Der Brief an die Epheser*, 191.

³¹ RA Wilson, "'We' and 'You' in the Epistle to the Ephesians," in *Studia Evangelica* 2, (TU 87 Berlin: Akademie, 1964), 676-680, argues that "we" in the epistle refers to all Christians while "you" refers directly to the addressees who are being given special instruction. K Usami, *Somatic Comprehension of Unity*, 36-37, argues similarly, though he tends to see more exclusiveness in the "we" group, restricted, in his view, to Paul, fellow Jews and certain gentile Christians.

³² Masson, *L'Épître de Saint Paul aux Éphésiens*, 188-89.

with the individuals who carry it out.³³ The individuals said to have been given by Christ in 4:11 seem to have been specially singled out by God to perform their function.

A comparison of the terminology of Eph 4:7-11 with that of Rom 12:3-8 and 1 Cor 12:4-31 suggests that the writer of Ephesians refers to the same basic phenomena that these other passages sometimes mention as *charismata*. Rom 12:3, before discussing them, remarks on ". . . the measure of faith which God has assigned [each]" (RSV). Three verses later Paul discusses believers "having gifts [χαρίσματα] that differ according to the grace given to us" (Rom 12:6, RSV). He does not speak of *charismata* being given, only possessed. He emphasizes the "grace" that is "given." Likewise, 1 Cor 12:7 says that the "manifestation of the Spirit" (RSV) has been "given" to each believer,³⁴ and that various items, some called *charismata* and others not, are demonstrations of this manifestation.

The term *χαρίσματα* does not appear in Eph 4:7-11, but the restricted use of that term in Rom 12 and 1 Cor 12 makes this inconsequential. Moreover, Eph 4:7 does talk about "grace. . . given to each of us according to the measure of Christ's gift" (RSV), much the same wording as Rom 12:3. It also resembles the "manifestation of the Spirit" that is "given" in 1 Cor 12:7.

Further, when in 4:11 the writer of Ephesians lists what Christ has given he uses the same grammar and vocabulary as 1 Cor 12:28, emphasizing people, not tasks.³⁵ 1 Cor 12:28 mentions not the *charismata* of apostleship, prophecy and teaching but apostles, prophets and teachers who are "placed" by God in the church. It is insignificant to argue, as some do, that church officers, not spiritual functions, are given in Eph 4:11.³⁶ In 1 Cor 12:28-29 Paul so identifies various functions with the people performing them that he says that these people are

³³ Eph 3:2, 7, 8. For support of this view, see Merklein, *Das kirchliche Amt nach dem Epheserbrief*, 60-64.

³⁴ . . . ἐκάστω δὲ δίδονται ἡ φανέρωσις τοῦ πνεύματος πρὸς τὸ συμφέρον. . .

³⁵ Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 249: "In Rom 12 gifts were ministries or functions and this is the way the term had been employed in 1 Cor 12, though in the latter passage in vv 28, 29 Paul could also speak of God appointing ministers as well as giving ministries."

³⁶ For a variety of reasons, Masson, Merklein and Schlier all consider v 11 to refer to specific office holders: Masson, *L'Épître de Saint Paul aux Éphésiens*, 190-91; Merklein, *Das kirchliche Amt nach dem Epheserbrief*, 3-5; Schlier, *Der Brief an die Epheser*, 195-96.

"placed" by God in the church.³⁷ Eph 4:11 refers to a similar phenomenon with a restricted scope and purpose.

If aspects from both sides of the above arguments are adopted, the following picture emerges. The passage does in fact begin with a discussion of issues related to *charismata*. But, as Schlier, Masson and Merklein rightly point out, the thrust in vv 7-16 is not upon diversity but upon the functioning of the individuals mentioned in v 11. V 7 introduces the general idea that a special endowment, "grace," has been given to every believer. Instead of focussing on a diversity of endowments for each believer, the writer in v 11 lists only five gifts. Each has a preaching function:³⁸ apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers. He then explains how these individuals promote unity and growth in the church.

To establish the importance of the individuals who function in the capacities described in v 11, the writer prepares the way in 4:8-10 first by quoting from Psalm 68:17 and then by applying this to Christ as the giver of gifts.³⁹ He asserts that the people he mentions in 4:11 are endowed from a lordly, exalted source. Because of this his readers should heed their ministry.

V 12 lists a three-fold purpose for the giving of these gift-individuals:⁴⁰ 1) they

³⁷ GD Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, (Grand Rapids: William B Eerdmans, 1987), 619: ". . . in fact he [Paul] lists gifts and deeds, not persons. That probably suggests that the first three items are not to be thought of as 'offices' held by certain 'persons' in the local church, but rather as 'ministries' that find expression in various persons; likewise the following 'gifts' are not expressed in the church apart from persons, but are first of all gracious endowments of the Spirit, given to various persons in the church for mutual upbuilding."

³⁸ Barth, *Ephesians 4-6*, 436: "All the ministers listed are persons who fulfill their service by speaking: they are 'Ministers of the Word.' This does not exclude the view that at the time when Ephesians was written other services were regularly carried out upon God's appointment. . . ." This is borne out by the emphasis on learned content found in vv 13-15.

³⁹ While much discussion surrounds the quotation, or misquotation, from Ps 68 and the interpretation that follows, the details of this do not directly affect the point on unity ultimately being argued here. For good representations of various points, see: C Arnold, *Ephesians: Power and Magic*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 56-58; GB Caird, "The Descent of Christ in Ephesians 4, 7-11," in *Studia Evangelica* 2, (TU 87 Berlin: Akademie, 1964), 535-45; WH Harris, "The Descent of Christ in Ephesians 4:7-11: An Exegetical Investigation with Special Reference to the Influence of Traditions about Moses Associated with Psalm 68:19," (Unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Sheffield, 1988); AT Lincoln, "The Use of the OT in Ephesians," *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 14 (1982): 18-25.

⁴⁰ Controversy also surrounds this verse. The basic views fall between two poles: 1) the "equipping of saints" is to enable these saints to perform their own ministry; versus 2) both the equipping of saints and the work of ministry are two separate purposes for the giving of the individuals mentioned in v 11. Commentators addressing the issue have varying nuances of each. For representatives of the first view, see Barth, *Ephesians 4-6*, 439-440 and 477-484; Robinson, *St Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians*, 182. Masson, *L'Épître de Saint Paul aux Éphésiens*, 192-93, reasons convincingly about the inappropriateness for the argument to shift suddenly and temporarily to work as performed by the rest of the church; Meyer, *The Epistle to the Ephesians*, 454-55, demonstrates how

are to equip saints; 2) they perform a work of ministry; and 3) they build up the body of Christ. V 13 indicates the duration of this three-fold purpose: until the unity of the faith and knowledge of the Son, or the "mature manhood" (RSV), or the measure of the stature of Christ's fulness are attained by all believers. V 3 had mentioned the unity produced by the Spirit as an existing entity. V 13 addresses aspects of unity yet to be attained, derived both from what people believe and how they know the Son of God.⁴¹ This unity is co-terminous with Christian maturity and transformation to the likeness of Christ. Vv 14-16 then disclose how, as the unity of the faith is aimed for, the unity of the Spirit is maintained. This happens through due attention to the gift-individuals of v 11.

Vv 14 and 15 comprise, respectively, a negative and a positive purpose statement concerning the giving of the functioning individuals in v 11. Negatively, their ministry keeps the rest of the community from being led astray; positively, it fosters spiritual growth. Within v 14 two hazards are metaphorically described. "We", i.e. every believer, is potentially a child, or as the writer mixes the metaphor, like a helpless ship tossed about on the rough seas. The seas are stirred up by winds of teaching produced by people who have been led astray from the true faith. The text is strangely silent on the origin or whereabouts of such people. Are they outside infiltrators or insiders affected by inappropriate influences? The ambiguous language in v 14 could indicate false teaching from any source.⁴²

a change in prepositions such as is seen here is a common stylistic variant (e.g. Rom 15:2). Finally, HP Hamann, "Church and Ministry," 124-27 and "The Translation of Ephesians 4:12--A Necessary Revision," *Concordia Journal*, 14 (1988): 42-49, points out that the term for "equipping" (καταρτισμός) in both the LXX and NT is mostly a comprehensive term by itself, requiring no additional purpose phrase to complete its sense (an argument that demonstrates the unlikelihood of a purpose phrase in Eph 4:12, not the impossibility). He also shows that "service" (διακονία) in the NT always portrays a special ministry rather than a wide or general concept of ministry. Note in this connection Robinson's citation of Acts 6:1, 4 to see the term applied both to teaching as well as to waiting on tables, *St. Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians*, 182.

⁴¹ Some commentators favour the view that faith here refers to the act of believing in Christ: Bruce, *The Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians*, 350; Robinson, *St. Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians*, 183; Schnackenburg, *Der Brief an die Epheser*, 187. The views of others, however, are more convincing. See Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 255: "As in v 5, πίστις, 'faith,' used here in the context of an emphasis on the teaching ministry and the mention of false teaching, is likely to have an objective connotation. In other words, it is not primarily believers' exercise of faith that is in view but rather the content of that faith;" also Mitton, *Ephesians*, 153-54.

⁴² See Caird, *Paul's Letters from Prison*, 77. Though his suggestion of the possible translation "by the passing fads of men, by a cleverness verging on misguided ingenuity" overlooks the definite negative connotations associated throughout the Pauline epistles with the terms πανουργία and πλάνη (see, e.g., 1 Cor 3:19; 2 Cor 4:2; 11:3; and Rom 1:27; 1 Thess 2:3), it captures the ambiguity perfectly. Robinson, *St. Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians*, 184-85, translates v 14b as "by the sleight of men. . . by craftiness in accordance with the wiles of error," which underscores the malicious tendency of the evil

Vv 15 and 16 together demonstrate the positive benefits derived from the ministry of the individuals of v 11. Here, for the first time since v 3, the writer refers to the active role of all believers in the advancement of unity. V 15 states that the individuals mentioned in v 11 are given for the following purpose: "we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ" (RSV). But this growth is to take place in a special environment created by believers "speaking the truth in love" (RSV). V 16 mixes anatomical and construction metaphors to describe how every believer works together to support one another through love. Both of these verses require additional explanation.

The term ἀληθεύοντες in v 15 can refer either to speaking or doing truth. Though arguments for "doing the truth" can be influenced by non-exegetical issues,⁴³ some linguistic and textual evidence does support this view.⁴⁴ But "speaking truth" is well within its range of meaning, as clearly shown by Gal 4:16: "Have I now become your enemy by telling you the truth?" (RSV).

In the NT "truth" is often equated with "the gospel" when there is concern over infiltration of false doctrine within the life of the church.⁴⁵ The writer of Ephesians, in 1:13, has already equated the gospel with the word of truth. In the context of 4:14, where impure doctrine is plainly in view, one would expect him to refer to this same spoken word of the gospel and all that it affirms.⁴⁶

The case, gender and number of the participle ἀληθεύοντες indicate that

people. A combination of these views shows how this verse can allow for a situation where unwittingly deceived people, convinced of their viewpoint, seek to draw others away unawares.

⁴³ Note, for example, G Johnston, *Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians and Philemon*, (London: Nelson, 1967), 20: "read: 'Rather, practicing the truth, . . .' The change is very significant, as everyone knows who has had the experience of hearing the truth spoken to him in love."

⁴⁴ TK Abbott, *The Epistles to the Ephesians and to the Colossians*, (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1897), 123, contends that verbs ending in -εω (ἀληθεύω) emphasize the doing of the action of the nouns with the same root but ending with -εια (ἀλήθεια). After showing textual variants and Latin translations that speak of "doing truth", Bruce, *The Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians*, 352, also notes this nuance in the OT "when fidelity between two parties is the subject." In support of his preference for "doing truth" he notes LXX uses in Gen 47:29; Josh 2:14; and Judg 9:16, 19. Note, also, J-D Dubois, "Ephesians IV 15: ἀληθεύοντες δὲ or ἀλήθειαν δὲ ποιοῦντες," *Novum Testamentum* 16 (1974): 30-34, who cites some inconclusive evidence from the Bohairic version that may support a Greek reading of "doing truth."

⁴⁵ See A Thiselton, "Truth," in *New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*, 3: 887-88, though he does not apply this line of reasoning to Eph 4:15, advocating instead the translation "doing the truth."

⁴⁶ Note also the arguments of both Barth, *Ephesians 4-6*, 444, and Schnackenburg, *Der Brief an die Epheser*, 190-91, where they see the context of this passage pointing overwhelmingly to a speaking emphasis.

truth-speaking is to be the activity of the subject "we," that is, all believers.⁴⁷ Appearing as an antithesis to an environment of doctrinal confusion, this truth-speaking would not refer principally to the opposite of lying, as the exhortation in 4:25 most certainly does. It would involve speaking about issues concerning "the faith" (vv 5, 13). Combined with the qualifier "in love," it may even indicate some form of conversational fellowship in the Christian gospel. The writer implies that when members of the community pay attention to the special people given to minister to them, they are equipped with what is proper to say, fostering the environment that allows for growth into Christ the head.

The message of v 16 is horribly complicated by the mixing of metaphors, confusing Greek syntax and vague terminology.⁴⁸ The writer oscillates between two different metaphors, the building and the body. He strings together a series of prepositional phrases without giving clear grammatical markers as to what they modify. He ambiguously uses two terms, ἐπιχορηγία (supply) and ἐνέργεια (working), and, from the pair of physiological terms ἄφῃ (ligament) and σύνδεσμος (ligament, sinew) found in Col 2:19, he adopts the first of these, which has a less certain medical orientation.

Though a host of interpretive possibilities exist, two basic views emerge. On the one hand, one can see the following: Christ the lordly source⁴⁹ gives impulse and growth power⁵⁰ that is transmitted through (διὰ) the uniting work

⁴⁷ One might conceivably try to argue that the force of the participle ἀληθεύοντες is linked with the gift-individuals of v 11, even as the purpose clause is. However, the nominative plural participle shows that it is in agreement with the subject of the verb "grow" - i.e. "we" - since adverbial participles agree with the nouns associated with the verbs they modify. See F Blass and A DeBrunner, *A Greek Grammar of the New Testament*, tr by RW Funk, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961), 215. Virtually every commentator sees truth speaking (or doing) as the responsibility of the subject of the verb ἀνέχομεν, "we".

⁴⁸ Barth, *Ephesians 4-6*, 445-451, has a useful discussion of the complications found in this verse.

⁴⁹ Schnackenburg, *Der Brief an die Epheser*, 191, points out that "body" in v 16 is related to "head" in v 15 as a catchword. The term κεφαλή in v 15 is not to be taken as the "head" of the body mentioned in v 16, but as the term that initiates the idea of body for v 16, and carries with it more the notion of lordship. See, also, G Howard, "The Head/Body Metaphors in Ephesians," *New Testament Studies* 20 (1974): 350-56. A similar view is shared by Caird, *Paul's Letters from Prison*, 77-78, who sees a combination of meanings where "head" refers simultaneously to an anatomical part, a chief ruling person, and source, much the same as in 1 Cor 11:2-10.

⁵⁰ Many commentators reckon that ancient physiologists thought that "joints" or "ligaments" supplied some sort of nutriment (e.g. Scott, *The Epistles of Paul to the Colossians, to Philemon and to the Ephesians*, (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1930, reprinted 1942), 214; Abbott, *The Epistle to the Ephesians*, 126; Gnilka, *Der Epheserbrief*, 219-220. Robinson, *St. Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians*, 104 and 186-87, insists forcefully that such a view finds no support in ancient physiological writings,

(συναρμολογούμενον καὶ συμβιβάζόμενον) of the bodily-connectors (ἀφή),⁵¹ who are to be identified as the individuals from v 11,⁵² to each separate body-part, identified as every believer,⁵³ causing the body (i.e. the church) to grow to spiritual maturity. On the other hand, instead of identifying bodily-connectors with a particular class of individuals, one can identify them with the contributions made by each individual believer:⁵⁴ either the body is fitted together and united through links supplied by such contributions⁵⁵ or the fitting together and uniting process

while Schnackenburg, *Der Brief an die Epheser*, 192, refers to studies on ancient physiology that show impulse and growth power (die "nötigen Antriebs- und Wachstumskräften"), not nutriment, would be conveyed from the head to the rest of the body through such "joints."

⁵¹ JB Lightfoot, *St. Paul's Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon*, (London: MacMillan, 1897), 196-99, cites evidence primarily from Aristotle and Galen to show that the contact or touch aspect of "joint" is meant by the term ἀφή. Robinson, *St. Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians*, 186-87, re-examines this data and refutes Lightfoot's claim, opting for some sort of binding activity more in line with the function of "ligaments." Schlier, *Der Brief an die Epheser*, 208, though using the term joint ("Gelenk") considers that an emphasis on binding is more appropriate than one on contact.

⁵² Gnilka, *Der Epheserbrief*, 220; Masson, *L'Épître de Saint Paul aux Éphésiens*, 198-99; Schlier, *Der Brief an die Epheser*, 208; Schnackenburg, *Der Brief an die Epheser*, 192-93.

⁵³ Particularly due to the repetition of the term μέτρον in connection with ἑνὸς ἐκάστου, thought to be a recollection of v 7, Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 263, Schlier, *Der Brief an die Epheser*, 208, and Schnackenburg, *Der Brief an die Epheser*, 193, relate the contributions of individual believers to the exercising of the gifts, or *charismata*, not mentioned in v 11. Masson, *L'Épître de Saint Paul aux Éphésiens*, 197, objects to the identification of each believer with each part of the body, a view that he feels requires a reference to *charismata*, a notion he feels to be foreign to the passage. Nevertheless, he identifies "each part" with every believer, not as a part of the body, but as a contributory part of the whole community. His analysis is useful in his explanation that each believer's contribution need not be related to *charismata*. However *charismata* need not automatically be signified by correlating believers with body-parts. The term μέρος does often refer to "body-part" in extra-biblical literature (see W Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, tr and ed by WF Arndt and FW Gingrich, rev by FW Gingrich and FW Danker, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979), 506), and would be a natural nuance in the present context. Following Masson's schema, Christ can be the head, the individuals of v 11 can be the ligaments and the remainder of the church can be each body-part without ever having to introduce the concept of *charismata*. The term μέτρον in v 7 refers to how Christ apportions "grace," the actual gift, to "each one." Assuming that one does not follow Beare, "The Epistle to the Ephesians," 695-96, who takes the phrase ἐν μέτρῳ in v 16 adverbially, meaning "properly," the term μέτρον in v 16 refers primarily to the portion of working that "each one" contributes to the growth.

⁵⁴ This, in effect, is the implication of such analysis as Beare, "The Epistle to the Ephesians," 695: ". . . the ruling thought is. . . the interdependence of the members in contributing to and through one another the vital forces which derive ultimately from the head." See also, Mitton, *Ephesians*, 157. Most often this view also assumes that spiritual gifts of each believer are in view. See previous note for a discussion of this. These two alternatives do not exhaust the possibilities. Barth, *Ephesians 4-6*, 447-50, suggests a more difficult alternative that every contact between believers is itself a supply from Christ, given according to individual needs.

⁵⁵ In this case, the phrase κατ' ἐνέργειαν κτλ. modifies the expression τῆς ἐπιχορηγίας. See BF Westcott, *Saint Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians*, (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1979 reprint of 1906 edition), 64-65.

accords with the contribution of each individual believer.⁵⁶

Regardless of one's perspective, two points clearly emerge: 1) Christ exercises a controlling influence over his people; 2) every believer eventually contributes something to the overall welfare of the church. These points affect the writer's overall discussion on unity.

The passage begins in v 7 with the statement of the lordly Christ dispensing gifts. These gifts promote unity and growth in their presentation of proper teaching concerning the faith. As individual believers heed the ministry of those given to the church, they are able to contribute to the overall benefit of the Christian community, which then becomes more unified. With Christ as a providing authority, each individual makes his or her own appropriate contribution to allow the body to build itself up in love.⁵⁷ The measure that each one imparts is derived from Christ, who offers a new orientation toward life promoted by the ministry of the individuals given according to v 11.

The implied behavioural activity for the readers is their truth-speaking (v 15) and their edifying work (v 16). In order to do this properly, however, they must learn from those given by Christ for their benefit. In so doing, they will promote growth within the church (vv 15-16) and attainment of "the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God" (4:13). This moral behaviour, too, is religious.

1.4 Conclusions

Vv 1-3 provide direct moral exhortation, bolstered by statements in vv 4-6, to promote harmonious, unified living among those who believe. The readers must live worthily of their calling, conducting themselves humbly, gently, patiently, and forbearingly as they eagerly keep the unity provided by the Spirit (4:1-3).

While lacking direct exhortation, vv 7-16 imply two basic moral activities: 1) truth-speaking in love; 2) helpful, mutual interaction in love. These two activities promote a yet-to-be-achieved unity of the faith (v 13) derived from the ministry of gift-individuals specially endowed by Christ himself. Unless the readers respond

⁵⁶ In this case, the phrase κατ' ἐνέργειαν modifies the two participles, συναρμολογούμενον καὶ συμβιβάζόμενον. See Abbott, *The Epistle to the Ephesians*, 126-27.

⁵⁷ This contribution could be limited solely to a "gift of grace" measured to each believer, cf Schnackenburg, *Der Brief an die Epheser*, 193, but could also refer to any sort of activity that is prompted by the ministry of the specific individuals given in v 11. See Masson, *L'Épître de Saint Paul aux Éphésiens*, 197.

to this ministry, they cannot know what the "truth" is that they are to speak, nor can they know what sort of "measure" they can contribute to their mutual interaction.

In vv 7-16, the writer has spoken idealistically. Nowhere does he suggest how these gift-individuals are to be recognized. He assumes that people will know who is an apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor or teacher. Neither does he explain explicitly how these individuals know what is true more than those who contribute to the tossing about of v 14. Their endowment by the ascended Christ is all that is needed. Nevertheless, he considers their function to be essential for promoting unity. The readers must speak truth and conduct themselves beneficently, basing ^{these activities} on their submission to Christ their Lord and their response to the ministry of those whom he has provided to give them direction.

2 Eph 4:1-16 - Affinities with Eph 1-3

The discussion of unity in Eph 4:1-16 has obvious links with what has preceded in 2:11-22 and 3:6. The topic of unity is also often thought to have been introduced in 1:3-14. This passage will be examined first before the more significant 2:11-22. Following this will be an overview of the presentation of Christ's lordship in chapters 1-3 as it relates to the presentation in 4:1-16. Though love is an important concept for 4:15-16, a discussion of this topic in chapters 1-3 will be reserved for Eph 4:25-5:2 where it is a more dominant principle.

2.1 Eph 1:3-14

It is often suggested that Eph 1:3-14 introduces the major themes of the epistle.⁵⁸ This tends to be overstated. Some aspects of 1:3-14 are repeated elsewhere in the epistle, but many statements have closer affinities with earlier Pauline epistles, including Colossians, than they do with later issues in Ephesians.⁵⁹

⁵⁸ Bruce, *The Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians*, 267, says that 1:3-14 as a liturgical passage "strikes the keynote for the rest of the letter, with its emphasis on the inclusion of Gentiles together with Jews within the new society of the people of God." Barth, *Ephesians 1-3*, (New York: Doubleday, 1974), expresses a similar notion, calling 1:3-14 "a prologue, or the overture to the whole that follows," (p 55) and "a digest of the whole epistle and replete with key terms and topics that anticipate the contents of what follows," (p 97). PT O'Brien, "Ephesians 1: An Unusual Introduction to a New Testament Letter," *New Testament Studies* 25 (1979): 12, after summarizing other similar comments, concludes, ". . . the *berakah* has introduced and prefigured many, though by no means all, important theological and parenetic themes" (p 512).

⁵⁹ One example of a notion mentioned in Eph 1:3-14 and perhaps developed later in the epistle is God's choosing believers so that they might be holy and blameless (1:4), which may foreshadow ideas in 2:10 and 5:3-14. There are far more topics raised in 1:3-14 that receive greater elaboration in earlier Pauline letters. E.g. - predestination is only mentioned in Eph 1:5, not discussed in a deeper fashion as in Romans 8:15, 23, 29-30; redemption in Eph 1:7, only mentioned, but not developed in Eph 1:14 and 4:30, as compared with Rom 8:23, 1 Cor 1:30 and Col 1:14; the wisdom of God, Eph 1:8, as compared with Rom 11:33, 1 Cor 2:7 and Col 1:9, 28, 2:3, 23 and 3:16; the Spirit as a deposit of

One cannot learn from these verses just what the contents of the rest of the epistle will be.

The issue of unity is a case in point. Though a major topic in Eph 2:11-22 and 4:1-16, the language of unity is virtually absent from 1:3-14. The verb ἀνακεφαλαιοῦμαι in Eph 1:10 may be an exception but only a remote one. While recognizing its rhetorical meaning of "summarize," as an orator would at the end of a speech, many writers disagree about the implications this has for Eph 1:10. Two basic alternatives are: 1) Christ summarizes by uniting;⁶⁰ 2) Christ summarizes as Lord.⁶¹

The two options are not mutually exclusive. A unitary Lord provides a unifying focal-point. But the revealing of the cosmic plan (1:9), the sense of the "fulness of times" (1:10) and the summarizing of "things in heaven and things on earth" (1:10, RSV) point more to the universal lordship of Christ than they do to his uniting of disparate groups.⁶² "All things" are "summarized" in Christ in that he is their focal-point. Eph 1:22 then develops this idea further by saying that "all things" are subjected beneath his feet, an obvious reference to Ps 8:6.⁶³ Christ's

future inheritance, Eph 1:14, as compared with 2 Cor 1:22 and 5:5. With regard to this last example, Eph 4:30 does use the vocabulary of 1:13 with the concept of being "sealed" by the Spirit, but again, this is only a brief mention, not a major point developed within the epistle.

⁶⁰ See especially S Hanson, *The Unity of the Church in the New Testament*, (Uppsala: Almqvist & Wiksells, 1946), 121-22, 126. Bruce, *The Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians*, 261, relates the term to the concept of reconciliation, remarking how God "gathered up" the fragmented and alienated universe;" accordingly Eph 1:10 foreshadows the reconciliation between Jew and Gentile in 2:11-22. See, also, Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 32-35; Robinson, *St. Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians*, 147; Scott, *The Epistles of Paul to the Colossians, to Philemon and to the Ephesians*, 145-46.

⁶¹ Gnllka, *Der Epheserbrief*, 79-81; F Mußner, *Der Brief an die Epheser*, (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus Mohn, 1982), 49-50; Schlier, *Der Brief an die Epheser*, 65, and "κεφαλή, ἀνακεφαλαιοῦμαι" in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed by G Kittel, tr by G Bromiley, (Grand Rapids: William B Eerdmans, 1965), 3: 681-82. Barth, *Ephesians 1-3*, 89-91, combines unify and head-up: "by becoming head he will prove himself as head; by his rulership he is to unite what was divided and hostile. Headship is the means, reconciliation the purpose, of his appointment," (p 91). Schnackenburg, *Der Brief an die Epheser*, 58-60, sees this as a spatial uniting of heaven and earth under the headship of Christ, foreshadowing both Eph 1:20-23 and 2:11-22. Many of these writers also assume that κεφαλή is a root-term to ἀνακεφαλαιοῦμαι, an assumption that I regard as invalid.

⁶² Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 35: "God has exalted Christ to heaven as cosmic Lord, thereby ensuring the inseparable connection between heaven and earth that enables both things in heaven and things on earth to be summed up in him."

⁶³ For a similar line of reasoning, see AT Lincoln, *Paradise Now and Not Yet*, (Cambridge: University Press, 1981), 143-44.

lordship has implications for the interpersonal unity of 2:11-22 and 4:1-16,⁶⁴ but it does not directly signify that unity.

A second possible precursor to the topic of unity is thought to appear in 1:11-14. After having used the first person plural to refer to his readers, himself, and his community, the writer suddenly qualifies "we" with the expression, "who first hoped in Christ" (1:12, RSV). This "we" excludes the readers, referred to in v 13 as "you also." The "we"- "you" terminology might represent "we Jewish Christians" and "you gentile Christians."⁶⁵ This is not very supportable. Rather it is probably only a rhetorical, stylistic variation.⁶⁶ To see here a Jew-gentile distinction is to see more than the text actually claims. Neither Eph 1:10 nor 1:12 offer much of a glimpse into the discussion of unity as it appears either in 2:11-22 or 4:1-16.

2.2 Eph 2:11-22 and 3:6

The writer begins this section with an imperative, "remember." His readers' recollection of former circumstances should highlight the significance of their present condition.⁶⁷ He underscores their former unprivileged position, addressing them as "Gentiles in the flesh" (2:11, RSV) and "uncircumcised" (literally, "foreskins," ἀκροβυστία), who were so designated in the past and may still have

⁶⁴ Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 132: ". . . the uniting of elements in heaven and on earth in a cosmic harmony has been seen as the goal of God's plan in 1:10. The move from cosmic unity to human unity. . . shows that the two notions were associated in the writer's mind." Note Schnackenburg, *Der Brief an die Epheser*, 58-60. Also, see below, p 44.

⁶⁵ Barth, *Ephesians 1-3*, 92-95; Bruce, *The Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians*, 264; Mußner, *Der Brief an die Epheser*, 49-50; Robinson, *St. Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians*, 34-35; Schlier, *Der Brief an die Epheser*, 66-69.

⁶⁶ Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 18: "Vv 13, 14, in particular, with their change to second person plural address, explicitly involve the readers, appealing to their experience of the great blessings of salvation and thereby enabling them to identify with the writer's thoughts and sympathize with his concerns." See, also, Schnackenburg, *Der Brief an die Epheser*, 63; Usami, *Somatic Comprehension of Unity*, 36-37, 42; Wilson, "'We' and 'You' in the Epistle to the Ephesians," 676-80.

⁶⁷ There is discussion in the literature about the significance of this "remembering." Some consider this to be part of a baptismal rite, an "anamnesis." See RP Martin, *Reconciliation*, (London: Marshall, Morgan & Scott, 1981), 189-90; WA Meeks, "In One Body: The Unity of Humankind in Colossians and Ephesians," in *God's Christ and His People*, ed by J Jervell and WA Meeks, (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 1977), 209, who follows closely the writing of NA Dahl, "Anamnesis" *Studia Theologica* 1 (1947): 69-95. Barth, *Ephesians 1-3*, 147, 254, suggests that such remembering had cultic significance. It is not the purpose here to validate or deny any technical nuance imbued in the term μνημονεύω. Worth noting is 1 Thess 2:19, which uses the same term in a thoroughly non-technical way to urge its readers to recall something in the past. The same kind of recollection is also in view here, regardless of any ritual associations. Note Bruce, *The Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians*, 292: "The privileges now enjoyed by Gentile believers in Christ would be appreciated all the more gratefully if they bore in mind the state of life from which they had been delivered."

been at the time of receiving the letter,⁶⁸ derogatorily considered by the so-called "circumcised" to be beneath them.

The writer not only reminds his readers of how Jews looked down upon them, he establishes some basis in redemptive history for such a demeaning view.⁶⁹ His uncircumcised gentile readers had once been (2:12, RSV): "separated from Christ;"⁷⁰ "alienated from the commonwealth of Israel;" "strangers to the covenants of promise;" "having no hope;"⁷¹ "without God in the world." They "once were far off" (2:13, RSV). They had been shut out by "the dividing wall of hostility" (2:14, RSV), most likely a reference to the separating feature of the law.⁷²

The writer then establishes how historically, Christ has both actively and passively united Jew and gentile. He has actively "made" (ὁ ποιήσας, 2:14), or

⁶⁸ Note the present participles λεγόμενοι . . . λεγομένης. While present participles do not always indicate present time, they often have a temporal nuance. See Blass and Debrunner, *A Greek Grammar of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 174-75, and N Turner, *Syntax in A Grammar of New Testament Greek*, ed by JH Moulton, (Edinburgh, T & T Clark, 1963), 79-81, who both state that the present participle usually expresses the same time as the main verb. The δε repeated again in v 12 may indicate that the appositional phrases are sufficiently distant from the main verb ἦτε as to make their temporal significance more closely linked with the present imperative μνημονεύετε.

⁶⁹ Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 125, adds a helpful distinction on this point: "What this use of the scheme [i.e. once-now] involves, then, is not a general depiction of the place of the Gentiles in the history of salvation nor a general contrast between Gentiles and Jews, but, more specifically, a contrast between the pre-Christian past in its relation to Israel's privileges and the Christian present of these particular Gentile addressees."

⁷⁰ Many commentators agree that this expression refers in some way to the Jewish Messianic hope from which the readers had been separated prior to their belief, which is how the writer can equate "separated from Christ" in some fashion with "alienated from the commonwealth of Israel." Barth, *Ephesians 1-3*, 256; Gnllka, *Der Epheserbrief*, 134; Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 136-37; Schnackenburg, *Der Brief an die Epheser*, 108.

⁷¹ Again, as with "without Christ," this expression is generally seen within the framework of Jewish promises, as opposed to a reference to total despair. See, e.g. Barth, *Ephesians 1-3*, 256, where he states that it ". . . alludes to the absence of the Messianic hope;" also, Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 138. Bruce, *The Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon and to the Ephesians*, 294, takes this as a general reference to the context of God's promises: "God is 'the God of hope' (Rom 15:13) and to be without him is to be without real hope even in this world, not to speak of that which is to come." Gnllka, *Der Epheserbrief*, 135, is similar, saying that gentiles had no hope because they did not know God's promises.

⁷² There are three accepted explanations for the meaning of the expression τὸ μεσότοιχον τοῦ φραγμοῦ: 1) the law alone - *Ep Arist* 139 and 142 refer to aspects of the law that form an "iron wall" around Jews to keep them from sin; 2) a cosmic wall separating heaven and earth, mentioned in 2 Baruch 54:5; 3) the barrier existing in the temple court in Jerusalem, mentioned in Josephus, *Jewish Wars* 5.193. For the first view, which is favoured here, see Schnackenburg, *Der Brief an die Epheser*, 113-14, and Martin, *Reconciliation*, 184-86. Mußner, *Der Brief an die Epheser*, 75, 78-79, gravitates toward the first, but does not feel that the third cannot be ruled out. Bruce, *The Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians*, 296-98, takes a similar view, though he also suggests that the writer could have meant both views simultaneously. The major arguments for the second view can be found in Schlier, *Der Brief an die Epheser*, 127-133.

"created," (κτίσις, 2:15) the two disparate groups into one new person (2:14-15). Passively, Christ is said to have shown no favouritism in his reconciling activity; both Jew and gentile are reconciled to God equally by the same act ("in one body", 2:16), both have the same message of "peace" preached to them (2:17), and both have the same access to God through the same Spirit (2:18).⁷³

In 2:12 gentiles were described as strangers of the covenants of promise (ξένοι τῶν διαθηκῶν τῆς ἐπαγγελίας); in 2:19 the readers are told that they are no longer strangers and foreigners (ξένοι καὶ πάροικοι). Formerly separated from the commonwealth or citizenship (πολιτείας) of Israel (2:12), they are fellow citizens (συμπολίται) with the saints (2:19).⁷⁴ With a series of word-plays based on the stem οἰκ-, the writer reinforces the fact of unity between Jew and gentile. No longer foreigners (πάροικοι, 2:19), they are instead household members (οἰκεῖοι, 2:19), people who are built on a special foundation (ἐποικοδομηθέντες, 2:20) of a building (οἰκοδομή, 2:21), aiming toward and joined together by Christ, a building in which the gentiles are co-built (συνοικοδομεῖσθε, 2:21) into a dwelling (κατοικητήριον) of the Spirit (2:21). The division between Jew and gentile no longer exists in view of Christ's reconciling work.

The writer, claiming to be Paul, draws upon this scenario of equality in 3:6 as part of a digression on his own ministry (3:2-13). He considers himself to be privileged to convey the message that gentiles could be "fellow heirs, members of the same body, and partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel" (3:6, RSV). This, he underscores, is a new message, a "mystery. . . which was not made known to the sons of men in other generations as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit" (3:5, RSV). Whatever may have

⁷³ This is an embellishment on the double sense of the reconciling work pointed out by many writers, who have observed that in this passage Christ reconciles both Jew to gentile and people to God. See Barth, *Ephesians 1-3*, 266. Martin, *Reconciliation*, 178, in discussing the "double structure" of the passage notes the emphasis placed on the historical work of Christ: "When the matter of priority--racial harmony or soteriological relation to God--is pressed, it seems clear that the Ephesians author's basis is God's action in Christ the reconciler of sinners. He has apparently anchored an earlier tribute to world redemption firmly in the cross and sacrifice of the human Jesus; and from that event he extrapolates the teaching of its effect upon society." Schnackenburg, *Der Brief an die Epheser*, 116-17, sees this double sense carrying to the term "body," so that when, in v 16, Christ is said to reconcile Jew and gentile in one body, it is meant to refer both to the church and to Christ's own flesh - i.e. Christ reconciles Jew and gentile to each other within the church and to God in his own flesh.

⁷⁴ The term "saints" (ἁγίων) probably refers here to Christians. Some see this referring, instead, to angels. It is not within the scope of this work to comment on the validity of this. Regardless, it is certainly within the rhetorical emphasis of the passage to see this in part as a reference to Christians, those who comprise the new person of v 14. See Schnackenburg, *Der Brief an die Epheser*, 120-22.

happened before Christ's coming, Christ's new order entails that all who believe enjoy the same advantages.

This same new situation is in view when the writer urges his readers to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace (4:3). For him, God's people are a unity. God through Christ (δι' αὐτοῦ, 2:18) and in the agency of the Spirit (ἐν ἐνὶ πνεύματι, 2:18) has removed the most basic ethnic division in the offer of salvation to humankind. The Jew-gentile discussion disappears in chapter 4 because it is no longer relevant. Any sense of superiority-inferiority, class-distinction or insider-outsider labelling among Christians is inappropriate since all believers are equally part of the new humanity. They have all been identically reconciled to God.⁷⁵

2.3 Unity and the Lordship of Christ

The concept of the lordship of Christ expressed in Eph 1-3 has implications for the developing argument on unity, particularly in 4:7-16. In 1:10 the writer presents Christ as the focal point of the universe, summarizing "all things." He expands this in 1:20-23 regarding "all things" as subjected beneath the feet of Christ, and declaring Christ as given to the church to rule it in "all things."⁷⁶ The church, in turn, is designated the body of Christ, "the fulness of him who fills all in all" (1:23, RSV).

The filling of "all things" is mentioned again in 4:10 as a prelude to the ascended Christ dispensing gifts to his church. The writer portrays Christ in a lordly, exalted position, high above the heavens. He is seated there so that (ἵνα) he might "fill all things."⁷⁷ The principal consequence of this lordly position is the giving of gifts - i.e. apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers.⁷⁸ These "gifts" are to function, in turn, until "we all attain to . . . the measure of the stature

⁷⁵ Usami, *Somatic Comprehension*, 54, makes a similar point, also extending the influence of 2:11-22 into 4:7-16, (p 138).

⁷⁶ G Howard, "The Head/Body Metaphors of Ephesians," *New Testament Studies* 20 (1974): 353, regards τῆ ἐκκλησίας in 1:22 as the indirect object of the verb ἔδωκεν, rather than a dative of reference linked with ὑπὲρ πάντα. Accordingly, "head" in 1:22 is a separate idea from "body" in 1:23. Thus, the church of which Christ is head is his body, rather than that the body of which he is head is the Church. Christ is head as authoritative ruler, not as chief body-part.

⁷⁷ J Ernst, *Pleroma und Pleroma Christi*, (Regensburg: Friedrich Pustet, 1970), 140-41, sees 1:22-23 and 4:10-13 each expressing similar concepts of Christ's domination through filling both the universe and the church.

⁷⁸ Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 248: "They [i.e. the gifts] are seen as the royal largesse which Christ distributes from his position of cosmic lordship after his triumphant ascent."

of the fulness of Christ" (4:13, RSV). According to the writer, Christ, from his position of lordly ascendance, has given gift-individuals to point his followers to a maturity that involves beneficial dominance by himself.⁷⁹ The writer may even envisage the results of this gift-giving as part of fulfilling his prayer for his readers to "be filled with all the fulness of God" (Eph 3:19, RSV).

The writer has linked attaining the fulness of Christ with the goal of "the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God" (4:13, RSV). The lordly Christ provides special individuals who, when responded to, move believers in the direction of unity. Because Christ's absolute lordship stands behind the giving of these individuals, they require due respect and attention. Unity in this sense is a by-product of Christ's domination, not a dictatorial demand.

2.4 Conclusions

According to the writer of Ephesians, Christ has united all believers on an equal basis by reconciling opposing factions of humanity both to one another and to God (Eph 2:11-22; also 3:6). This "unity of the Spirit" is to be kept "in the bond of peace" (4:3). He also presides as absolute Lord over a church (1:22) that is striving to achieve unity (4:13), and provides gifts to enhance the process (4:8-11). Christ's reconciling work establishes unity. His lordly power promotes it.

3 Eph 4:1-16 and Pauline Moral Traditions

Eph 4:1-16 has three major affinities with antecedent Pauline writings. Two of these appear in 4:1-2 with the exhortation to live worthily of the calling (4:1) and with the four character qualities mentioned in Eph 4:2: humility, gentleness, patience and forbearance. The third is its concern for behavioural unity. After treating these in sequence, the section will conclude with comparisons with Colossians.

3.1 Living Worthily

As in Ephesians, so Paul's letters frequently employ "walk" imagery to convey

⁷⁹ The expression εἰς μέτρον ἡλικίας τοῦ πληρώματος τοῦ Χριστοῦ is difficult to explain with precision. Schnackenburg, *Der Brief an die Epheser*, 188-89, linking 1:23, 3:19 (a prayer that the readers might be filled with all the fulness of God), and 4:10 with 4:13, rejects the nuance of attaining to the highest height of fulness in favour of being permeated with the power of salvation and godly wisdom of Christ. Ernst, *Pleroma und Pleroma Christi*, 124-45, who has also linked 1:23, 3:19 and 4:10, sees "the fulness of God" as referring to the ultimate, final growth-point of the church, attained through the dwelling of Christ, the grounding in love and the knowledge of Christ's love. Arnold, *Ephesians: Power and Magic*, 137-38, sees in "fulness" and "head-body" terminology the ecclesiology of Ephesians "stressing the accessibility to divine power" (p 138).

how a person lives.⁸⁰ Less wide-spread but more significant for Ephesians is the combination of terminology expressing "live worthily." Two passages in Paul's writings use this: 1 Thess 2:12 and Phil 1:27-28.

In 1 Thess 2:12 Paul reminds his readers of his preaching while he was physically present with them: ". . . for you know how. . . we exhorted each one of you and encouraged you and charged you to lead a life worthy of God [περιπατεῖν ὑμᾶς ἀξίως τοῦ θεοῦ], who calls you into his own kingdom and glory" (1 Thess 2:11-12, RSV). This passage makes God the object of worthiness, rather than God's calling, but the emphasis on living a life commensurate with conversion is remarkably similar to what is found in Eph 4:1. Though specific exhortations do not follow here immediately, as in Eph 4:2, there is a definite link between the reminder in 1 Thess 2:12 and the direct paraenesis beginning in 1 Thess 4:1.⁸¹ A number of the concerns found in 1 Thess 4:1-12 resemble those found in Eph 4:17-5:20.⁸²

Instead of the "walk" metaphor (περιπατέω), Phil 1:27-28 uses political imagery (πολιτεύω) to express the notion of moral conduct.⁸³ In this case, the readers are urged to live worthily of the gospel of Christ. The concept is similar to what is found in 1 Thess 2:12 and Eph 4:1. Conversion as expressed through the gospel makes implicit demands for appropriate moral conduct. Significantly for Eph 4:1-16, worthiness is expressed through unified behaviour: ". . . that you stand firm in

⁸⁰ See Rom 6:4; 8:4; 13:13; 14:15; 1 Cor 3:3; 7:17; 2 Cor 4:2; 5:7; 10:2, 3; 12:18; Gal 5:16; Phil 3:17, 18; 1 Thess 2:12; 4:1, 12.

⁸¹ This, of course, assumes that the epistle is a unity, rather than a combination of two epistolary fragments. Both 1 Thess 4:1 and 2:12 refer to what the Thessalonians have learned from Paul and his cohorts, though in 4:1, he refers to traditions they had received (καθώς παρελάβετε παρ' ἡμῶν). Both verses use the verb περιπατέω and both refer to God-oriented behaviour, either pleasing God (4:1) or walking worthily of God (2:12). See T Holtz, *Der erste Brief an die Thessalonicher*, (Zürich: Benziger Verlag, 1986), 153.

⁸² E.g. pleasing God (1 Thess 4:1; Eph 5:10); abstention from fornication (1 Thess 4:2; Eph 5:3, 5); a possible concern with sexual greed (1 Thess 4:6; Eph 4:19; 5:3, 5); abstention from moral impurity (1 Thess 4:7; Eph 4:19; 5:3, 5); a role for God's Spirit in morality (1 Thess 4:8; Eph 4:30); a concern for love, especially among Christians (1 Thess 4:9; Eph 5:2); a high value on manual labour (1 Thess 4:11-12; Eph 4:28).

⁸³ RP Martin, *Philippians*, (Grand Rapids: William B Eerdmans, 1976), 82: "Paul is using the technical verb to call the Philippians to their double responsibility: they were proud of being treated under the *ius Italicum*. . . as citizens of the empire with privileges to enjoy and responsibilities to fulfil. They must also remember that they are citizens of a heavenly kingdom (3:20), and by this membership of Christ's kingdom on earth their conduct with the Church and in the world is to be determined." Also, see J Gnilka, *Der Philipperbrief*, (Freiburg: Herder, 1968), 97-98, who suggests that Paul consciously chose this over the normal walk terminology to convey the point of dual citizenship.

one spirit, with one mind striving side by side for the faith of the gospel" (Phil 1:27, RSV). Christian unity is an outflow of faith in Christ.

Moral exhortations to live worthily appear only twice in the undisputed writings of Paul. That this would be an important facet of Paul's own moral teaching can be inferred in at least two ways. First, it is his overt statement in 1 Thess 2:12, 4:1. Second, 1 Thess is one of the earlier letters of Paul, while Phil is one of the last. The same concerns are present from beginning to end. Ephesians stands squarely in Pauline tradition with the exhortation in Eph 4:1.

3.2 Pauline Character Qualities

The four qualities in Eph 4:2 are represented in Paul's writings. Though not ubiquitous, they do appear in certain key passages expressing Paul's moral thought. Two of the qualities, gentleness (πραΰτης) and patience (μακροθυμία) appear in the listing of the fruit of the Spirit (Gal 5:22-23).⁸⁴ Humility (ταπεινοφροσύνη) is the trait cited in Phil 2:4 to govern how those readers should "count others as better than [themselves]" (RSV). The example of Christ humbling himself (2:8) is then posed as a model worthy of emulation, also having implications for Christians behaving in a unified fashion (2:2). In Rom 12:16, Paul commends humility over exalted thinking. Paul also commends forbearance as a response to persecution, not by direct exhortation, but by his own apostolic example (1 Cor 4:12).⁸⁵ The listing in Eph 4:2 also falls within Pauline thought.

3.3 Pauline Behavioural Unity

Among the undisputed Pauline epistles, only 1 Thessalonians and Philemon do not refer to unity in some form. While recognizing this as a major Pauline issue, discussions on unity have tended to focus on theological or ideological issues to the exclusion of behavioural expectations.

Often, a single issue is offered to explain the emphasis on unity for the

⁸⁴ Gentleness is also commended as a positive attribute of his own apostolic example, along with kindness and sincere love (2 Cor 6:6). In that entire passage, Paul's lists of each of these items clearly place him in a more favourable light. See RP Martin, *2 Corinthians*, (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1986), 187-88. Elsewhere he commands gentleness, along with acts of kindness and mercy to be directed to all in need (1 Thess 5:14).

⁸⁵ See 4:16: "I urge you, then, be imitators of me" (RSV). H Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians*, tr by JW Leitch, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975), 85: "The principles that have been laid down are valid not only for the officebearer. The latter possesses no special quality, but is an instance of Christian existence in general." G Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, (Grand Rapids: William B Eerdmans, 1987), 165: "But the way he [Paul] actually is, set forth in the rhetoric of vv. 11-13, is the way they all ought to be."

Pauline churches. Suggestions have included: Jewish monotheism - God is one, Christians ought to be one;⁸⁶ a Christianizing of the Hebrew notion of "corporate personality" - Christ embodies all Christians as a single entity;⁸⁷ the collection for the saints in Jerusalem as a symbol of the unity of Jew and gentile.⁸⁸ When unity is discussed as a behavioural necessity, it is primarily as an inference from ideological statements. Thus, Gal 3:28 is regarded as a major Pauline statement on unity intended to revolutionize social relationships within the church,⁸⁹ disregarding the fact that Paul's statement bolsters a doctrinal, not a behavioural point.⁹⁰

Though useful, these approaches tend to ignore concrete exhortations to

⁸⁶ L Cerfaux, *The Church in the Theology of St. Paul*, tr by G Webb and A Walker, (New York: Herder and Herder, 1950), 233-36. S Hanson, *The Unity of the Church in the New Testament*, (Uppsala: Almqvist & Wiksells, 1946), 57ff, and to a lesser degree PI Bratsiotis, "Paulus und die Einheit der Kirche," in *Studia Paulina*, ed by JH Sevenster and WC van Unnik, (Haarlem: De Erven F Bohn, 1953), 28-36.

⁸⁷ RP Shedd, *Man in Community*, (London: The Epworth Press, 1958), 195: ". . . a mysterious unity pervaded the Elect Race so that the action of a member or a group implicated the whole in reward or punishment. In Paul these metaphors are often organic (i.e. a body, tree) because it is the organic structure which best describes the implications of solidarity; therefore Paul says: 'And whether one member suffereth, all members suffer with it; or one member is honoured all the members rejoice with it' (1 Cor 12:26)." Also, see E Best, *One Body in Christ*, (London: SPCK, 1955). DEH Whitely, *The Theology of St. Paul*, 2nd edition, (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1974), 192, also refers to this concept when discussing "the body of Christ." Stig Hanson, *The Unity of the Church*, 69ff, merges his view of unity as derived from monotheism with unity as represented by a single body in an undivided Christ. Because God is one, Christ is one. Since Christ is the embodiment of the new humanity in a corporate personality, all Christians are one. Each of these writers draws heavily on the same anthropological concepts used by H Wheeler Robinson, who has been rightly criticized for taking principles derived from early (and long since surpassed) studies on "primitives" and applying them to a 1000 year-long time-span of a people whose "primitiveness" can readily be questioned. See J Rogerson, "The Hebrew Conception of Corporate Personality: A Re-examination," *Journal of Theological Studies* 21 (1970): 1-16.

⁸⁸ See PJ Achtemeier, *The Quest for Unity in the New Testament Church*, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987), though he thinks the Jerusalem church rejected this gift. JP Sampley, *Pauline Partnership in Christ*, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1980), had proposed a similar view, though he centres it around the concept of the Roman legal and commercial concept of *societas*. He contends that Paul and the leaders of the Jerusalem church entered into a contract that obligated Paul to collect money for the poor in Jerusalem, a contract that he then tried to bring the other churches into, thus unifying them with Jerusalem.

⁸⁹ Whitely, *The Theology of St. Paul*, 222-27, discusses this verse under the rubric of "equality and subordination." MY MacDonald, *The Pauline Churches*, (Cambridge: University Press, 1989), 66-67, refers to the "revolutionizing consequences in the social realm" and "the abolition of divisions between social groups" (also see p 103) without proving that Paul was urging any special sort of behaviour in making such a statement.

⁹⁰ JMG Barclay, in *Obedying the Truth*, (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1988), and in "Mirror-Reading a Polemical Letter: Galatians as a Test Case," *Journal for the Study of the New Testament*, 31 (1987): 73-93, has convincingly demonstrated that disunity, or disharmony, is a problem that Paul addresses in his paraenesis in Galatians, but this is linked to the overall argument in chapters 1-4, not explicitly to 3:28.

unity.⁹¹ Because Eph 4:1-16 urges people to behave in a unified fashion, Pauline exhortations to unity will receive exclusive attention here. Paul's statement in Phil 1:27 urging his readers to unity in the gospel has already been observed. More frequently he employs words common to the Graeco-Roman world: τὸ αὐτὸ φρονεῖν - literally, "think the same thing" or be of the same mind.⁹² Similar wording appears five times in his letters - Rom 12:16; 15:5-6; 2 Cor 13:11; Phil 2:2 and 4:2 - with a variant, "say the same thing" (τὸ αὐτὸ λέγητε), in 1 Cor 1:10. Additionally, the metaphor of the body conveys his desire for Christians both in Rome and in Corinth to behave in a unified way in relation to the exercise of *charismata* (Rom 12:3-8; 1 Cor 12:4-31).

Both Rom 12:16 and 15:5 urge the readers to "live in harmony with one another" (RSV).⁹³ They express Paul's desire for believers to promote overall group welfare and cooperation over individual interest. Rom 12:16 belongs to a series of loosely connected exhortations thought to resemble material from Jewish paraenesis.⁹⁴ Rom 15:5 is part of a prayer aimed at resolving a dispute in Rom 14-15 about issues related to food, drink and observance of holy days.⁹⁵ Unified behaviour involving mutual concern for others grows from an agreement on the value of others in the group.

This general concern for deeds of mutual welfare seems to stand behind the

⁹¹ G Bornkamm, *Paul*, 176, does explain the dynamics of Paul's all-things-to-all-people attitude by relating his resolution of strong-weak disunity in Rom and 1 Cor to the commonality of the gospel that all the parties involved believed, a view coinciding with my own analysis of unity exhortations. He elaborates further, however, on a unity he feels is necessitated by Paul's view that ". . . as the eschatological people of God, the church by its very nature was and had to be *one*. . ." (p 179). This he asserts without proof.

⁹² GA Deissmann, *Bible Studies*, tr by A Grieve, (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1901), 256, cites an epitaph from the 2nd century BC that uses the expression, concluding "that it was familiarly used in popular speech." Sampley, *Pauline Partnership*, 15, 94-96, in evaluating the same evidence, concludes that the expression may also represent the Latin *in eodem sensu*, found commonly in partnership agreements of Roman consensual *societas*. He has not, however, proven that this is actually alluded to in Paul's writings, nor has he produced any evidence from Greek transactional manuscripts to show that such terminology was in effect under such arrangements.

⁹³ 12:16 reads: τὸ αὐτὸ εἰς ἀλλήλους φρονούντες. 15:5 reads: τὸ αὐτὸ φρονεῖν ἐν ἀλλήλοις.

⁹⁴ So JDG Dunn, *Romans 9-16*, (Dallas, TX: Word Books, 1988), 738-39.

⁹⁵ Whether 15:1-6 is the final summary of chapter 14's issues or a halfway summary is a subject of discussion among commentators. E Käsemann, *Commentary on Romans*, tr by GW Bromiley, (Grand Rapids: William B Eerdmans, 1980), 380, sees 15:1-6 as linked to chapter 14, but introducing "a new aspect of the previous theme." CEB Cranfield, *Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1979), 731, sees a summary of chapter 14 as well as a possible widening "of the scope of his exhortation." Dunn, *Romans 9-16*, 844-45, sees a definite summary of chapter 14 here, with 15:7-13 tying together themes that appear earlier.

exhortation in 2 Cor 13:11. It is made more explicit in Phil 2:2 where like-mindedness refers to a willing agreement to consider others as more important than oneself, resulting in beneficial deeds of service for others. Acts of mutual welfare are also important to the message of unity as found in Eph 4:1-16. Vv 2-3 in particular emphasize various aspects of self-denial, while vv 15-16 speak of loving, positive contributions.

In 1 Cor 1:10 unified behaviour is urged in the face of factions that have formed around competing sources of teaching. Paul condemns the existence of such divisions. In pleading for unity, however, he does not advocate agreement on who is the best teaching authority. Rather, he appeals to basic issues related to the gospel, most immediately exemplified in the ensuing elaboration on God's wisdom expressed in the cross (1:17-31).⁹⁶ Paul intimates that if his readers understood the implications of the cross, they would not be having their disagreement. Human criteria differ radically from God's in evaluating matters such as power and wisdom.

Paul emphasizes how his Corinthian readers must recognize the emptiness of their own human wisdom in comparison with God's (1 Cor 1:25, 27), a concept resembling humility in Eph 4:2. Additionally, the problems in 1 Cor 1:10 stem partly from competing sources of teaching. Eph 4:7-16 deals with such a scenario, though more related to false teaching (4:14). In Eph 4:7-16 teachers are said to help the readers know truth (4:15) in pointing them to the unity of the faith and knowledge of the son of God (4:13). In 1 Cor 1:17-31 Paul appeals to vital aspects of the gospel to help his readers understand the absurdity of their factions. In both passages awareness of basic issues related to the faith is to promote unity within the church. Only, Corinthian believers may have been missing the important substance of others' teaching by evaluating these sources with improper criteria.

Verbal and semantic parallels between Eph 4:7-16 and both Rom 12:3-8 and 1 Cor 12:4-31 have already been examined. Each of these passages employs the figure of the body to present the case for Christians living in a unified manner. In 1 Cor 12:12 Paul reintroduces the figure of the body after having used it briefly

⁹⁶ See Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 47-51. ". . . this opening issue is the most crucial in the letter, not because their 'quarrels' were the most significant error in the church, but because the nature of this particular strife had as its root cause their false theology, which had exchanged the theology of the cross for a false triumphalism that went beyond, or excluded, the cross" (p 50).

three times earlier in the epistle.⁹⁷ In 12:13 he recites what may have been a "reunification formula" stating that all Christians belong to the same body, having equal status.⁹⁸ But in vv 14-31 he explains how membership in a body necessitates differences between body-parts. Diversity in function is necessary for the group to exercise the mutual care required for existing as a unit. Though lacking the "reunification formula," Rom 12:3-8 follows virtually the same logic.

Mutuality is certainly a feature of the body imagery in Eph 4:16. However the passage emphasizes not diversity, but unity as promoted by specific individuals. The readers must conform to a common goal. The writer of Ephesians speaks of mutuality without emphasizing diversity, using body imagery chiefly but cursorily to emphasize Christian solidarity under the single authority, Christ (4:4, 12, 15-16). Equal status before God is overtly related to the body imagery in Eph 2:16. This same equality of status undergirds the exhortation in Eph 4:2-3, though without direct appeal to body imagery.

3.4 Comparisons with Colossians

Eph 4:1-16 is more elaborate than most Pauline unity exhortations, and, apart from body imagery, uses totally different vocabulary. But it shares many aspects of the various messages on unity found in Paul's undisputed letters. Colossians, on the other hand, has many more vocabulary affinities with Eph 4:1-16, even though behavioural unity is not as major a concern as it is in Ephesians.

As do most Pauline writings, Colossians also heavily employs "walk" imagery.⁹⁹ Col 1:10 expresses virtually the same thought with the same words as Eph 4:1 in its concern for Christians to live worthily of their calling, though Col 1:10 is part of a prayer rather than a moral exhortation. The most obvious commonality is observed in the list of qualities found in Eph 4:2. Though earlier in this section these were examined for their congruence with Pauline thought, their appearance here is most clearly influenced by the listing in the same order with the same terminology in Col 3:12-13. There are two principal differences between the two

⁹⁷ See 1 Cor 6:15, where union with Christ as "members" precludes sexual immorality; 10:17, where unity with others in one body precludes participation with demons; 11:29, where insensitivity to belonging to a body leads to unfair treatment of disadvantaged Christians at the church's eucharistic gathering.

⁹⁸ See W Meeks, "The Image of the Androgyne: Some Uses of a Symbol in Earliest Christianity," *History of Religions* 13 (1974): 180-83, who sees a "baptismal reunification formula" repeated in Gal 3:28, 1 Cor 12:13 and Col 3:10.

⁹⁹ Col 1:10; 2:6; 3:7; 4:5.

passages: 1) the four terms in Eph 4:2 appear near the end of a list of seven qualities; 2) the qualities in Eph 4:2 promote unity, while in Col 3:12-13 they represent heavenly conduct.¹⁰⁰

Unity is a moral concern in Col 3, but not a major one. Because Col 3:11 resembles unity formulae found in Gal 3:28 and 1 Cor 12:13, it is often also regarded as an affirmation of unity:¹⁰¹ "Here there cannot be Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free man, but Christ is all, and in all" (RSV). On closer examination, this statement appears to assert not primarily unity, but rejection of culturally approved differences in status. This is especially evident in the dropping of dualism when listing barbarians and Scythians. Unity among believers may be a valid inference from this, but the statement focuses on Christ. The verse does not urge believers to be unified; it presents Christ as the sole measuring standard for Christian behaviour, obviating any other formulation of status.¹⁰²

The statement in Col 3:15 relates directly to unified behaviour: "And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you have been called in one body" (RSV). This active peace promotes unity as it "rules" the readers' mutual interactions. The exhortation recognizes that the Colossian believers have been called together as a unit, "in one body."¹⁰³ Here, unity is part of the state to which Christians are called, and is enabled by Christ's provision of peace, concepts certainly present in Eph 4:1 and 3. Because unity is related to "peace," it refers primarily to the avoidance of interpersonal strife on the one hand and the

¹⁰⁰ H Merklein, "Eph 4,1-5,20 als Rezeption von Kol 3,1-17," in *Kontinuität und Einheit*, ed by P-G Müller and W Stenger, (Freiburg: Herder, 1981), 209-10, sees these as indicative of the general transformation of material between the two letters. Material marking the heavenly-earthly schema of Colossians is used in Ephesians to denote pre- and post-conversion realities. Equal standing before God for Jewish and gentile believers is a part of the post-conversion ideal that Ephesians promotes.

¹⁰¹ MacDonald, *The Pauline Churches*, 103-04; Meeks, "The Image of the Androgyne," 180-83.

¹⁰² PT O'Brien, *Colossians, Philemon*, (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1982), 193: "The concluding triumphant words, 'but Christ is all and in all,' contrast the centrality of Christ with the divisions that separate people in the world. . . he [Christ] permeates and indwells all members of the new man, regardless of race, class or background."

¹⁰³ Throughout Colossians, body imagery has emphasized the readers' union with Christ: 1:18 speaks of Christ as head of the body, which is the church; 1:24 speaks of "Paul" being afflicted for the sake of Christ's body, the church; 2:19 speaks of unspiritual people who have lost connection with Christ, the head of the body. These uses are vaguely reminiscent of those found in 1 Cor 6:15 and 10:17. In Col 3:15 the imagery for the first time depicts the unified relationship that believers are to enjoy in Christ, resembling the use of "body" in 1 Cor 11:29. It has no allusion to any of the diversity-in-unity discussions as found in Rom 12:3-9 and 1 Cor 12:12-31.

promotion of interpersonal benefaction on the other.

3.5 Conclusions

Eph 4:1-16 shares thoughts and vocabulary with antecedent Pauline epistles, including Colossians. The vocabulary affinities are closest to Colossians, while the notion of behavioural unity is closer to the undisputed Pauline epistles. Though he seldom gives this notion extended treatment, Paul often urges his readers to behave in a unified fashion as an expression of their mutual concern for one another. This is a perspective at home in Eph 4:1-16. Eph 4:7-16 explicitly emphasizes the role of a select group of individuals in fostering unity. It is a concept not totally alien to a context such as 1 Cor 1:10-31, where Paul the apostle urges unity by refocussing his readers' attention on the implications of the cross. However, it does not find direct expression anywhere in the antecedent Pauline writings.

4 Eph 4:1-16 and Non-Christian Moral Traditions

Eph 4:1-16 both uses literary devices and conveys notions common to a number of different traditions prevailing at or before its writing. This will be explored in three broad divisions of non-Christian moral traditions: 1) qualities and exhortations similar to 4:1-2; 2) uses of body metaphors to express the concept of unity; 3) unity as a general topic. In each of these instances, various Graeco-Roman writings are consulted along with certain Jewish works, including the LXX.

4.1 Similar Expressions to Eph 4:1-2

The concept of living worthily of the calling to salvation (Eph 4:1) would not have been totally strange to those outside of Pauline and other Christian circles. Though having marked differences with Eph 4:1, similar types of expressions exist in various writings. Wis 3:5, for example, refers to God finding people to be worthy for himself. Epictetus' *Encheiridion* 15 refers to people living considerately so that they be worthy of future considerateness from the gods. Other writings describe priests of Dionysus as completing their duties piously and worthily of God.¹⁰⁴ These statements tend to address a worthiness yet-to-be-recognized, whereas Eph 4:1 emphasizes congruence with present reality.

The list of qualities in 4:2 likewise would not appear strange. Though most of the listed terms are attested in Pauline writings, as well as to a certain degree

¹⁰⁴ "συ[ν]τελεκότος τὰ ἱερά. . . εὐσεβῶς [μ]ὲν καὶ ἀξίως τοῦ θεοῦ." This and other references appear in Deissmann, *Bible Studies*, 248, taken from a collection of inscriptions at Pergamum.

in the LXX¹⁰⁵ and in various OT Pseudepigrapha,¹⁰⁶ they appear in various Classical and Hellenistic writings too.¹⁰⁷ These terms are generally more predominant in Jewish and Christian writings, but the qualities found in Eph 4:2 would not be abnormal to gentile readers in that first-century environment.

4.2 Body as a Metaphor for Unity

The metaphor of the body used in Ephesians (1:23, 2:16, 4:4, 12, 16, 5:30) is a common image expressing unity not only in Pauline writings but also in a wide variety of extra-biblical writings.¹⁰⁸ As early as the fourth century BCE, Xenophon attributes the metaphor to Socrates, who resolves a dispute between brothers by comparing their relationship to that of the parts of a body.¹⁰⁹ Cicero, writing in the first century BCE, uses the concept of "body" to describe how people in society

¹⁰⁵ For humility, see Prov 15:33, 18:12, 29:23. For gentleness, see Num 12:3, LXX Ps 131:1, Sir 1:26. For patience, see Prov 14:29, 15:18, Sir 5:11. Forbearance as a moral quality expressed by the term ἀνέχομαι does not appear in the LXX.

¹⁰⁶ E.g. *T Dan* 6.9 mentions patience, gentleness and humility together. Gentleness is a valued righteous quality in *T Abr* 1.1, *T Jud* 24.1 and *Asen* 23.10. Patience is upheld in *T Dan* 2.1, *T Gad* 4.7 and *T Jos* 2.7, 17.2 and 18.3, among other places. As with the LXX, the term for forbearing (ἀνέχομαι) does not appear in Greek versions of OT Pseudepigrapha.

¹⁰⁷ Wengst, *Humility*, 4-15, modifies the commonly held view that humility was not a virtue to the Greek mind by showing how it most often was used as a designation aimed at social inferiors. He does list several examples of humility as a positive characteristic (pp 14-15), including Dio Chrysostom 77/78.26, which advocates the person who "journeys through life without ostentation and free from arrogance, so far as possible, humble and chastened by himself and by his own conscience, having no need of any extraneous adornment or adventitious honour, nor of trappings and plumes. . . ." Tr by HL Crosby in *Dio Chrysostom*, (London: William Heinemann, 1951), V: 285. Aristotle considers being gentle a virtue (*Nicomachean Ethics* II.vii.10, 1108A), as does Plato (*Laws* 731B). Epictetus also regards it positively (II.xii.36) as does Dio Chrysostom (1.5). The specific term μακροθυμία is rare in non-Christian and non-Jewish writings, but not unknown as a positive designation (Plutarch, *Lucullus* 33.1). Something similar can be said about the term ἀνέχομαι as it refers to putting up with others' faults and insults. Aristotle thinks badly of the person who endures insult without retaliation (*Nicomachean Ethics* IV.v.10, 1126A), but Epictetus lauds Socrates for enduring the abuse of others, patiently seeing an argument out to the end (II.xii.14).

¹⁰⁸ Many of the references that follow are also discussed by EA Judge, "Contemporary Political Models for the Inter-Relations of the New Testament Churches," *The Reformed Theological Review* 22 (1963): 66-69.

¹⁰⁹ "What if a pair of hands refused the office of mutual help for which God made them, and tried to thwart each other; or if a pair of feet neglected the duty of working together, for which they were fashioned, and took to hampering each other? That is how you two are behaving at present. Would it not be utterly senseless and disastrous to use for hindrance instruments that were made for help? And, moreover, a pair of brothers, in my judgment, were made by God to render better service one to the other than a pair of hands and feet and eyes and all the instruments that he meant to be used as fellows. For the hands cannot deal simultaneously with things that are more than six feet or so apart: the feet cannot reach in a single stride things that are even six feet apart: and the eyes, though they seem to have a longer range, cannot at the same moment see things still nearer than that, if some are in front and some behind. But two brothers, when they are friends, act simultaneously for mutual benefit, however far parted one from the other." *Xenophon*, "Memorabilia" II.iii.18-19, tr by EC Marchant, (London: William Heinemann, 1923), IV: 121.

were related to one another in mutual fellowship.¹¹⁰ Livy (first century BCE), in describing a moment of unrest between Senators and Plebeians in the city of Rome, relates its resolution through the counsel of one Agrippa Menenius who demonstrated the foolishness of their dispute by telling a story about quarrelling body-parts,¹¹¹ a solution similar to Socrates', but elevated from the personal to the societal level.

The metaphor appears in different ways in the writings of the Stoic philosopher Epictetus (first century CE). In one instance he draws on the analogy to demonstrate humanity's integration with the universe as a whole¹¹² and in another to explain how an individual is related to other citizens in the world.¹¹³ Seneca shows similar versatility with the analogy, in one place, using the metaphor to express the solidarity of humankind,¹¹⁴ and elsewhere defending to Nero, his

¹¹⁰ "Suppose, by way of comparison, that each one of our bodily members should conceive this idea and imagine that it could be strong and well if it should draw off to itself the health and strength of its neighbouring member, the whole body would necessarily be enfeebled and die; so, if each one of us should seize upon the property of his neighbours and take from each whatever he could appropriate to his own use, the bonds of human society must inevitably be annihilated." *Cicero*, "De Officiis" III.22, tr by W Miller, (London: William Heinemann, 1913), p 289.

¹¹¹ "In the days when man's members did not all agree amongst themselves, as is now the case, but had each its own ideas and a voice of its own, the other parts thought it unfair that they should have the worry and the trouble and the labour of providing everything for the belly, while the belly remained quietly in their midst with nothing to do but to enjoy the good things which they bestowed upon it; they therefore conspired together that the hands should carry no food to the mouth nor the mouth accept anything that was given it, nor the teeth grind up what they received. While they sought in this angry spirit to starve the belly into submission, the members themselves and the whole body were reduced to the utmost weakness. Hence it had become clear that even the belly had no idle task to perform, and was no more nourished than it nourished the rest, by giving out to all parts of the body that by which we live and thrive, when it has been divided equally amongst the veins and is enriched with digested food--that is, the blood." *Livy* II.xxxii.9, tr by BO Foster, (London: William Heinemann, 1919), I: 325.

¹¹² "Do you not know that as the foot, if detached, will no longer be a foot, so you too, if detached, will no longer be a man? For what is a man? A part of a state; first of that state which is made up of gods and men, and then of that which is said to be very close to the other, the state that is a small copy of the universal state." *Epictetus* II.v.25-26, tr by WA Oldfather, (London: William Heinemann, 1926), I: 245.

¹¹³ "What, then, is the profession of a citizen? To treat nothing as a matter of private profit, not to plan about anything as though he were a detached unit, but to act like the foot or the hand, which, if they had the faculty of reason and understood the constitution of nature, would never exercise choice or desire in any other way but by reference to the whole." *Epictetus* II.x.4, I: 275.

¹¹⁴ "I can lay down for mankind a rule, in short compass, for our duties in human relationships: all that you behold, that which comprises both god and man, is one--we are the parts of one great body. Nature produced us related to one another, since she created us from the same source and to the same end. She engendered in us mutual affection, and made us prone to friendships. She established fairness and justice; according to her ruling, it is more wretched to commit than to suffer injury. Through her orders, our hands are ready to help in the good work." *Seneca Ad Licilium Epistulae Morales* XCV.52, tr by RM Gummere, (London: William Heinemann, 1925), III: 91.

Emperor, the necessity of one authoritarian "head" over the united "body" of the Roman Empire.¹¹⁵ Nearly one century later, Marcus Aurelius Antoninus drew on the same imagery on several different occasions to express the solidarity of humanity and the harmony that should prevail.¹¹⁶ Still later, Maximus of Tyre likened civic unity to the functioning of a body.¹¹⁷

Body imagery was not unique to Graeco-Roman writing. Josephus used the metaphor on occasion to express various forms of unity, albeit without the deeper philosophical underpinnings in relation to humanity found in the above cited examples.¹¹⁸ More pertinent, however, is the use of body imagery in *T Zeb* 9.4-5, where unity under a single head, or ruler, is to be preferred over a two-headed being, a reference to the divided monarchy of Israel.¹¹⁹ Thus, in a wide variety of literature, the concept of "body" is found expressing various nuances and

¹¹⁵ The following is addressed to Nero: "That kindness of your heart will be recounted, will be diffused little by little throughout the whole body of the empire, and all things will be moulded into your likeness. It is from the head that comes the health of the body; it is through it that all the parts are lively and alert or languid and drooping according as their animating spirit has life or withers. There will be citizens, there will be allies worthy of this goodness, and uprightness will return to the whole world; your hands will everywhere be spared." *Seneca*, "On Mercy" II.ii.1, tr by JW Basore, (London: William Heinemann, 1928), I: 433.

¹¹⁶ *Marcus Aurelius Antoninus* II.1, tr by CR Haines (London: William Heinemann, 1916), 27: "For we have come into being for co-operation [πρὸς συνεργίαν], as have the feet, the hands, the eyelids, the rows of upper and lower teeth. Therefore to thwart one another is against Nature; and we do thwart one another by shewing resentment and aversion." "The principle which obtains where limbs and body unite to form one organism holds good also for rational things with their separate individualities, constituted as they are to work in conjunction. But the perception of this shall come more home to thee if thou sayest to thyself, I am a limb [μέλος] of the organized body of rational things. But if thou sayest thou art but a part [μέρος], nor yet dost thou love mankind from the heart, nor yet does well-doing delight thee for its own sake" (VII.13, p 169).

¹¹⁷ "But a city is an entity blended together by cooperation of all. It is the same way with the body's use, which is of many kinds and requires many things, and is preserved by the joint contribution of the body's parts to the functioning of the whole: the feet carry, the eyes see, the ears hear, and so on, lest I waste time in continuing the list" (Oration 15.5). As cited in AJ Malherbe, *Moral Exhortation, A Greco-Roman Sourcebook*, (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1986), 149-50.

¹¹⁸ *Josephus*, tr by R Marcus, (London: William Heinemann, 1943): "As in the body when inflammation attacks the principal member all the members catch the infection, so the sedition and disorder in the capital gave the scoundrels in the country free licence to plunder" (*Jewish War* IV.406-7, III: 119). "And David enclosed the lower city and joined it to the citadel so as to form one whole [ἐν σώμα]. . ." (*Antiquities* VII.66, V: 393). "Now that these men have been punished, we hope that henceforth we shall enjoy peace and give Asia respite from war. . . and so, owing to our victory, the body of Asia is now recovering, as it were, from a serious illness" (*Antiquities* XIV.311-312, VII: 615).

¹¹⁹ "Do not be divided into two heads, because everything the Lord has made has a single head. He provides two shoulders, two hands, two feet, but all members obey one head. In the writing of the fathers I came to know that in the last days you shall defect from the Lord, and you shall be divided in Israel, and you shall follow after two kings. . ." Tr by HC Kee, in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, ed by JH Charlesworth, (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1983), I: 807.

relationships of solidarity, from harmony between two brothers, to harmony among citizens of a city, or between individuals and the universe, as well as expressing the solidarity of a group of cities or of people united under a single monarch.

In his use of body imagery the writer of Ephesians certainly appears as a product of his age. This imagery in Eph 4:1-16 resembles aspects of its use in antecedent Pauline writings, especially Colossians (1:18; 2:19; 3:15). However, it also bears likeness to various appearances in extra-biblical writings. Both Seneca's description of the headship of Nero over the body of the empire and *T Zeb's* portrayal of the headship of a single monarch over the kingdom of Israel are similar to the concept of Christ as head of the body in Eph 4:15 as well as a source of nourishment in 4:16.

The wide attestation of this imagery helps to explain how Ephesians and Colossians both can speak of the body differently from other Pauline discussions in Rom 12:3-8 or 1 Cor 12:12-31. Paul certainly did not invent the metaphor. To help express the lordship of Christ and the dynamics of Christian interrelationship, the writer of Ephesians has drawn on an easily understood image familiar both to Pauline churches and to the world at large.

4.3 Unity as a Jewish and Hellenistic Concept

A concern for societal unity would be an expected commonplace not simply for the Graeco-Roman world but for any organized group of individuals. Observations of this commonplace in Judaism and in Hellenism should not be surprising. This commonness indicates the appropriateness of the thoughts expressed in Eph 4:1-16 more than any direct influence from material being consciously borrowed.¹²⁰

Unity is a concern in the LXX ranging from a desire for present harmony

¹²⁰ This is contrary to the evolution suggested by S Hanson, *The Unity of the Church in the New Testament*. He reduces the origin of Hebrew unity to a concern in Israel stemming fundamentally from the unity of God in monotheism (pp 5-7), which provoked Jew/Gentile opposition (pp 8-10) and obedient/disobedient, homeland/diaspora tensions (pp 11-17). These tensions in turn stimulated an eschatological hope for unity around a three-fold concern for "representation" under one Messiah, "centralization" around the common temple of Jerusalem and "elimination" of competing powers (pp 22-3). This line of thinking, he maintains, undergirds the articulation of a desire for unity that he thinks does not take place overtly until the formation of the Church (p 42). Additionally, he notes parallels between Eph 4:4-6 and certain Hellenistic "unity formulas" (pp 149-50), but he does not prove convincingly that these had any influence on Ephesians. M Dibelius, "Die Christianisierung einer hellenistischen Formel", *Botschaft und Geschichte*, (Tübingen: JCB Mohr, 1956), 14-29, thinks that, based on the similarity between Marcus Aurelius VII.9 and Eph 4:4-6, Stoic philosophy influenced the Christian view of unity as mediated through Diaspora Judaism, but at best he has only demonstrated a possible structural influence in the construction of an argument, not an influence on the heart of Ephesians' message of unity.

both among all people of Israel (LXX Ps 132:1), and among true worshippers in Jerusalem both past and present (LXX Ps 121:3) and for a yet-future gathering of all people in Jerusalem (LXX Ps 101:22). The prophets express the desire for unity in a variety of ways, showing concern for peace between God and his people (Ezek 34:25), for a reunification of scattered Israel (Ezek 37:15-28; Mic 2:12-13; Zech 8:10-17), for a reunification of Northern and Southern kingdoms (LXX Jer 3:18; 27:4; Hos 1:11¹²¹) and for a gathering of all people in the world into a peaceful co-existence centred in Jerusalem (Mic 4:1-5; Zech 9:10). Two key expressions for unity in the LXX are "peace" (εἰρήνη) and "together" (ἐπι τὸ αὐτό). "Peace" is sometimes connected with eschatological promises both for well-being (Isa 32:17) and for an end of conflict between people (Mic 5:4) and with God (Isa 57:19; Ezek 37:15-28).

The sense of realized eschatology present in places such as Eph 2:1-10 does not affect overtly the discussion of unity in the epistle. The unity of Jew and gentile in 2:11-22 is not expressed in terms of fulfillment of LXX unification hopes.¹²² This is all the more surprising in view of the use of Isa 57:19 in 2:13 and 17.¹²³ The peace that is referred to here is peace between God and people, and it is based on this peace with God, according to the writer of Ephesians, that there can be peace between the two hostile factions of humanity, Jew and gentile. Eph 2:11-22 does not overtly refer to LXX promises about unity.¹²⁴

Unity is a concern found in various strands of Judaism outside of the LXX traditions. Josephus reflects these on several occasions, arguing both from the unity of God and from the requirement for a single temple in a single special city,

¹²¹ Hos 1:11 describes a reunification under "one rule", ἀρχὴν μίαν.

¹²² Lincoln, *Paradise Now and Not Yet*, 151, notes affinities between the discussion of Eph 2:19-22 and the eschatological hope of a universal temple in Is 56:6-7. Whatever affinities may exist are neither highlighted nor developed by the writer of Ephesians. See *Ephesians*, 156, where he qualifies this view, saying that though "the temple imagery would certainly lend itself to an eschatological understanding. . . , what has taken place through Christ cannot simply be depicted in categories which are in straightforward continuity with OT expectations."

¹²³ Both Barth, *Ephesians 1-3*, 276-79, and Lincoln, "The Use of the OT in Ephesians," 25-30, explain the allusion to Isa 57:19 in Eph 2:13 and 17 as a claim of eschatological fulfillment commensurate with explanations found in Rabbinic exegesis.

¹²⁴ Such thought was possible in early Christian tradition. *Didache* 9:4 appears to make a passing reference to this notion, also drawing on the Johannine Eucharistic tradition of John 6:12-14: "As this broken bread was scattered upon the mountains, but was brought together and became one, so let thy Church be gathered together from the ends of the earth into thy kingdom. . ." In *Apostolic Fathers*, tr by K Lake, (London: William Heinemann, 1912), I: 323.

Jerusalem, that all Hebrews are to act in a unified manner, recognizing their commonality:

We have but one temple for the one God. . . common to all as God is common to all. . . At these sacrifices prayers for the welfare of the community must take precedence of those for ourselves; for we are born for fellowship, and he who sets its claims above his private interests is specially acceptable to God (*Against Apion*, II.193, 196).¹²⁵

He puts a similar argument into the mouth of Moses when he elaborates on Moses' final words to the Israelites:

Let there be one holy city. . . And let there be one temple therein, and one altar of stones. . . In no other city let there be either altar or temple; for God is one and the Hebrew race is one. . . Let them assemble in that city in which they shall establish the temple. . . and to promote by thus meeting and feasting together feelings of mutual affection. For it is good that they should not be ignorant of one another, being members of the same race and partners in the same institutions. . . (*Antiquities* IV.200, 201, 203-04).¹²⁶

These statements resemble the unity statements of Eph 4:4-6 by basing certain kinds of unified behaviour on arguments that there is one God, one temple and one holy city. The writer undergirds his appeal for behaving in a unified fashion by listing a series of items that are "one."

Philo also argues for unity based on the oneness of God, though this unity is of the universe, rather than some branch of humanity. His thought is more philosophical than ethical, though he does draw implications from the oneness of God to the quality of life of one who adheres to such a principle:

God is one. . . the world too is one as well as its Maker. . . He that has begun by learning these things with his understanding rather than with his hearing. . . will lead a life of bliss and blessedness, because he has a character moulded by the truths that piety and holiness enforce (*On the Creation* 171-72).¹²⁷

It is highly unlikely that this type of thinking parallels what is happening in Eph 4:4-6.¹²⁸ The only similarity that any of the above-mentioned writings have is their common presupposition of monotheism. That they all happen to present some other form of unity derived from monotheism indicates at best only a commonality in logical process underlying the actual thoughts that are expressed.¹²⁹

¹²⁵ *Josephus*, tr by H Thackeray, (London: William Heinemann, 1926), I: 371.

¹²⁶ *Josephus*, tr by R Marcus, IV: 571-73.

¹²⁷ *Philo*, tr by FH Colson and GH Whitaker, (London: William Heinemann, 1929), I: 135-37.

¹²⁸ Contra Dibelius, "Die Christianisierung einer hellenistischen Formel."

¹²⁹ This ultimately coincides with the analysis of Caird, *Paul's Letters from Prison*, 72, when he evaluates Eph 4:4-6 in light of claims of a Christian confession of faith standing behind not only this passage, but also 1 Cor 8:6; 12:4-6. Instead, he suggests that all three may be different adaptations of the *Shema* "in the light of Christian faith and experience." Also note the more detailed discussion of

Unity as a concept in the Graeco-Roman world is even harder to describe due to the existence of a broad time-span, a large geographic region and a wide philosophical diversity.¹³⁰ Nevertheless, there are some striking parallels to NT thought:¹³¹

Moreover, the much-admired *Republic* of Zeno. . . may be summed up in this one main principle: that all the inhabitants of this world of ours should not live differentiated by their respective rules of justice into separate cities and communities, but that we should consider all men to be of one community and polity [δημότας καὶ πολιτάς], and that we should have a common life and an order common to us all [εἰς δὲ βίος ἧ καὶ κόσμος]. . .¹³²

Plutarch then describes Alexander as one who carried out these ideals:

. . . he brought together into one body all men everywhere, uniting and mixing in one great loving-cup, as it were, men's lives, their characters, their marriages, their very habits of life. He bade them all consider as their fatherland the whole inhabited earth, as their stronghold and protection his camp, as akin to them all good men, and as foreigners only the wicked; they should not distinguish between Grecian and foreigner by Grecian cloak and targe, or scimitar and jacket; but the distinguishing mark of the Grecian should be seen in virtue, and that of the foreigner in iniquity; clothing and food, marriage and manner of life they should regard as common to all, being blended into one by ties of blood and children.¹³³

These ideas are aimed at a geo-political group rather than at those concerned with religious morality, but they bear a marked resemblance to the discussion of the unity of disparate races in Eph 2:11-13, also championing similar behavioural values to those found throughout Ephesians' moral teaching. Moral concepts in

Barth, *Ephesians 4-6*, 462-72.

¹³⁰ S Hanson, *The Unity of the Church*, 46-54, has attempted such a task, determining that unity is an important concept to the range of Greek philosophers, from Ionian physicists to Pythagoreans, to the Eleatics, to Plato, to Aristotle, to the Stoa, to the Neo-Pythagoreans, to the Neo-Platonists: "The unity that is generally in question among Greek thinkers is that of cosmos, but cosmos then often taken in a very wide sense as comprising not only the visible, material world, but also the intelligible one, that of ideas. Besides cosmological unity, we have also found a sociological one, most distinctly represented among the Stoics, whereby mankind is conceived as a unity, which is the philosophical background of their cosmopolitanism"(55-6). In so concluding, however, he is in danger of being reductionist. He has not differentiated between unity as a cultural rallying concern and unity as a topic that is probably universal to all societies. A different sort of analysis is found in ML Appold, *The Oneness Motif in the Fourth Gospel*, (Tübingen: JCB Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1976), 163-193. He concentrates principally on philosophical ideas, dealing with oneness as an abstraction of thought in the Greek and Hellenistic world. He surveys much of the same literature as Hanson but does not confuse peoples' views of centrality of the universe with normal societal pressures to behave in a cooperative manner. The philosophy may eventually be called on to support the behaviour, but exhortations to unity need not flow directly from a theology.

¹³¹ EA Judge, "Contemporary Political Models," 72-74, cites a number of similar remarks throughout Graeco-Roman literature.

¹³² "On the Fortune of Alexander" 329 B, in *Plutarch's Moralia*, tr by FC Babbitt, (London: William Heinemann, 1928), IV: 397.

¹³³ "On the Fortune of Alexander" 329C-D, 399.

Ephesians would not appear to be strange in the Graeco-Roman world. As regards unity, Eph 4:1-16 appears to be closer to Hellenistic thought than to what is found in the LXX.

4.4 Conclusions

Elements of Eph 4:1-16 do resemble aspects found in a wide variety of Jewish and Greek writings. Appeals to various character qualities, the use of body imagery and general requests to behave in a unified fashion all could have been familiar to a number of different kinds of first-century readers. These similarities notwithstanding, one must not lose sight of the unique religious dimension that Ephesians adds. The qualities of 4:2 are expressions of walking worthily of the Christian calling. The unity that is advocated is the unity "of the Spirit," undergirded by the oneness of the Christian body, the Spirit, the Christian hope, the Lord, the faith, baptism and God himself. Even the body that is spoken of is the body of which Christ is the head.

5 Eph 4:1-16 - Social Networks and Exchanges

The behavioural message in Eph 4:1-6 is easily recognizable. That in 4:7-16 is not. Consequently, most studies on 4:7-16 tend to focus on what these verses may be saying about early church structure.¹³⁴ Theories abound, principally based on historical speculation of what ecclesiastical structure may have looked like in the days after Paul.¹³⁵

¹³⁴ Schnackenburg, *Der Brief an die Epheser*, 195, recognizes the function of the gift-individuals in promoting unity, but nevertheless focusses his explanation of this list on the legitimizing of certain church structures. A more cautious approach is found in Lincoln, *Ephesians* 233, who, after discussing the overall message of the passage, places the epistle into a general post-Pauline historical setting, observing that "the issues of church life that the writer of Ephesians is addressing are how, without the apostle, the Pauline churches can remain unified and how, without the apostle, they can remain apostolic."

¹³⁵ KM Fischer, *Tendenz und Absicht des Epheserbriefes*, (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1973), is a major contributor to this, suggesting that Eph 4:7-16 is defending traditional Pauline church authority in the face of its gradual overthrow by encroaching ecclesiastical hierarchy. See, especially, pp 40-48. E Käsemann, "Ephesians and Acts," in *Studies in Luke-Acts*, ed by LE Keck and JL Martin, (London: SPCK, 1966), 288, 292-93, regards Eph 4:11-15 as evidence of a developing "Catholic" hierarchy. H-J Klauck, "Das Amt in der Kirche nach Eph 4, 1-16," *Wissenschaft und Weisheit*, 36 (1973): 81-110, proposes an alternative that is almost a combination of Käsemann's and Fischer's, namely that alongside the development of a presbyterial-episcopal system stood the Pauline charismatic model, which the writer takes up and adapts in a more institutionalized form, not as a reaction to the emerging system but as a further development of Paul's thought. M MacDonald, *The Pauline Churches*, 99, 132-36, cautiously softens Käsemann's views, though she definitely fits Eph 4:7-16 into a continuum of expressions of developing church leadership. W Meeks, *The First Urban Christians*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983), 135, notes that Ephesians contains "possible evidence for some advance in the process of formalizing offices." Merklein, *Das kirchliche Amt nach dem Epheserbrief*, 58, states that the passage addresses the importance of certain individuals for promoting both unity and acceptable teaching, but assumes that office-holders are really the subject under discussion, with the writer also legitimizing his own function (pp 64-65, 79-80). LM White, "Social

Though it may be interesting to observe in Eph 4:7-16 a portrayal of one phase of the early church's development of leadership structures, this in itself tells us nothing of how such structures might promote unity, which is what the passage chiefly addresses. It may be more useful from an interpretive standpoint to examine what these verses may be indicating about the sociological role of certain authoritative individuals in promoting unity.¹³⁶ Such an examination need not necessarily contradict studies of the institutionalization of roles. Rather, it would help illumine this passage as an ethical one, uncovering certain aspects of the dynamics of unity as it is encouraged by the writer of Ephesians. With this in mind, the following study draws on theories related to network analysis, social exchange and group dynamics.

5.1 Preliminary Considerations on Ephesians' Life-Setting

An appeal to social science theories is not motivated by an attempt to bring a novel interpretation to bear on the passage at hand, but by a desire to illumine possible situations this passage may be addressing. One must cautiously bear in mind that Ephesians is notoriously silent about the occasion for its writing. The variety of proposals of Ephesians' life-setting has already been discussed.¹³⁷

Suggestions of specific situations that may have given rise to the exhortations are highly speculative. A more cautious approach focusses principally on what is stated by the text.¹³⁸ In Ephesians 4:14, for example, the writer does not discuss an invasion of false teachers, or even of false teaching. He simply says that false teaching exists (i.e. "every wind of doctrine"), that this teaching is promoted deceitfully and craftily by people who have been led by some sort of "error." Whoever the writer of Ephesians may have been, he certainly seemed to be

Authority in the House Church Setting and Ephesians 4:1-16," *Restoration Quarterly* 29 (1987): 209-228, proposes that a spiritualizing in Eph 4:1-16 of a "quasi-technical" terminology relating to the household betrays Ephesians' position in a more-distant-from-Paul stage of the historical development of ecclesiastical structure.

¹³⁶ B Holmberg, *Paul and Power*, (Lund: CWK Gleerup, 1978), 138, 155-61, discusses authority as a social phenomenon within Paul's churches, proposing a modified form of "charismatic authority" as that which prevailed in such a setting. This would involve recognition by followers that a certain person has divine endowment as they accept the influence of that person in helping them to orient their lives to a common perspective.

¹³⁷ See the Introduction, §1.2.

¹³⁸ This is the basic approach followed by Lincoln, *Ephesians*, lxxiv-lxxxvii, in discussing the setting and purpose of the letter. He makes a rhetorical analysis of the letter to determine what kind of general human situations the letter addresses without specifying an exact historical occasion.

familiar with the basic corpus of Pauline literature where concrete situations of infiltration of false teaching are addressed.¹³⁹ Knowing that false teaching exists, and knowing that it results in disharmony and disunity, the writer of Ephesians can be seen here presenting a preventative mechanism to hedge against any inevitable false teaching that is bound to work its way into any church community by any means. The author is thinking in idealistic, general and potential terms.

But he does clearly have actual human situations in mind. He does not have to invent the concept of disunity, or of unity. One can see that the writer's idealism is based on concrete social phenomena. In verses 1-6 he assumes that people become selfish, self-promoting, harsh and unforgiving over a whole host of trivial and not so trivial items. Consequently, he draws on special ethical concepts to counter these problems - humility, gentleness, longsuffering, forbearance in love - but elevates their significance by relating them to an exhortation to keep an already existing unity said to have been created by the Spirit. He then legitimates his exhortation through a string of confession-like statements that all refer to different facets of unity related to their common belief.

Within the discussion of vv 7-16 the writer betrays other assumptions of a church-like situation. He knows that the community, or communities if he is writing some sort of encyclical, consists of individuals ("to each of us", 4:7) who must interact with each other, and who, as a result, can grow together in Christ (4:15). He knows further that these individuals can receive information about their faith and conduct from different sources, from others in the home, at work or within the entire gathered community. He wants to ensure the dissemination of correct information through proper channels.¹⁴⁰

It is when individuals and their structural relationship with one another come into focus that an awareness of social network theories becomes useful.¹⁴¹ The

¹³⁹ Even assuming pseudonymity, Mitton, *The Epistle to the Ephesians: Its Authorship, Origin and Purpose*, has demonstrated this likelihood.

¹⁴⁰ The historical possibility of these occurrences will be elaborated later.

¹⁴¹ This short study makes no claim to originality in appealing to social network theories to illumine a biblical passage. There has been much interest in the usefulness of these theories to provide alternative models to understanding the growth of early Christianity. See, especially, LM White, "Adolf Harnack and the 'Expansion' of Early Christianity: A Reappraisal of Social History," *Second Century*, 5 (1985-86): 97-127; "Sociological Analysis of Early Christian Groups: A Social Historian's Response" *Sociological Analysis* 47 (1986): 259-62. He is influenced by RS Stark and WS Bainbridge, "Networks of Faith: Interpersonal Bonds and Recruitment to Cults and Sects," *American Journal of Sociology* 85 (1980): 1376-95. LM White is also the editor of a forthcoming issue of *Semeia* devoted to the social network theory in this area. Also note B Malina, *Christian Origins and Cultural*

pitfalls of using such theories are obvious. We, today, are dealing with a potential or ideal set of situations that exists in the mind of the writer and that he expresses to his readers. There is a scant amount of data available so that the kinds of conclusions one can draw are very limited. There are no people to interview, and there is no ongoing entity to observe. But by drawing on observations made of present day situations and generalizations derived from them, certain patterns may appear to coincide with the general type of situation lurking behind the scene in Ephesians 4.

5.2 Social Networks

A social network describes a group of connected individuals. A given individual is involved in a variety of relationships as part of several networks functioning for different purposes. Some of these relationships consist of "strong ties," that is one individual may rely on another for a series of needs. Others consist of "weak ties" where one person has brief, limited interaction with another individual. Since network ties disclose the range of an individual's existing relationships, they can often describe an identifiable group of individuals such as a household or a club. But most often, particularly in a complex society, one's social networks extend beyond such identifiable boundaries. Large organizations function as a grouping of smaller networks since not every individual will necessarily interact with every other member.

Network analysis developed as an alternative way of examining interpersonal relationships. Though traditionally social scientists would analyse formal societal structures such as kinship, occupation, neighborhood or other such visible groups or organizations, gradual discontent with this kind of grouping arose because of the incomplete picture of a society such analysis would often portray.¹⁴² In particular, when one analyses the potential interaction that can take place between two individual members of a church in an urban setting, whether ancient or modern, coupled with those interactions between those of two different church communities or between two individuals, one of whom belongs to a church community and the other who does not, one can see that there is potential for a wide range of input

Anthropology, (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1986), 66-111.

¹⁴² See the discussions by B Anderson and ML Carlos, "What is social network theory?," in *Power and Control*, ed by T Burns and W Buckley, (London: Sage, 1976), 31; CJ Mitchell, "Social Networks," *Annual Review of Anthropology* 3 (1974): 281 and N Shulman, "Network analysis: A new addition to an old bag of tricks," *Acta Sociologica* 19 (1976): 308-09.

of all sorts of competing information, as well as a whole series of possible behaviours that each different interaction would demand.

The primary difficulty with bringing to bear principles derived from network observations on any group of individuals living nearly 2000 years ago is the sparseness of data. Modern network analysis supposes that different interactions can be observed first-hand. One can ask a person to list those people he or she comes into contact with for different purposes¹⁴³ or one can set up elaborate communication experiments to map the flow of information¹⁴⁴ or one can simply observe what interactions take place in special situations. A second difficulty lies in the appeal to network theory itself. Many social scientists question whether network theory is really a theory, or whether it is simply a new way of describing the same phenomena observed with other techniques.¹⁴⁵ Added to this is the often non-scientific way in which propositions are stated, appealing to a more folkloric view based on "lay" terminology.¹⁴⁶

Not much can be done about the first difficulty. Enough data do exist to make rough sociological generalizations on urban settings of the Eastern Roman Empire in the first century.¹⁴⁷ But what to do about the Epistle to the Ephesians is more complicated, since there is enough doubt that the epistle was ever sent originally to the city of Ephesus in the first place. Still, given the known historical trend of early Christianity taking hold first of all in urban settings,¹⁴⁸ coupled with

¹⁴³ See Maguire's simple explanations for learning who comprises a given social network in L Maguire, *Understanding Social Networks*, (Beverly Hills: Sage Publications, 1983), 13-16.

¹⁴⁴ Note parcel-passing studies alluded to by M Granovetter in "The Strength of Weak Ties," in *Social Structure and Network Analysis*, ed by PV Marsden and N Lin (Beverly Hills: Sage Publications, 1982), 105-130, and studies on the spread of information such as EM Rogers, "Network Analysis of the Diffusion of Innovations," in *Perspectives on Social Network Research*, ed by PW Holland and S Leinhardt, (New York: Academic Press, 1975), 137-164.

¹⁴⁵ Note in particular the discussions by B Anderson and ML Carlos, "What is Social Network Theory?" and CL Mitchell, "Social Networks" as well as JA Barnes, "Network Analysis: Orienting Notion, Rigorous Technique or Substantive Field of Study?," in *Perspectives on Social Network Research*, 403-423.

¹⁴⁶ Both Mitchell, "Social Networks," 280, and Barnes, "Network Analysis," 405-06, are particularly concerned about this.

¹⁴⁷ The following works represent such a view: W Meeks, *The First Urban Christians*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983), G Theissen, *The Social Setting of Pauline Christianity*, tr by JH Schütz, (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1982) and R Banks, *Paul's Idea of Community*, (Grand Rapids: William B Eerdmans, reprinted 1988).

¹⁴⁸ Meeks, *The First Urban Christians*, 21.

certain assumptions that appear to underlie various statements made in the epistle itself, it seems safe to borrow from the same general conclusions made on urban Christianity.

The second difficulty is more troublesome. Ultimately, one can only draw on theories substantiated by modern studies and see the potential situations to which they could be applied in the ancient world. In so doing, however, the resulting descriptions will appear to be more in line with the more folkloric view of social networks associated with lay terminology. Such is the limitation of dealing with incomplete data.

5.3 Social Networks in Ephesians

According to W Meeks, a basic first-century urban church would comprise a variety of households each potentially consisting not only of a nuclear family, but also of others such as slaves, artisans and trades-people.¹⁴⁹ R Banks suggests forty-five as the average size of a given church, along the lines of secular clubs that rarely exceeded a membership of one hundred, and also in accord with the practical limit of how many could fit inside a home.¹⁵⁰ In general, a given church community would consist of a mix of close and distant relationships.

This type of setting may be inferred from Ephesians from exhortations aimed directly at households in discussing wife-husband, children-father, and slave-master relationships on the one hand (5:20-6:9) as well as from the exhortation in 4:28 for certain individuals to work so as to be able to give to a needy person, presumably in the church community. The former implies the existence of "strong ties" such that basic needs are cared for, but that certain relationships need to be spelled out in a "Christian" framework. The latter, on the other hand, implies that some Christians in the community are not related in such a way that giving to another's needs would appear as a natural activity.

The writer seems to envisage what in network terms appears as clusters of closely related individuals connected to others who relate to each other on one or two spheres, but do not do so with the same intensity¹⁵¹ and multiplexity¹⁵² of a

¹⁴⁹ Meeks, *The First Urban Christians*, 75-76.

¹⁵⁰ Banks, *Paul's Idea of Community*, 42.

¹⁵¹ "Intensity" measures the strength or "degree of commitment" of a link between two individuals in a network. See Maguire, *Understanding Social Networks*, 14.

household group. A head of a household does not usually need an exhortation to work to provide for those under his care, but an artisan may need to know that there are others beside his or her immediate family that he or she has an obligation to help.

Within this kind of environment, one can imagine the existence of at least two potentially disharmonizing tendencies. Most obviously, those who are more weakly tied to the group could be made to feel themselves more as outsiders, particularly if those with stronger ties tend to exclude them. But also, the existence of weak ties increases the potential for competing forms of teaching to arise. Strong ties may exist within a household unit, but weak ties exist between one individual in a household and another outside of it, as well as between an individual tradesperson and other tradespeople or customers. While strong ties may promote stability within that particular network, network studies show that weak ties are more instrumental in spreading information between networks, or from areas outside of a network.¹⁵³

Consider, for example, the case of an itinerant teacher coming to town expounding new ideas.¹⁵⁴ Should this teacher gain a hearing from one or more people weakly tied to a church community network, he or she has a means of infiltrating the community itself, since the new ideas have the potential of spreading across the weak ties. Obviously not everyone would embrace each new idea. But there is the possibility that several competing factions could arise centered around the variety of responses to these new ideas. A similar happening could take place when a new convert would bring a strong set of philosophical presuppositions into the community, or when a more established believer recently having moved to the city would introduce a competing set of ideas brought from

¹⁵² "Multiplexity" refers to the number of roles connecting two individuals. Maguire, *Understanding Social Networks*, 14.

¹⁵³ See Granovetter, "The Strength of Weak Ties," 105-06, and Rogers, "Network Analysis of the Diffusion of Innovations," 155.

¹⁵⁴ Such an example is not far-fetched. On the spread, not only of Christianity, but of ideas in general in the Graeco-Roman world, see AD Nock, *Conversion*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1933), 77-98, who emphasizes the attractiveness of public proclamation, the performance of miracles and the spreading of rumour as ways that ideas from the outside took hold within an urban environment. Further, itinerancy is certainly a valid inference from statements such as Rom 16:3 or Gal 2:12. It is addressed in *Didache* XI-XIII. On the importance and significance of Christian travel, see AJ Malherbe, *Social Aspects of Early Christianity*, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983), 92-112. Also, see Meeks, *The First Urban Christians*, 16-20.

a group considered to be slightly aberrant.

5.4 Social Exchange and Group Dynamics in Ephesians

At this point, observations from Exchange Theory are relevant to explore. Exchange Theory overlaps significantly with Network Analysis.¹⁵⁵ At its heart, it depends on the mutual exchange of benefits between two or more individuals.¹⁵⁶ These benefits can consist of anything considered to be positive, from tangible goods to information to smiles. As these individuals exist in a network, the exchange of benefits spreads through the network in identifiable forms. A person "A" receiving a benefit through a person "B" is said to be positively connected to that person. If the benefit originated from a person "C" and had to pass through "B" in order for "A" to receive it, then "A" and "C" are negatively connected to each other, though positively connected through person "B". "B" is considered to be a powerful person, acting as a "broker" of benefits flowing from "A" to "C". If for some reason "A" and "C" decide to get together to bypass "B," "B" loses out entirely, being negatively connected to both "A" and "C".

These notions can now be brought to bear on the scenario of new information entering a church community. One could easily picture a situation where an individual, perhaps in an attempt to strengthen his or her own ties to the group by gaining some sort of special recognition, brings a new form of teaching recently acquired from outside of the group. Some unrecognized teacher would have originally exchanged his or her instruction in return for a receptive audience with this person. This individual might then attempt to "broker" the new form of teaching to others in the community, perhaps even going so far as to bring the actual teacher in person, if possible. The attractiveness of such an outside influence would increase even more if such a person could be considered more

¹⁵⁵ Mitchell, "Social Networks," 284, argues that the difference is one of degree of abstraction, while K Cook, "Network Structures from an Exchange Perspective," in *Social Structure and Network Analysis*, ed by PV Marsden and N Lin, (Beverly Hills: Sage Publications, 1982), 180, defines exchange network as "a set of two or more connected exchange relations."

¹⁵⁶ R Emerson, in "Social Exchange Theory," in *Social Psychology: Sociological Perspectives*, ed by RM Emerson and RH Turner, (New York: Basic Books, 1981), 31-32, describes "three core assumptions in exchange theory" as: (1) "Beneficial events of all kinds, whether they involve money, goods, smiles or simply 'social attention,' are valuable in exactly the same general sense: people for whom they are beneficial act in a way that tends to produce them." (2) "Every class of beneficial (valued) events obeys a principle of satiation, value adaptation, or diminishing marginal utility." (3) ". . . benefits obtained through social process are contingent upon benefits provided 'in exchange.'"

authoritative than those currently influencing the community.¹⁵⁷

If the group in question already has an accepted practice of disseminating instruction, then potential competition has arrived, particularly if this new teaching is at odds with what has been the group standard, or if the new teacher seems more appealing than those currently responsible for group instruction. A church-group could easily polarize around these competing sources of information, becoming disunited. Further, if the intruding teaching deviates from the previous norm so that it is considered erroneous, the purpose of the church group's existence becomes endangered.

On seeing such dangers, some recognized leadership source could attempt to restore order. Strategies identified by group theorists for such action include: devaluing the competitor's resources, cultivating alternative resources, forming coalitions to stand against intrusion, and creating special dependencies on the leadership's own resources.¹⁵⁸ Translated into the church situation, the established leadership can denounce or expose the competing teaching for the heresy that it is believed to be. It can describe how its instruction is specially received, by special revelation or endowment from Christ. It can call on people to close ranks, rallying around some standard of the faith. Or, it can choose a special focus of its own teaching and show how this is the unique but standard way to achieve Christian goals.

That these types of situations and strategies existed in Pauline churches can be demonstrated from at least one indisputably Pauline epistle, that to the Galatians. Paul must deal with the intrusion of false teaching as well as a factious church (Gal 1:6-9; 5:13-15).¹⁵⁹ He denounces what he considers to be a false notion of the faith as presented by his competitors. He discusses his source of revelation as a way of showing the superior uniqueness of his instruction (Gal 1:12). He encourages his readers to act in a cooperative way (Gal 5:13-15), which also results in closed ranks against intruding sin or heresy. He also describes a special focus of his teaching that shows his way as the best for attaining what his

¹⁵⁷ Such scenarios are proposed by Holmberg, *Paul and Power*, 44-50, 69-72, who suggests that many of Paul's struggles may have been related to competition arriving in the form of envoys from the Jerusalem church, an institution perceived to be more authoritative than Paul.

¹⁵⁸ PV Crosbie, *Interaction in Small Groups*, (New York: MacMillan, 1975), 354.

¹⁵⁹ For a more detailed discussion of this situation, see J Barclay, *Obedying the Truth*.

readers wanted in the first place: "walk by the Spirit" (Gal 5:25, RSV).¹⁶⁰ Of course, the issues at hand also deal heavily with the acceptability of Paul and his authority, rather than the authority of any leadership structure existing in any of these churches. But as itinerant overseer, Paul is exercising his responsibility on behalf of the Galatian communities.

As stated earlier, the writer of Ephesians is undoubtedly familiar with Pauline writings and the situations represented by them. Additionally, he may also be aware of other doctrinal dangers lurking about.¹⁶¹ Whether he is writing to combat an actual intrusion in his churches' communities is a matter of debate.¹⁶² He perceives a threat, whether potential or actual, and tailors his teaching accordingly in Eph 4:7-16. While 4:1-6 urges activity to be performed by each of his readers so that unity is maintained, 4:7-16 intimates a strategy that allows this same unity to be achieved in a different sphere. No explicit commands appear in these verses: only implicit directives. The pattern resembles what is enacted in Galatians, only there, what is scattered by example throughout an entire epistle is concentrated in Eph 4:7-16 in an articulated, idealistic statement.

Apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers are said to have been given by the lordly, ascended Christ to His people (4:8-11). Their teaching is to be valued because they, and by implication their message, come from Christ.¹⁶³ Meanwhile, the ministry of some would-be teacher, implicitly not given by Christ, is devalued as a ministry that tosses its adherents around through trickery and error (4:14). The good teachers¹⁶⁴ simultaneously are depicted as better resources for learning about the faith since their ministry is said to have come directly from

¹⁶⁰ According to Barclay, *Obeying the Truth*, 70-72, Galatian believers' concerns about acquiring proper behavioural standards may have prompted their desire to follow the Law in the first place. Gal 5:22-23 accordingly comprise part of Paul's alternative to a strict code (pp 119-125).

¹⁶¹ The traditions found in Act 20:29 and Rev. 2:2 support this at least for the suggested provenance of Ephesians.

¹⁶² NA Dahl, "Interpreting Ephesians: Then and Now," *Currents in Theology and Mission* 5 (1978): 138, has the "impression" that the descriptions of 4:14 "refer not to some possible danger that may threaten in the future, but were very much part of the present reality which the author then faced."

¹⁶³ Holmberg, *Paul and Power*, 198: "The most important basis for the legitimate exercise of power or, in other words, for the exercise of authority in the Primitive Church is proximity to the sacred (Christ and His Spirit). . . The really crucial form of proximity to the sacred is that of being in close contact with sacred *ratio*, the divine Word."

¹⁶⁴ The term "teacher" is used collectively to focus on the function of apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers (4:11).

Christ himself for the benefit of all believers (4:11-12). Coalition formation is encouraged by describing truth-speaking in love and mutual deeds of love as the consequence of heeding the teaching of those given by Christ (4:15-16). Finally, the writer of Ephesians promotes a dependency on the specially given individuals by showing how adherence to their ministry is the only way to achieve ultimate unity, also equated in highly spiritual terminology with maturity and "the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ" (4:13). By adhering to these Christ-given individuals, the entire community is enabled both to speak what is true about the faith among themselves and to make "edifying" contributions to the welfare of the group, all resulting in growth in Christ (4:15, 16).

5.5 Conclusions

The writer has built an impressively positive, ideal picture in the name of unity. Whether the intrusion of false teaching is actual or only potential, the writer has devalued the input coming from unrecognized outsiders mostly by intensifying the value of the recognized insiders. If deviant information comes from a new convert, the community will have a strongly unified base that works against the acceptance of a deviation from a norm.¹⁶⁵ If an outside teacher is the direct source, his or her input must demonstrate how it promotes growth in Christ. Or even more daunting, how it has a more worthy ambition than the achievement of the collective maturity in Christ that comes from the input of Christ-given teachers. If other teaching is to gain an entrance, it must prove itself to be more valuable than what comes from Christ's own envoys, while at the same time demonstrating how it is not tossing its listeners about or is not from an erroneous source.

Recognition of such dynamics demonstrates that Eph 4:7-16 does reflect unique attitudes about the development of leadership structures in the first century church. Those who teach are given a prominent role in the promotion of group cohesion. But one must not lose sight of the fact that this role was conceived in the mind of the writer, not as autocratic but as beneficiary. The writer states explicitly that "growth," the ultimate purpose of teaching ministry, comes in the end not solely from these teachers, but from all believers. As the ideology expressed by the passage meets the social structures underlying it, Christ-given teachers are put forward as unifying forces to promote actions of solidarity among each believer.

¹⁶⁵ Crosbie, *Interaction in Small Groups*, 440: "The more similar group members are to each other, the more likely it is that any potential dissident will conform to the group's standards and beliefs."

The writer implies that as believers learn from the Christ-given teachers they acquire the right kind of knowledge about the Christian life. This not only helps them to evaluate teaching input from other sources, but enables them to know both what is truthful to speak in love among themselves and how to contribute mutually to one another's welfare. By heeding the Christ-given teachers, the believers maintain a positive connection to the divinely endowed sources of information, enabling them to be positively connected to each other in the calibre of fellowship and mutual ministry they can enjoy together.

The teachers promote unity by disclosing what helps the community grow in Christ. Other believers promote unity by receiving and practising the message of those whom, it is claimed, Christ has given to them for their edification. In the end the passage focusses not on the existence of strong leadership, but on the contribution that those who are given by Christ make toward strengthening the ties between all believers in the community. The dynamics of such a unity are illumined by an awareness of actual human processes as individuals interact within their existing social networks.

6 Conclusions on Eph 4:1-16

The writer begins with a summarizing exhortation that urges his readers to live in a manner commensurate with the salvation that they enjoy. He makes this more immediately concrete in a plea for his readers to live in a unified fashion. His entreaty toward unity is both explicit and implicit. When his readers give up any claims of superiority, they maintain a previously established unity. When they heed the ministry of special individuals who instruct them about their faith, they learn how to speak truthfully and grow in Christ. The first half of the letter has prepared the way for this discussion both by describing the equal standing before God enjoyed by all in the "body of Christ" and by establishing the unequivocal lordship of Christ, who both provides for and becomes the focal point for Christian unity.

This concern for unity is not unique. Paul's epistles express it often. Various Jewish and, especially, Graeco-Roman writers do as well. A desire for unity itself is a basic issue found in many small groups of individuals who gather together for a common cause. Ephesians regards the issue as a major expression of the converted life its readers are said to possess.

Chapter 2

1 Eph 4:17-24 - Exegetical and Behavioural Issues

At 4:17 Ephesians' author shifts the topic from unity and enters into another facet of living worthily of the calling, a negative command to shun gentile living. Eph 4:1-16 and 17-24 are connected in several ways, which will be examined immediately. After this follow discussions about Ephesians' views of stereotypical gentile behaviour on the one hand and archetypal Christian behaviour on the other.

1.1 Eph 4:17-24 and 1-16

The writer connects his exhortation in 4:17 directly to what he has said in the previous verses: "Now [σὺν] this I affirm and testify in the Lord, that you must no longer live as the Gentiles do" (RSV). Various schemes explain how the two sections relate. Some analysts see the link existing only between 4:1, or 4:1-3, and 4:17, where the writer resumes his discussion after a digression.¹ Others regard the moral teaching after 4:17 as asserting the practical aspects of unity on the basis of the theological foundations in 4:1-16.² Neither of these alternatives are entirely adequate.

The writer's exhortation to live no longer as gentiles is, in part, a negative aspect of walking worthily of the calling (4:1).³ Along with the exhortation to unity, it is one more way in which the writer urges his readers to behave as converts.⁴ He is not returning to his original thoughts after having digressed. The terminology of 4:17-24 does not reduplicate that found in 4:2-16. Christian unity

¹ M Barth, *Ephesians 4-6*, (New York: Doubleday, 1974), 499, sees the writer doing the same thing in 3:1 and 3:13-14, being side-tracked, and then returning to the point he was really trying to make. TK Abbott, *The Epistles to the Ephesians and to the Colossians*, (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1897), 127-28, sees the σὺν as "resumptive", continuing the discussion of 4:1-3 after the digression of 4:4-16. Similar views are found both in HAW Meyer, *Critical and Exegetical Hand-Book to the Epistle to the Ephesians*, tr by MJ Evans, rev and ed by WP Dickson (Winona Lake, IN: Alpha Publications, 1979 reprint of 1884 edition) and FF Bruce, *The Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians*, (Grand Rapids: William B Eerdmans, 1984), 354.

² AG Patzia, *Ephesians, Colossians, Philemon*, (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1990), 248: "At 4:17, however, there is a clear break from the theological aspects of unity to an emphasis upon the ethics of unity and how that unity can be maintained within the church." EF Scott, *The Epistles of Paul to the Colossians, to Philemon and to the Ephesians*, (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1930, reprinted, 1942), 215: "This Church, however, while it is united within itself, stands over against the world."

³ This is also affirmed by some of those who see Eph 4:17 as resuming the ethical argument after a digression. See, in particular, Abbott, *The Epistle to the Ephesians*, 127, and Meyer, *The Epistle to the Ephesians*, 467.

⁴ See Schlier, *Der Brief an die Epheser*, (Düsseldorf: Patmos-Verlag, 1957), 209-10.

is not an overt topic in this passage.⁵ But worthy Christian living is fostered by behaving in the unified fashion that promotes Christian growth.

After having established this, the writer next tells his readers to do away with those behaviours that also happen to be incompatible with the life of unified growth in Christ. This life is furthered, not by futile products of the mind (4:17), but by Christ-given ministers who enable believers to learn what is true, allowing them to "build up the body" in love (4:16). Just as love is a facet of living in and striving toward unity, so ultimately is it the antithesis of living like gentiles, and the point to which 4:17-24 will ultimately lead (5:2).

V 17 begins its criticism of gentile behaviour with failings of the mind: ". . .in the futility of their minds; they are darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, due to their hardness of heart" (4:17b-18, RSV). This mental state, along with the wicked behaviour it is said to spawn, is regarded as both incompatible with what the readers have already "learned" (ἐμάθετε, v 20) and contrary to the "truth" that is "in Jesus" that they had "heard" and been "taught" (v 21).⁶ Without making overt links to his discussion on "gifts" in the previous section, the writer does display a kind of logic in choosing his next topic of discussion. Just as Christ-given teachers promote unity, so Christ-commensurate teaching promotes proper Christian life-style.⁷ The writer clearly wants his readers to learn what is right (4:7-16, 4:20-24, 5:6, 5:17).

1.2 Archetypal Gentile Behaviour

When the writer urges his readers to live no longer as gentiles, he refers to a general grouping of people.⁸ The ensuing description of gentile behaviour

⁵ This is contrary to JL Houlden, *Paul's Letters from Prison: Philippians, Colossians, Philemon, and Ephesians*, (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1977), 317, as well as to Patzia, *Ephesians, Colossians, Philemon*, 224.

⁶ See the summarizing comments of R Schnackenburg, *Der Brief an die Epheser*, (Zürich: Benziger Verlag, 1982), 198 and 206.

⁷ Houlden, *Paul's Letters from Prison: Philippians, Colossians, Philemon, and Ephesians*, 316-17, observes continuities between 4:13-16 and 22-24. See AT Lincoln, *Ephesians*, (Dallas, TX: Word Books, 1990), 274: "The stress on the tradition which the readers need to remember provides one of the major links with the preceding pericope of 4:1-16."

⁸ The definite article in τὰ ἔθνη is used generically rather than anaphorically. The writer is not specifically recalling his previous discussions about gentiles in 2:11-22 and 3:1, 6, 8. Schnackenburg, *Der Brief an die Epheser*, 199, notes that these earlier comments referred to gentile Christians, whereas in 4:17 the writer discusses outsiders.

indicates that he is thinking in terms closer to stereotype⁹ than to classification. He clearly addresses a gentile readership (2:11, 3:1). But he is not indicating that in some way they have ceased to be gentiles, emphasizing their membership in a supra-gentile "third race."¹⁰ Rather, he addresses the dominating cultural influence over his readers' lives.

The Jewish heritage of the writer of Ephesians¹¹ included laws thought by some Jews to form a protective wall against intrusions of gentile immorality.¹² This writer addresses people whose heritage did not include the same sensitivity toward holiness.¹³ Before the readers believed, they lived according to ungodly influences (2:1-3). Now, as converts, they must live that way no longer (μηκέτι).

The writer undergirds his exhortation in 4:17 with a portrayal of gentile lifestyle, starting with a generalization of its overall quality; gentiles are said to live "in the futility of their minds" (RSV). "Futility" originates in their minds, affecting not just thought processes but the actual deeds these thoughts engender. The label "futility" was a common Jewish designation of sinful behaviour associated with ungodly people, whether Jew or gentile.¹⁴ It also appears in Rom

⁹ OL Yarbrough, *Not Like the Gentiles*, (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1985), 84, observes that similar language about gentiles in 1 Thess 4:5 refers to outsiders to the Christian community. Though he uses the term "polemical," I prefer "stereotypical" both for Eph and 1 Thess, since the paraenesis in neither letter is really concerned with the attacking of opponents, but rather with how converts should behave differently from their former way of life.

¹⁰ Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 276, says that the statement in 4:17 "underscores the 'third race' mentality" depicted in 2:11-22. Whether or not a third race mentality appears in 2:11-22, the writer's concern in 4:17 is with his readers' overall orientation to living.

¹¹ The writer evinces his Jewish heritage especially in the ways he uses Jewish scriptures. Lincoln, "The Use of the OT in Ephesians," *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 14 (1982): 16-57.

¹² *Ep Arist* 128-142 gives an apologetic for dietary laws that defends them as separating regulations: "In his wisdom the legislator, in a comprehensive survey of each particular part, and being endowed by God for the knowledge of universal, surrounded us with unbroken palisades and iron walls to prevent our mixing with any of the other peoples in any matter, being thus kept pure in body and soul, preserved from false beliefs [ἀπολελυμένοι ματαίων δοξῶν], and worshiping the only God omnipotent over all creation. . . So, to prevent our being perverted by contact with others or by mixing with bad influences, he hedged us in on all sides with strict observances connected with meat and drink and touch and hearing and sight, after the manner of the Law" (139; 142); "Letter of Aristeas," tr by RJH Shutt, *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, ed by JH Charlesworth, (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1985) II: 22. The appearance of the term ματαίος to modify a term governing activity of the gentile mind may possibly indicate a similarity in viewpoints influencing the statements in Eph 4:17-19 and in *Ep Arist* 128-142.

¹³ So CL Mitton, *Ephesians*, (London: Marshall, Morgan & Scott, 1973), 158.

¹⁴ The LXX tends to be vague on whether it is Jews or gentiles who are referred to as "vain." Often, non-specific terminology is used, e.g. "sinners" or "sons of men." See, LXX Pss 4:3; 25:4; 30:6; 37:13; 61:10; 93:11; and 143:8-11, though clearly, Wis 13:1 has gentiles in view. Even OT Pseudepigrapha do not reserve the epithet "futility" solely for polemical use against gentiles. *Sib Or*

1:21, a passage with which Eph 4:17-19 shares several commonalities. While Rom 1:21 associates futility with idolatry, as do some Jewish writings,¹⁵ Eph 4:17-19 does not,¹⁶ a striking omission in light of the similarities between these two passages.

In v 18 the writer portrays spiritual and rational shortcomings that eventually give way to improper behaviour. Two participial phrases, "being darkened in their understanding"¹⁷ and "alienated from the life of God," provide additional description of how gentiles live.¹⁸ These two conditions both come about, according to the writer, because of: 1) "the ignorance that is in them;" and 2) "their hardness of heart" (RSV).¹⁹

The term "ignorance" (ἄγνοια) and the metaphor of "darkening" (ἔσκοτωμένοι) are known to appear with spiritual implications in some Jewish writings, both when moral issues are being discussed and when a state prior to conversion is being described.²⁰ These same expressions appearing in Eph 4:18, with the obvious spiritual deficiencies of hard-heartedness and alienation from the

3.8, 9 and 5.83-5 obviously refer to gentiles, but *Ep Arist* 205 is certainly general, while *T Dan* 4:1 applies the label to describe the senselessness of anger to the sons of Dan, an implied Jewish audience.

¹⁵ See, e.g., Isa 44:9ff; 45:18ff; Wis 13:1ff; *Sib Or* 3.555 (τὰ μάταια φρονεῖν); 5.83, 85.

¹⁶ This assertion is contrary to GB Caird, *Paul's Letters from Prison*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976), 79 and Schnackenburg, *Der Brief an die Epheser*, 200, but upheld by Abbott, *The Epistle to the Ephesians*, 128-29, and Bruce, *The Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians*, 355.

¹⁷ Abbott, *The Epistle to the Ephesians*, 129, and Meyer, *The Epistle to the Ephesians*, 468, are to be favoured over Robinson, *St. Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians*, 189, in linking ὄντες with ἔσκοτωμένοι rather than with ἀπηλλοτριωμένοι in spite of the similarity of Col 1:21. Meyer, 648: ". . . if ὄντες ἀπηλλοτριωμένοι are joined, the logical and formal parallelism is disturbed, inasmuch as the ἔσκοτ. τῆ διανοίᾳ would be merely predicate and ὄντες ἀπηλλοτριωμένοι specifying the reason (subordinate to the former), and the emphatic prefixing of the two perfect participles, as brought in prominence by our punctuation, would go for nothing. And that the second clause does not specify the reason why the darkening has come over the minds of the Gentiles, is clear from the following διὰ τὴν ἄγνοιαν κ.τ.λ."

¹⁸ The participles are coordinate, rather than expressive of some logical sequence. See Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 277, and Schnackenburg, *Der Brief an die Epheser*, 200-01.

¹⁹ Schnackenburg, *Der Brief an die Epheser*, 200-01, is convincing in his contention that ignorance and hard-heartedness explain both the darkened understanding and the alienation from God. In note 471 on the bottom of p 201, he argues on stylistic grounds against Schlier and others who split these phrases between the preceding participles. Ephesians, by his analysis, is more rhetorical than logical.

²⁰ With regard to ignorance as a promoter of immorality, see *T Reub* 1.6; *T Jud* 19.3-4; *T Ash* 7.1, 5-6; *T Gad* 5.3-8 (with v 7 depicting the role of repentance in destroying ἄγνοια, putting "darkness" to flight and illumining "the vision"). This notion is not the same as the OT notion of the sin of ignorance. *Asen* 6.7, 12.5, 13.11, 17.10 all demonstrate the role of ignorance in relation to sin in the life of a gentile prior to conversion. The concept of darkening in relation to wrong conduct is illustrated also in *T Reub* 3.8, *T Lev* 14.4, *T Dan* 2.4, *T Gad* 6.2. Conversion is described as a rescuing from darkness in *Asen* 8.9 and 15.12.

life of God, point primarily to a religious problem. Gentiles, conveys the writer, do not know God. Therefore they do not perceive the behaviour that he prefers. As converts who know God, his readers should be more aware.

The writer also implies that gentiles refuse to learn about God. Associated both with the ignorance and hard-heartedness that are said to produce the darkened understanding and alienation from God is a sense that these people really could know better.²¹ They simply refuse to. As a result, they become calloused. When the writer urges his readers to shun gentile living, he incriminates any demonstration on their part of unwillingness to acknowledge God as the writer knows him.

A triad of sins in v 19 exemplifies the morally catastrophic behaviour that the writer believes results from these briefly described spiritual problems. Specifically, he states that gentiles have given themselves over to "licentiousness," which has made them "greedy" in the practice of "every kind of uncleanness." This triad is somewhat obscure. No specific activities are illustrated for these general terms.

The term for "licentiousness," ἀσέλγεια, sometimes has a sexual connotation, but not always. In various NT lists of sins it frequently occurs in the environment of sexual misdemeanors. In Rom 13:13, for example, it is mentioned in parallel with κοίτη, "bed," a term often used in Jewish writings euphemistically to refer to sexual intercourse.²² Both 2 Cor 12:2 and Gal 5:19 list "licentiousness" in close proximity to the term πορνεία, "fornication." 1 Pet 4:3, in listing gentile deeds, associates the term with ἐπιθυμία, "lusts." Likewise in one of the two LXX appearances of the term, Wis 14:26, the term clearly indicates sexual license. In the other LXX appearance, 3 Macc 2:26, the usage is decidedly non-sexual, referring to an uninhibited proclivity to inflict any kind of evil.²³ The context of

²¹ This becomes even clearer when the terminology of ignorance, ἄγνοια and its verbal counterpart ἀγνοέω are analysed in the OT Pseudepigrapha. Sometimes, it refers to being plainly uninformed (e.g. *T Jud* 5.4 - the men of Shechem were totally unaware that Jacob's sons were secretly invading them). There are places, however, where there is a sense that the person being called ignorant really could have known better (e.g. *T Ash* 7.1 - the people of Sodom failed to recognize the Lord's angels).

²² The context in which the term κοίτη is used often determines whether a sin is in reference. See, for example, Lev 15:21 where marital intercourse is in view, but *Sib Or* 4.33 ("Neither have they disgraceful desire for another's spouse;" tr by JJ Collins in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, I: 384) as well as *Sib Or* 5.387 and 5.393 where it is used to refer to "pederasty" and "bestiality" (again, Collins' translation, I: 402).

²³ "Thereafter, on his arrival in Egypt, he [Ptolemy IV] became even more extravagant in his wickedness through his aforementioned boon companions and friends, complete strangers to everything that was just, and not only was he not satisfied with his innumerable excesses [ταῖς ἀναριθμήτοις

some NT usages does not demand sexual connotations: e.g. Mark 7:22; 2 Pet 2:2, 7, 18 and Jude 4.

The same sort of ambiguity exists in extra-biblical Jewish writings. *T Lev* 17:11 includes the term in a list of sins, followed by pederasty and bestiality. Philo, in *De Vita Mosis* 1.305, links the term with ἀκολασία, also translated "licentiousness," in describing the sexual misdeeds of Midianite women toward Israelites on the plain of Moab. Other uses seem to indicate a general lack of inhibition with regard to any sort of sin. Josephus uses the term on two occasions to refer to the proclivity toward idolatry on the part of Rehoboam and of Jezebel (*Antiquities* 8.10.2 §252 and 8.13.1 §318 respectively). *Ep Arist* 205 uses the term to refer to an unbridled use of a rich man's wealth and power that could cause him to lose his money.

Thus the writer of Ephesians might be implying that a total lack of self-control and a release of inhibition results from detachment from God's ways and leads to an insatiable practice of every kind of evil deed imaginable.²⁴ If so, one could infer from the statement in v 20, "You did not so learn Christ," that belief in Christ is the chief way to achieve an ordered and controlled life free from abominable offenses before God.

This does not seem to be the case on further examination. Though ἀσέλγεια does not always refer to sexual license, the likelihood that it does here is increased by the use elsewhere in the epistle of the other two terms in this triad of sins, ἀκαθαρσία and πλεονεξία, "uncleanness" and "greed" or "covetousness". These last two terms appear together in two other triads in the same order as here in 4:19. Only, in 5:3 and 5:5, the writer uses πορνεία/πόρνος, "fornication/fornicator," instead of ἀσέλγεια, "licentiousness." It appears that he has substituted a term with overt sexual overtones for one that is more ambiguous; the fact that "fornication" is more overtly sexual may indicate that sexual licence is primarily in view in 4:19.

ἀσέλγεια], he even reached such a pitch of arrogance as to concoct slanderous reports in these regions." 3 Macc 2:25-26, tr by H Anderson in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, II: 519. This appears in the context of Ptolemy's attempt to enter the Jerusalem temple and his subsequent decrees to inflict suffering on the Jews.

²⁴ This is the contention of Schlier, *Der Brief an die Epheser*, 214: "Es [ἀσέλγεια] ist die 'Schwelgerei', in der ein 'üppiges' Leben weilt, in der u.a. die geschlechtliche Ausschweifung vorkommt. Das Ausschweifen auf Grund der Erschlaffung führt dann aber in ganz konkrete Ausübung von 'Unreinheit';" on πλεονεξία, "Das erschlaffte Dasein ist ja auch das nun nicht mehr erfüllte" (p 215).

Further, the stereotypical appeal of the passage favours a sexual connotation. Gentile sexual misconduct is a prominent stereotype in various Jewish writings.²⁵ One can reasonably expect the same in any warning against living like gentiles coming from a Jewish writer. There is evidence for this in Paul's undisputed writings (1 Thess 4:3-5). Sexual wrongdoing certainly begins the list of evils elaborated in Rom 1:21-32, a passage, as has already been pointed out, that shares many common points with Eph 4:17-19.

Giving over to sexual licence is said to lead to the practice of all sorts of "uncleanness," ἀκαθαρσία. The qualifying adjective "all" may indicate that this uncleanness need not be restricted to illicit sexual activity, though such a nuance predominates in sin-lists appearing in the Pauline corpus at large (see Rom 1:24; 2 Cor 12:21; Gal 5:19; Col 3:5 and 1 Thess 4:7). In the LXX "uncleanness" refers largely to the lack of ritual purity, which sometimes applies to sexual issues (e.g. Lev 20:21; Hos 2:10), but most often is related to general cultural pollution.²⁶ Various OT Pseudepigrapha reflect a wide range of reference, not unexpected in works that attempt to make older regulations relevant to their own cultural settings.²⁷ Some of these writings occasionally associate "uncleanness" with sexual wrongdoing (*1 Enoch* 10.11, *T Jud* 14.5, *T Jos* 4.6, *Sib Or* 5.168). These differ in tone from attempts to speak of moral purity in Levitical terms.²⁸

²⁵ Yarbrough, *Not Like the Gentiles*, 8-18, has a useful survey of Apocryphal and Pseudepigraphal writings that portray sexual misconduct as a major boundary marker separating Jews from gentiles. EP Sanders, *Paul, the Law and the Jewish People*, (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983), 95: "Paul's vice lists generally feature prominently the sins most characteristic of Gentiles as the Jews saw them: idolatry and sexual immorality," though one must note that other sins are also mentioned. Upholding the stereotype, see, e.g., *Sib Or* 3.594-600: "Greatly, surpassing all men, they [the Jews] are mindful of holy wedlock, and they do not engage in impious intercourse with male children, as do Phoenicians, Egyptians, and Romans, specious Greece and many nations of others, Persians and Galatians and all Asia, transgressing the holy law of immortal God, which they transgressed." Tr by Collins in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, I: 375. See, in a similar vein, *Sib Or* 3.763, 4.24-34 (but note that in this last reference sexual immorality is preceded by "murder" and "dishonest gain"), 5.162-171 (esp 166-7), 5.386-396, 5.429-431, *T Jud* 23:1-2, *T Dan* 5:5, *T Naph* 4:1-5, *Pss Sol* 8:9-13, Wis 14:22-29 (where again a host of other non-sexual sins appear as well). One must also not neglect the holiness code in Lev 18, oriented to sexual pollution, and preceded by the warning against committing the abominations of the Egyptians and the Canaanites.

²⁶ In this regard, see the interesting discussion by M Douglas, *Purity and Danger*, (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1966), 51-54.

²⁷ LW Countryman, *Dirt, Greed and Sex*, (London: SCM Press, 1988), 51-65, concludes this in his analysis of the concept of sexual purity both in Lev and in the NT.

²⁸ Note, e.g., *T Ash* 2.8-10: "Someone else commits adultery and is sexually promiscuous, yet is abstemious in his eating. While fasting, he is committing evil deeds. Through the power of his wealth he ravages many, and yet in spite of his excessive evil, he performs the commandments. This also has two aspects, but is evil as a whole. Such persons are hares, because although they are halfway clean,

The practice of "every kind of uncleanness" that stems from sexual license probably refers in the first instance to illicit sexual activity. Sexual license would indicate the kind of activity being undertaken, while uncleanness would refer to the acts of wrongdoing themselves.²⁹ The author does not elaborate at all on what specifically comprises this uncleanness. Though sexual immorality is probably at the forefront of his thinking, he may also be including any activity, whether sexual or not, that one could conceive of as stemming from sexual licence.

The RSV translates the phrase ἐν πλεονεξία with the adjective "greedy," qualifying how the practice of impurity is carried out.³⁰ However, the phrase probably depicts an additional sin, which "covetousness" certainly is in 5:3 and 5:5.³¹ The flow of thought suggests that sexual license can lead to all sorts of impure activities along with greed, or covetousness.

This greed might have a sexual nuance to it.³² The Tenth Commandment certainly associates a wife with property articles; desire for a neighbour's wife is in

in truth they are unclean [ἀκάθαρτοι], for this is what God has said on the tables of the commandments." Tr by HC Kee in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, I: 817. For a similar statement, see *T Ash* 4:5.

²⁹ "Licentiousness," ἀσελγεία, is the indirect object of the verb παρέδωκαν. "Practice every kind of uncleanness" appears in a prepositional phrase, εἰς ἐργασίαν ἀκαθαρσίας πάσης. Though it is possible that this εἰς also introduces an indirect object as a substitute for the regular dative (See CFD Moule, *An Idiom-Book of New Testament Greek*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1959), 69; F Blass, A Debrunner, *A Greek Grammar of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, tr by RW Funk (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961), 100), as seems to be so with the similar statement found in Rom 1:24, it is most likely introducing an adverbial phrase that shows the sphere of operation of licentiousness. In the first situation there would be two indirect objects in apposition to each other; in the second, the εἰς phrase would flow from the indirect object. In either case there is a progress in thought signalled by the term ἐργασία, "practice."

³⁰ This is supported by Mitton, *Ephesians*, 162, and EF Scott, *The Epistles of Paul to the Colossians, to Philemon and to the Ephesians*, (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1930, reprinted, 1942), 217-18.

³¹ Barth, *Ephesians 4-6*, 503; Bruce, *The Letters to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians*, 356; Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 271. Uncleanness is practised *with* greed, not in a state or attitude of greediness.

³² Countryman, *Dirt, Greed and Sex*, 108, commenting on Eph 4:19, says: "License, uncleanness, and greed all work together here; for the abandonment of restraint and of concern for the rights of others is what produces the impurity of heart which the Gospels treat as the only significant form of uncleanness." Thus, the writer does not address sexual wrongdoing, but selfishness expressed sexually. A few sentences later, he says: "For the author of Ephesians, uncleanness, harlotry, and even idolatry seem to be synonyms of *pleonexia*" (108-09). He works out in greater detail his categorization of Paul's sexual ethics as a curbing of "social greed" (p 108) on pp 147-219, where he links sexual morality with property rights. Without denying some relationship between sexual mores and property issues, one cannot say accurately that either Paul or the writer of Ephesians classified sexual wrongdoing as disregard of another's property, whether that owner is Christ, an offended spouse, or an offended parent. Yarbrough, *Not Like the Gentiles*, 73-76, demonstrates sexual wrongdoing in this setting as both sinful in itself, and, in semi-commercial language, as an act of greed.

the same sphere of reference as desire for a neighbour's house, field, servant, maid, ox, ass, cattle and anything else that "belongs" to the neighbour (ὅσα τῷ πλησίον σου ἐστί - Exod 20:17, LXX).

It is unlikely that the writer of Ephesians refers to this connection, at least as found in the LXX. The term for "covet" (ἐπιθυμέω) used in Exod 20:17 and elsewhere in the LXX is related to the more general concept of "lust" or "desire."³³ The term πλεονεξία used here, however, tends most often to be associated with the accumulation of wealth and power.³⁴ This latter emphasis is definitely present in its NT uses.³⁵ Still, the NT does employ this term and its verbal and adjectival relatives in the environment of sexual wrongdoing.³⁶

The statement in Eph 4:19 could certainly include the notion of an insatiable desire to acquire sexual property, but not as its primary reference. The writer states in simple, general terms that sexual licence gives way to all sorts of impure actions along with greed. Since greed does occasionally have sexual overtones, it may appear here partly in a catchword fashion.³⁷ Sexual greed could be one aspect of the general concept of greed that the writer condemns.

Without attempting philosophical comprehensiveness, the writer explains in selectively stereotypical terms why gentile behaviour should be avoided. He

³³ H Schönweiss, "ἐπιθυμία," in *Dictionary of New Testament Theology*, tr and ed by C Brown, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1975), 1: 456-461.

³⁴ This is confirmed by an examination of its occurrences in the LXX and in Greek versions of OT Pseudepigrapha. In the LXX see especially Ezek 22:27, Wis 10:11 and Sir 14:9. Other uses are more ambiguous - e.g. Judg 4:11; Ps 118:36; Hab 2:9; Isa 28:8; Jer 22:17; and 2 Macc 4:50. Most occurrences of πλεονεξία and its verbal and adjectival counterparts in Jewish Pseudepigrapha refer to the gaining of wealth and power: *T Jud* 21.7-8, *T Iss* 4.2, *T Dan* 5.7, *T Gad* 2.3-4, *T Ash* 5.6, *T Ben* 5.1 and *Ep Arist* 270. More ambiguous uses are in *T Naph* 3.1, *T Gad* 5.1, *Adam and Eve* 11.1, *3 Baruch* 13.3 and *Ep Arist* 277. The closest association of sexual immorality with greed appears in *T Levi* 14.5-6: "You plunder the Lord's offerings; from his share you steal choice parts, contemptuously eating them with whores. You teach the Lord's commands out of greed for gain; married women you profane; you have intercourse with whores and adulteresses. You take gentile women for your wives and your sexual relations will become like Sodom and Gomorrah." Tr by Kee in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, I: 793.

³⁵ See Luke 12:15, Rom 1:29; 2 Cor 2:11; 7:2; 9:5; 12:17-18; 1 Thess 2:5 and 2 Pet 2:3-4.

³⁶ See sin-lists found in Mark 7:22 and Col 3:5. Also 2 Pet 2:14 does link a sexual metaphor with the general concept of acquisition. But, most overtly, 1 Cor 5:10, 11 and 6:10 in their respective sin-lists do include greed with other sins in the context of a discussion of sexual wrongdoing. 1 Thess 4:6 has probably the most overt linkage of sexual immorality, πορνεία, with greedy defrauding, πλεονεκτέω, but significantly does so after first having introduced the term ἐπιθυμία in v 5.

³⁷ One must not ignore the correspondence between this passage and Col 3:5-10. The terms ἀκαθαρσία and πλεονεξία are also listed in Col 3:5, though separated by three other sins. On the relationship between these passages, see p 110 below, as well as Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 273-74.

characterizes gentiles as unenlightened, godless, pervertedly sinful people. His readers should avoid any behaviour remotely resembling this. Such reasoning looks like guilt-by-association. A negative view of gentiles is presented to motivate the readers to avoid any kind of affiliation with that lifestyle.

The writer must make this point because he addresses gentiles who, he assumes, have been raised under that standard. He wants to highlight the changes in their lives now that they have believed in Christ. In the verses that follow, he explains how his readers, as converts, have a totally different outlook.

1.3 Archetypal Christian Behaviour

After depicting the moral worth of gentile lifestyle, the writer jolts his readers into considering the differences of the converted life: "You did not so learn Christ!" (4:20, RSV). This is a transitional statement, both summarizing his valuation of the gentile way of life and introducing the discussion of positive principles now existing for his readers.³⁸

The expression "learn Christ" is puzzling, but probably refers both to static and dynamic aspects of belief. Christ can be learned about in terms of facts of the faith, but also learned in the way a person can come to be known.³⁹ The writer on several occasions in his moral teaching appeals to this same dynamic aspect of knowing Christ: e.g. Christ is the one toward whom believers grow (4:15); Christ is the one whom believers should emulate (5:2).

Most commentators agree that verses 20-24 refer to some sort of teaching tradition. Christ is "learned," "heard of" and the one in whom the readers were "taught."⁴⁰ What sort of tradition is not at all indicated by the text.⁴¹ For the

³⁸ Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 283: "In terms of the writer's train of thought, this clause [even as the truth is in Jesus] contrasts with the οὐχ οὕτως, lit. 'not thus,' of v 20. He asserts that his readers had not been instructed in the Christian tradition falsely according to the Gentile pattern of life he has depicted in vv 17-19 but had been instructed according to the proper content of that tradition, that is, the truth in Jesus."

³⁹ See Gnllka, *Der Epheserbrief*, 227; Mitton, *Ephesians*, 162. Schnackenburg, *Der Brief an die Epheser*, 203, somewhat similarly, sees in this not merely a reference to a set of ideas learned about, but an allusion to the historical existence of Christ as a person, ". . . an der Person des einen Christus, der als geschichtlich Gekommener der zuverlässige Wegweiser für christliche Lebensgestaltung ist."

⁴⁰ The emphasis of the ἐν αὐτῷ that modifies "taught" is enigmatic. Among those who choose to comment directly on this, there seem to be two positions. The first, supported, among others, by Schlier, *Der Brief an die Epheser*, 216-17, Meyer, *The Epistle to the Ephesians*, 417, Westcott, *Saint Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians*, (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1979, reprint of 1906 edition), 67, takes the view that teaching takes place in fellowship with or in union with Christ. The second view considers that Christ is the sphere of content in which the readers have been instructed. This latter position, while not always stated explicitly, seems to be the view of, among others: Masson, *L'Épître de Saint Paul aux Éphésiens*, (Neuchâtel: Delachaux & Niestlé SA, 1953), 201 ("si c'est en lui, c'est-à-dire dans la foi en

purposes of this discussion it is sufficient only to underscore the writer's concern with proper learning. This learning pertains not merely to the acquisition of facts or the imbibing of philosophy but to the establishing of a schema that leads the readers to live in keeping with their belief in Christ.

The εἰ γε of v 21, translated "assuming" (RSV), indicates that the writer reminds his readers of what they already know.⁴² Central to this is the idea that "the truth is in Jesus" (v 21). The writer directs his readers' attention to the core of their new existence; Christ is the focal point of what they are to know about how to live. Truth is in Jesus,⁴³ not the darkened gentile understanding. The writer assumes that his readers have both heard of Christ, perhaps a reference to the initial preaching of the gospel, and have been instructed in him, perhaps a reference to the continuing teaching after conversion.⁴⁴ Accordingly, the readers

ce Christ"); Barth, *Ephesians 4-6*, 504, who also opts for the phrase to refer to a special school; and Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 282, who, in arguing for a stylistic variant in the appearance of "in Christ" and "in Jesus" in such close proximity concludes ". . . to learn the gospel tradition is to be taught in Christ or to be taught the truth in Jesus." This latter view is probably more to the point, since the passage emphasizes the content of what is learned, not relationship with Christ. A similar ambiguity with "taught" and "in" appears in Col 1:28 - διδάσκοντες πάντα ἄνθρωπον ἐν πάσῃ σοφίᾳ - "instructing all people in all wisdom."

⁴¹ Suggestions have included: a primitive Christian catechism instructing new converts on the significance of baptism - P Carrington, *The Primitive Christian Catechism*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1940) (for a refutation of this, see the Introduction, §2.); the transmission of information within a "school" setting - Barth, *Ephesians 4-6*, 529-533; transmission of teaching in a general Christian setting but expressed in the language of Mystery Religions - K Wegenast, *Das Verständnis der Tradition bei Paulus und in den Deuteropaulinen*, (Assen: Neukirchener Verlag, 1962), 130-32; transmission of information in a Christian setting in much the same way that Torah would be transmitted in a Jewish one - F Mußner, *Der Brief an die Epheser*, (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus Mohn, 1982), 135-36; Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 280.

⁴² Though εἰ γε can communicate either "confident assumption" or "doubt" (see Moule, *An Idiom-Book of New Testament Greek*, 164) that the writer knew what his readers had already been taught, the likelihood of the former is increased by the use of this expression in 3:2, by the stereotypical statements that have preceded and by the lack of explanation that appears in the statements that follow. Ultimately if the writer doubted what his readers knew, his references to the abstraction of putting off the old humanity and putting on the new would be quite obscure. See Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 280, 173; Robinson, *St. Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians*, 190.

⁴³ Though it is unusual to see the name "Jesus" being mentioned apart from the usually accompanying "Christ," this is probably a stylistic variation rather than a theological point. See Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 280-81, and Patzia, *Ephesians, Colossians, Philemon*, 250, as opposed to Gnllka, *Der Epheserbrief*, 228-29, and Mitton, *Ephesians*, 163, who, among others, see with this a special emphasis on the historical activities of Jesus.

⁴⁴ Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 280: "Now, in a context where in particular the ethical aspects of the tradition are in view, "hearing" draws attention primarily to the first stage of its transmission, while "being taught" highlights the further stage of catechesis." Schnackenburg, *Der Brief an die Epheser*, 203: "Die Missionspredigt, in der die Adressaten von Christus gehört haben, wurde in der katechetischen Unterweisung vertieft."

should uphold the moral distinctiveness found in Christ.⁴⁵

In vv 22-24 the writer summarizes the basic content of the teaching he assumes his readers to know.⁴⁶ He uses language that reminds them of their conversion as well as their new moral responsibilities. They are to "put off" the old person, or humanity (τὸν παλαιὸν ἄνθρωπον), associated with their former way of life. They are to "be renewed" in their inner being. They are to "put on" the new person, or humanity (τὸν καινὸν ἄνθρωπον), associated with Christ.

The putting off of the old humanity and putting on of the new (vv 22-24) may allude metaphorically to baptismal clothing.⁴⁷ This seems unlikely for three reasons. First, there are no first-century data indicating the use of baptismal clothes that would have been put on.⁴⁸ Second, even if baptismal clothing was an earlier, more wide-spread phenomenon than the data indicates, the symbolism inherent in changing clothes would have had to have been so common that this itself could become a metaphor.⁴⁹ Third, other kinds of clothing imagery account adequately for its use here.

An overwhelming amount of data demonstrates the commonness of change

⁴⁵ Mußner, *Der Brief an die Epheser*, 132-33, goes so far as to say that such a reference to Christ as guide for the readers' moral behaviour does not allow the promotion of any common ethic, whether from Hellenism or Hellenistic Judaism: ". . . christliche Ethik speziell mit Jesus Christus zu tun hat und insofern keine »allgemeine« Ethik ist" (p 133). Such exclusivity would belong not to any specific kinds of behaviour but to the spiritual orientation that they are said to demonstrate.

⁴⁶ The infinitives ἀποθέσθαι (v 22), ἀνανεοῦσθαι (v 23) and ἐνδύσασθαι (v 24) may have an imperatival force as objects of the verb ἐδιδάχθητε (v 21), so that the content of the teaching received by the readers would have been "put off. . . renew . . . and put on." They could also be complementary to the verb, with vv 22-24 summarizing the rudiments of the teaching referred to by the writer, or perhaps even the goal of such teaching. The first option would fit more nicely with a catechetical theory, where the catechism itself could be quoted directly, but the idea of a summary of teaching probably suits the context more directly, though even this does not rule out a latent imperatival force. A quotation has not been clearly marked, as for example occurs in 5:14. Further, the similarity with Col 3:5-14 indicates that a paraphrase of such teaching is more likely than a direct quotation. In view of the lack of evidence of a catechism, the first theory is highly speculative. See discussions in Barth, *Ephesians 4-6*, 504-06; Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 283-84.

⁴⁷ See W Meeks, "The Image of the Androgyne: Some Uses of a Symbol in Earliest Christianity," *History of Religions* 13 (1974): 180-189. Among commentators promoting this view are Gnilka, *Der Epheserbrief*, 229-30; Patzia, *Ephesians, Colossians, Philemon*, 250; Schnackenburg, *Der Brief and die Epheser*, 203-04.

⁴⁸ For a general explanation of the relationship between clothing and baptism, both symbolic and actual, see GR Beasley-Murray, *Baptism in the New Testament*, (Grand Rapids: William B Eerdmans, 1962), 148-150. Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 285, however, points out that such associations are difficult to date prior to the second century CE.

⁴⁹ Though according to Beasley-Murray, *Baptism*, 286, 288, this is the case for Paul in Rom 6:1-14, baptism is overtly mentioned there (6:3-4) so as to draw out an ethical parallel, whereas Eph 4:22-24 never uses the term.

of clothing as a metaphor in ethical writings both inside and outside of the NT, where certain qualities are put on and others put off.⁵⁰ Further, clothing plays a symbolic role in the LXX in expressing moods and changes of circumstances.⁵¹ Even more significant for Ephesians, elaborate change-of-clothing symbolism denotes pre- and post-conversion states in the first-century Jewish conversion story *Joseph and Aseneth*. Aseneth first puts off her royal clothes and dresses for mourning (*Asen* 10.10-13), indicating her state of personal contrition and repentance (*Asen* 13.1-5). She signifies her acceptance of God's ways by putting off her mourning clothes and putting on her wedding garment (*Asen* 14:12). An angel from God affirms for her that this wedding garment symbolises her legitimate status as a convert (*Asen* 15:10). This change-of-clothing symbolism is especially noteworthy since Aseneth, as a woman gentile convert, undergoes no baptism.

⁵⁰ E.g. *Ep Arist* 122: "They were therefore well qualified for the embassy, and brought it to fruition as occasion demanded; they had a tremendous natural facility for the negotiations and questions arising from the Law, with the middle way as their commendable ideal; they forsook [ἀπέθεντο] any uncouth and uncultured attitude of mind. . ." Tr by Shutt in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, II: 21; Greek fragment from *Jub*, 4.7: ". . . in the 127th year Adam and Eve put off [ἀπέθεντο] their grief," (my trans); *Adam and Eve* 20.1-2: "And at that very moment my eyes were opened and I knew that I was naked of the righteousness [δικαιοσύνης] with which I had been clothed [ἐνδεδυμένη]. And I wept saying, 'Why have you done this to me, that I have been estranged from my glory with which I was clothed [ἐνδεδυμένη]?" Tr by MD Johnson in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, II: 281; *T Lev* 18.14: "Then Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob will rejoice, and I shall be glad, and all the saints shall be clothed in righteousness [καὶ πάντες οἱ ἄγιοι ἐνδύσονται ἐσθλοσύνην]," tr by Kee in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, I: 795; *Pss Sol* 11.7: "Jerusalem, put on [ἐνδύσασαι] (the) clothes of your glory,/ prepare the robe of your holiness,/ for God has spoken well of Israel forevermore." Tr by RB Wright in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, II: 662. In the LXX, note: 2 Chr 6:41 (clothed with salvation), 1 Esdr 5:40 (clothed with doctrine and truth); Job 8:22 (clothed with shame); 29:14 (clothed with righteousness); 39:19 (clothed with fear); Pss 34:26 (clothed with shame and confusion); 92:1 (clothed with honour); 103:1 (clothed with praise and honour); 108:18 (put on cursing as a garment), v 29 (clothed with shame); 131:9 (clothed with righteousness), v 16 (clothed with salvation), v 18 (clothed with shame); Prov 31:25 (put on strength and honour); Wis 5:18 (put on righteousness as a breastplate and true judgment as a helmet); Sir 6:31 (put on a robe of honour), 17:3 (clothed with strength), 27:8 (put on righteousness), 45:8 (put on glory); Isa 51:9, 52:1 (put on strength), 59:17 (put on righteousness as a breastplate), 61:10 (clothed with robe of salvation); Ezek 7:27 (clothed with desolation). In the NT, see Rom 13:12 (put off works of darkness, put on weapons of light); Col 3:8 (put off certain sins); Heb 12:1 (put off encumbrances); Jas 1:21 (putting off filthiness and evil); 1 Pet 2:1 (putting off certain evils). Other references listed by Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 284, include Demosthenes 8.46; Lucian, *Dial Mort* 10.8.9; Plutarch, *Cor* 19.4; Philo, *De Conf Ling* 31; *Corpus Hermeticum* 13:8, 9.

⁵¹ See, e.g., Esther (LXX) 4:17; 5:1; Ps 34:13; Jonah 3:5; Bar 4:20; 5:1. Clothing plays a significant symbolic role in Zech 3:4-7, as well as in 13:4. In Isa 22:21 it communicates exaltation, while Isa 49:18 uses clothing imagery to refer to restoration, and Ezek 16:10 uses the imagery to present God's care of his people.

Clothing imagery alone can denote conversion in at least one strand of Judaism.⁵²

The writer of Ephesians could also have used this same imagery without focussing on baptism.⁵³ Baptism would only be an indirect allusion. The writer uses put-off/put-on language, not chiefly to remind his readers of a rite, but to illustrate to them how they have a completely different orientation to life.⁵⁴

The old humanity to be put off is described as that "which belongs to [their] former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful lusts" (4:22, RSV). The former conduct of his readers would be, in one sense, the gentile way of life that they must "no longer" (μηκέτι, v 17) live.⁵⁵ The old humanity characterizes the readers' pre-conversion state. Corruption through deceitful lusts recalls the vain way of life elaborated in vv 17-19. The present tense in the participle τὸν φθειρόμενον ("being corrupted") conveys an ongoing corruption that belongs to the old humanity. This corruption originates with a wrong, deceived view of God and is expressed in debauched behaviour that is not recognized as debauched by those who engage in it.⁵⁶ The writer assumes rejection of that way of life as a normative part of the teaching his readers would have received.

The second aspect of the teaching that the writer recalls for his readers is the act of being "renewed in the spirit of [their] minds" (4:23, RSV). Though some

⁵² Clothing can also play a symbolic role in non-Jewish/Christian conversions. In Apuleius' oft-cited *Metamorphoses* XI.23-24, Lucius, the protagonist, is told to put on a cheerful countenance to match his white garments. Though Lucius has undergone a ritual bath, the special clothes he puts on later are not overtly connected to it. Beasley-Murray, *Baptism*, 148, also refers to studies that show the significance of clothing in Mystery Religion initiation rites.

⁵³ Abbott, *The Epistle to the Ephesians*, 136, observes that ἀποθέσθαι, while a figure related to putting off clothes, is frequently used as a figure in pre-biblical writers. He concludes, extremely, that this "puts out of the question any reference to change of dress in baptism."

⁵⁴ PW van der Horst, "Observations on a Pauline Expression," *New Testament Studies* 19 (1972-3): 181-87, regards the notion of a person being put off/on as more significant than the change of clothing metaphor. He cites a story of the philosopher Pyrrho who, when caught in an act inconsistent with his own philosophy, said that it was hard to put off the old man. He thinks that the writers of Colossians and Ephesians may have been aware of this, but reasons from this that baptism is meant. His arguments support a general conversion orientation more than a more restrictive baptismal sense.

⁵⁵ The writer's use of the term μηκέτι in 4:17 implies that the way of life he describes in vv 17-19 had formed some part of his readers' experience without indicating that it was actually the case at the time of writing. He refers both in v 17 and in v 22 to the pre-conversion lives of his readers.

⁵⁶ Both Scott, *The Epistles of Paul to the Colossians, to Philemon and to the Ephesians*, 219, and Schnackenburg, *Der Brief an die Epheser*, 204, explicitly link v 22 with the descriptions found in vv 17-19.

have argued that the "s" in "spirit" should be capitalized,⁵⁷ the rendering of the RSV is to be preferred. The genitive construction in the phrase τοῦ νοῦς ὑμῶν ("of your mind") is exceptionally difficult to understand if πνεῦμα refers to the Holy Spirit instead of the immaterial make-up of a person.⁵⁸ The writer uses the expression here, not to connote a special ontological insight, but to emphasize the interiority of the renewing that is to take place. His view here resembles that in 1:18 where he speaks of "the eyes of your heart."⁵⁹

The moral implications of the statement direct the readers to consider how their own thinking should be changing to become more like God's. This offers a diverging comparison with the vanity of the mind in v 17,⁶⁰ which, like v 22, implies the writer's concern that his readers might at some time participate in wrong behaviour. The change in tense between the infinitives in vv 22-23 underscores the continuing nature of renewal.⁶¹ Ongoing renewal of the thinking process is a hedge against the futile thinking that had been a part of the readers' former way of living and that can subtly maintain its impressions in the mind of any convert.

The portrayal of renewal also suggests a progression from the old of v 22 to the new of v 24.⁶² "Deceit" in v 22 is an activity of the mind. As the mind is being renewed (v 23), the new person (v 24) is more consistently appropriated. This does

⁵⁷ Every other usage of the term πνεῦμα in Eph refers to a divine spirit (1:13, 17; 2:2, 18, 22; 3:5, 16; 4:3, 4, 30; 5:18; 6:17, 18), though 1:17 is debatable. See Masson, *L'Épître de Saint Paul aux Éphésiens*, 202. Gnilka, *Der Epheserbrief*, 230-31, remarks that since the work of the Spirit would be in the mind, the renewing would be interior regardless. Schnackenburg, *Der Brief an die Epheser*, 204, observes the close association between the Holy Spirit and the mind throughout the epistle, especially in 3:16, 4:3, 5:18 and 6:18.

⁵⁸ Neither Masson, *L'Épître de Saint Paul aux Éphésiens*, 202, nor Gnilka, *Der Epheserbrief*, 230-31, adequately account for this. Robinson, *St. Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians*, 191, points out that precisely because of this construction a human "spirit" must be in view.

⁵⁹ Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 287, attributes the expression "spirit of your mind" to the "characteristic style of pleonastic accumulation of synonyms."

⁶⁰ So Robinson, *St. Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians*, 191; and Schnackenburg, *Der Brief an die Epheser*, 204.

⁶¹ Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 287: "The present tense of this infinitive underlines the continuous nature of the renewal that is still required, and the passive voice suggests that this takes place as believers allow themselves to be renewed."

⁶² This is intimated by Schnackenburg, *Der Brief an die Epheser*, 204, though part of his argument is also based on the change of terminology for newness, from an ἀνα- derivative to καινός. This latter point is disputed by Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 286, who cites support for the notion that these two aspects are virtually synonymous. The point made by Schnackenburg, that the old and new persons standing in opposition to each other requires a constant inner renewal or refreshing, holds true, and is better supported by the tense of the infinitive than by any semantic change in the vocabulary.

intimate a "become what you are" attitude on the part of the writer.⁶³ But the expression in v 23 primarily depicts a life-long process involved in behavioural conformity. Renewal of the mind encompasses both the recognition of evil activities and the consideration of appropriate lifestyle.⁶⁴

The third and final aspect of the teaching the writer wishes to recall for his readers is for them to "put on the new nature, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness" (4:24, RSV). In contrast to the decaying, corrupt, error-driven lustfulness of their former conduct, the readers are told that the new person, their new orientation to life, originates in truth created by God.⁶⁵ In line with God's character, this person is created in "righteousness" and "holiness," behavioural qualities not normally encouraged in Paul's epistles, but certainly not absent from them.⁶⁶

Much discussion of this verse centres around the expression "created after the likeness of God" and the two behavioural attributes "holiness and righteousness." The first expression is often regarded as a reference to creation in Gen 1:26-27, based on similarities with Col 3:10, which undoubtedly alludes to the creation story.⁶⁷ One major difference between the two passages, however, is Ephesians' omission of the key term εικῶν. A restoration to the image of God is essential to

⁶³ So Gnllka, *Der Epheserbrief*, 231; and Patzia, *Ephesians, Colossians, Philemon*, 250.

⁶⁴ A similar notion appears in *T Ben* 6:5-7: "The good set of mind does not talk from both sides of its mouth: praises and curses, abuse and honor, calm and strife, hypocrisy and truth, poverty and wealth, but it has one disposition, uncontaminated and pure, toward all men. There is no duplicity in its perception or its hearing. Whatever it does, or speaks, or perceives, it knows that the Lord is watching over its life, for he cleanses his mind in order that he will not be suspected of wrongdoing either by men or by God." Tr by Kee, in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, I: 826-27.

⁶⁵ "Desires from deceit" (τὰς ἐπιθυμίας τῆς ἀπάτης) and "righteousness and godliness from truth" (δικαιοσύνη καὶ ὁσιότητα τῆς ἀληθείας) are direct opposites, with the genitives in both places indicating source. "Righteousness and holiness that come from the truth" is to be preferred over the RSV's rendition "true righteousness and holiness." See Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 286, 288; Mußner, *Der Brief an die Epheser*, 138; and Schnackenburg, *Der Brief an die Epheser*, 205.

⁶⁶ Mitton, *Ephesians*, 166, goes so far as to say that "righteousness" as moral obedience is non-Pauline, though this certainly is contradicted both by Paul's own claim to have acted "holily" (ὁσίως) and "righteously" (δικαίως) among the Thessalonians (1 Thess 2:10) as well as by his urging the Philippians to think about what ever is "righteous" (Phil 4:8). Further, Rom 14:17, 2 Cor 6:14 and 9:10 refer to righteousness as a moral/behavioural standard.

⁶⁷ Gen 1:26-27 reads, in part, "ποίησωμεν ἄνθρωπον κατ' εἰκόνα ἡμετέραν καὶ καθ' ὁμοίωσιν. . . κατ' εἰκόνα Θεοῦ ἐποίησεν αὐτόν." Col 3:10 reads in part "κατ' εἰκόνα τοῦ κτίσαντος." See PT O'Brien, *Colossians, Philemon*, (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1982), 191-92.

the portrayal of the new humanity in Colossians.⁶⁸ It is not to Ephesians.

Ephesians' general interest in the creative acts of God (2:10, 15 and 3:9) tends to be related to the unfolding of the plan/purpose of God for humanity. Eph 2:10 represents the goal of salvation by depicting believers as God's "workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them" (2:10, RSV). The new humanity made up of reconciled Jew and gentile is "created" (2:15) by Christ in his overall purpose to produce a totally new corporate realisation of the people of God (2:11-22). God has now revealed the "mystery" of the church's role, a mystery that, while hidden, was part of the divine plan of God "who created all things" (3:9).

Though Eph 4:24 structurally resembles what appears in Col 3:10, the semantic content of the creation motif is more likely to have been mediated through the emphasis found in the earlier part of the epistle rather than through an allusion to Gen 1:26-27 or a dependence on Col 3:10.⁶⁹ The writer clearly accepts God as creator according to Gen 1. His appeal to creation stresses how his readers should behave in accordance with God's established purposes.⁷⁰

⁶⁸ This becomes most obvious when the creation/image-of-God motif is traced in Colossians. Col 1:15-16 portrays Christ both as being the image of God and the creator of all things. Col 3:10, in referring to the new person as the image of God, sees Christ as the pattern for this image.

⁶⁹ This contradicts Barth, *Ephesians 4-6*, 509-10; Bruce, *The Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians*, 359; Mitton, *Ephesians*, 165-66; Mußner, *Der Brief an die Epheser*, 137-38; Robinson, *St. Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians*, 191; and Scott, *The Epistles of Paul to the Colossians, to Philemon and to the Ephesians*, 219-20. Gnllka, *Der Epheserbrief*, 232, partly relates Eph 4:24 to Gen 1:26-27, but regards Eph 4:24 as referring to more than the creation of humankind. J Jervell, *Imago Dei*, (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1960), 231-32, reckons that a baptismal catechism referring to Gen 1:26-27 has influenced Eph 4:24 more than Gen 1:26-27 itself; Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 287, does speak of "Ephesians' version of Col 3:10" as containing not only the connotations of Col 3:10 in reference to Gen 1:26-27 but also as being more focussed "on the new creation as involving a life which is patterned after God's. . . an existence in conformity to the divine will." Schnackenburg, *Der Brief an die Epheser*, 204-05, sees only a minor allusion to the discussion of Col 3:10, with Eph 2:24 emphasizing the obligation of people to live in accordance with God's new creation as stated in 2:9-10. Abbott, *The Epistle to the Ephesians*, 138, does not think that Gen 1:26-27 and Col 3:10 are in view at all, but rather the idea of living "in a godly manner," or "according to the will of God."

⁷⁰ As an interesting possibility, RA Wild, "Discipleship in the Letter to the Ephesians," in *Discipleship in the New Testament*, ed by FF Segovia, (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985), 133-36, suggests that the expression "according to God" means "God-like." He cites a number of references from the LXX and from Philo that use the two terms holy (ἅγιος) and righteous (δίκαιος) to describe the character of God and then reasons from this that ultimately the writer of Ephesians here is urging an imitation of God. (These views also resemble those of Jervell, *Imago Dei*, 254-56, who sees κατὰ θεὸν as a reference to Christ and the terms 'holiness' and 'righteousness' as expressive of God's character.) While this may be possible, I find it unconvincing for several reasons. In the first place, contrary to Wild's assertion, the LXX can use these qualities to refer to archetypal human behaviour (e.g. Deut 9:5, Ps 131:9 and Prov 14:22), as do many OT Pseudepigrapha (e.g. *1 Enoch* 102.4-5, *T Abr* 1.9.2, *T Ben* 5.4). Even Philo uses them to refer both to human qualities as well as divine (e.g. human: *De Vita Mosis* 2.107, 2.216, *De Specialibus Legibus* 1.304, 2.12, 2.179, 4.135, *De Virtutibus* 50, *De Paemiis et Poemis* 66; divine: *De Sobrietate* 10 - quoting Deut 32:4). Though he refers to Plato's *Theaetetus* in

In v 24 an inherent tension exists between the creation of the new person as a past act by God and its appropriation by the readers as present activity.⁷¹ This contrasts with the old humanity that is constantly being corrupted (v 22). What is to be "put off" is an orientation to living in continual moral decay. What is to be "put on" is a new, morally pure orientation to living, fashioned incorruptibly as a creative act of God. The present behaviour of the converted should correspond with God's past creative designs.

The new humanity is not merely created "in accordance with God" but "in righteousness and holiness of truth." There is an important behavioural aspect to God's overall purposes that the writer unfolds in greater detail in 4:25-5:2. Here he summarizes this purpose under the rubric of "righteousness and holiness" (δικαιοσύνη καὶ ὁσιότητα) two qualities commonly appearing together in nominal, adjectival or adverbial forms in moral statements found in the LXX,⁷² in OT Pseudepigrapha,⁷³ in Classical and Hellenistic writings,⁷⁴ and in the NT.⁷⁵

Though some have argued that these qualities refer, respectively, to responsibilities toward other people and responsibilities toward God,⁷⁶ this distinction is valid only when the context clearly dictates.⁷⁷ Most often, they appear together either as virtues or as a summarizing description of ideal human character. The statements that follow in Eph 4:25-5:2 describe people-to-people behaviour,

De fuga et Inventione 63 where it says that to become like God is to become holy, just and wise, he does not prove this to have been a consistent view throughout Philo's writings.

⁷¹ Both Gnllka, *Der Epheserbrief*, 231-32, and Schnackenburg, *Der Brief an die Epheser*, 205, see an indicative-imperative schema here, since the readers are being told to put on something that has already been created.

⁷² In reference to people, Deut 9:5; Ps 131:9; Prov 14:22, 17:26; Wis 9:3, 14:30. In reference to God, Deut 32:4; Ps 144:17.

⁷³ *I Enoch* 25.4, 102.4-5, 103.9, 104.12, 106.18; *T Abr* 1.1.2, 1.9.2; *T Ben* 5.4; *Pss Sol* 3.7-8, 4.8, (9.3), 10.5 (about God), 14.2-3, 9-10, 15.3, 7; *Ep Arist* 18, 306; *Pseudo-Phoc* 5, 37 (in these last two, ὅσιοι people and means are contrasted with ἄδικοι).

⁷⁴ E.g., note Demosthenes *Orat.* 19.311, 21.227, 24.104; Dio Chrysostom Discourse 47.7; Epictetus I.xxix.54, III.xxvi.32; Isocrates *Evag* 26, 38, *Antid* 284, 321; Lucian *Tox* 9; Plato, *Apol* 35D, *Crito*, 54B, *Theatetus* 172B, 176B, *Polit* 301D, *Alc* 2.149E, *Prot* 329C-349B; Plutarch *Thes* 10.3, *Sol* 21.1 *Moralia* 1105C. Also Philo, *De Abr* 208, *De Virt.* 47.

⁷⁵ Luke 1:75; 1 Thess 2:10; Titus 1:8.

⁷⁶ See, e.g., Robinson, *St. Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians*, 191; Schlier, *Der Brief an die Epheser*, 221-22.

⁷⁷ See Plato *Euthyphr* 12A, 14D, 15B; *Gorgias* 507B. See, also, Polybius 22.10.8.

indicating that these two characteristics comprise "a summary of human virtue."⁷⁸ The writer sees God's re-creative purposes as necessitating a change in the moral conduct of those who believe the gospel of truth, the source of this holiness and righteousness.⁷⁹

1.4 Conclusions

The writer principally urges his readers to shun the ungodliness associated with their former way of life. He expresses this in two ways: 1) by describing in stereotypical language what sort of lifestyle this actually would involve (4:17-19); and 2) by reminding his readers of foundational teaching (4:20-24). In this latter scheme he uses metaphorical language, referring to the old and new persons/humanities, or old and new orientations to living, that his readers are to "put off" on the one hand and "put on" on the other.

The thought centres principally around conversion. The old ways are to be avoided because the readers have come to know Christ, having both heard of him and been taught in him through proper sources of the Christian tradition. Belief in and learning of Christ provide new, enlightened perspectives to enable them to live the kinds of lives God now wants, a life that is worthy of the calling to which they have been called.

2 Eph 4:17-24 - Affinities with Eph 1-3

Two broad categories from Eph 1-3 prepare the way for what appears in 4:17-24. The first revolves around what the writer thinks his readers should know and internalize. The second revolves around the once-now motif,⁸⁰ which contrasts what has happened in the past for the readers with what now, in the writer's view, encompasses their present reality. Examination of these common but significant

⁷⁸ Abbott, *The Epistle to the Ephesians*, 138-39. See, also, Gnllka, *Der Epheserbrief*, 231-33; Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 288; Schnackenburg, *Der Brief an die Epheser*, 205.

⁷⁹ In keeping with the concept of "truth" presented in 1:13, where "the word of truth" is qualified by the expression "the Gospel of your salvation" (RSV), I take the term here also to refer to some aspect of the gospel. The same seems to be the case in 4:15 and in 4:20. See the discussion in the previous chapter under 4:15. Also, see Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 282-83, 288.

⁸⁰ See NA Dahl, "Interpreting Ephesians: Then and Now." *Currents in Theology and Mission* 5 (1978): 133-43. With an obvious pun Dahl provides a historical overview of the motif, indicating not only how it appears in the letter itself, but also how the interpretation of the motif has shown divergent views at various moments in the history of the church.

categories in Eph 1-3 highlights the content of 4:17-24.⁸¹

2.1 Knowledge in Ephesians

Eph 4:17-24 is not the only passage in the moral teaching showing a concern for what the readers know. Of the five sections being considered, 4:1-16, 4:17-24, 4:25-5:2, 5:3-14, 5:15-21, only 4:25-5:2 contains no reference to what the readers should be learning. In 4:1-16, as has already been seen, the writer elaborates on the proper channels for obtaining information about the faith. In 5:5, and especially 5:6, he states firmly something that his readers should know and urges them not to be deceived by some other form of teaching. In 5:15, and especially 5:17, he urges his readers to be wise instead of ignorant, being informed of God's will.

Notwithstanding, Eph 4:17-24 displays a unique concentration of statements reflecting a dual interest in knowledge and its inner control over human processes. The readers are warned about the outcome of wrong thinking. They are made aware that this outcome stems in part from failure to relate to God. They are reminded about what they should have learned. They are also urged to be in the process of changing or renewing their thinking. But these concerns are not entirely new within Ephesians.

At the end of the introduction to the epistle, the writer first mentions the concepts of knowledge and truth in relation to his readers' presumed response to the faith: they have "heard the word of truth, the gospel of [their] salvation, and have believed in him" (1:13, RSV). He addresses converts, relating their conversion both to the fact that they have "heard" and to the content of what they have heard, namely "the word of truth, the gospel of . . . salvation."

"Hearing" and "truth" are important concepts in 4:17-24, especially in vv 21, 22 and 24. The writer in 4:21 assumes that his readers have heard "him," namely Christ. He states that "truth is in Jesus" (4:21). Contrasted with this "truth" is the "lust of deceit" by which the old person is corrupted (4:22), while the "holiness and righteousness" of the new person is said to originate in "truth" (4:24).

The relation between 4:17-24 and 1:3-14 is brief at best. Two other passages in chapters 1-3 have a greater bearing on the issue of knowledge in 4:17-24. Both

⁸¹ Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 275, indicates that holiness in 1:4 has some connection with this passage. While in a general sense this is true, links between 1:4 and 5:3-14 are much stronger and so will be discussed there.

are prayers. Eph 1:16-19⁸² contains a prayer for the readers to have a proper knowledge of God through their being "enlightened" (RSV) (πεφωτισμένους), an antonym to the term "darkened" (έσκοτωμένοι) used in 4:18 to describe the unenlightened gentile mindset.⁸³ In this prayer the writer also conveys his desire for a special knowledge to affect the deepest interior of his readers, "the eyes of [their] heart." Eph 3:14-19 contains a prayer with an even more penetrating interest in knowledge, which is to be associated both with the inner person (τὸν ἔσω ἄνθρωπον, 3:16) and with Christ dwelling in the readers' hearts through faith (3:17). In both prayers, knowledge is to control the very centre of the human being. This has a direct bearing on the expression of 4:23 where the readers are reminded to be renewed in the spirit of their minds. It also presents a contrasting background to the tainted gentile mind of 4:17-19.

A detailed analysis of these two prayers is unnecessary since 4:17-24 does not incorporate all elements of them. Only those basic aspects that inform the concern of 4:17-24 need be briefly observed. The principal prayer in Eph 1:16-19 is for God to give the readers "a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him" (1:17, RSV).⁸⁴ The writer wants his readers to know God, not just facts about

⁸² In cutting off the prayer at v 19, I am aware that various writers debate its actual length, as to whether it ends at 1:23 (Barth, *Ephesians 1-3*, 160; Caird, *Paul's Letters from Prison*, 42-43; Mußner, *Der Brief an die Epheser*, 52-57; and to a certain degree, Mitton, *Ephesians*, 64-66; Schlier, *Der Brief an die Epheser*, 75; Schnackenburg, *Der Brief an die Epheser*, 69-71), or even at 2:10 or 3:21 (JT Sanders, "The Transition from Opening Epistolary Thanksgiving to Body in the Letters of the Pauline Corpus," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 81 (1962): 348-62.). While the complete thought of the sentence really does not end until v 23, functionally the writer stops praying at v 19 (so Bruce, *The Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians*, 272; PT O'Brien, "Ephesians 1: an Unusual Introduction to a New Testament Letter," *New Testament Studies* 25 (1979): 505, 514). Vv 20-23 thus illustrate the power that the writer prays for his readers to know as part of their ongoing experience in the faith. One could actually go further, making a plausible argument that the prayer introduces themes that immediately follow in the epistle, from 1:20 all the way to 2:22, so that the writer addresses, chiasmically, the issue of power in vv 20-23, the issue of the wealth of God's inheritance in 2:1-10 (note the correspondence between πλοῦτος in 1:18, πλούσιος in 2:4 and πλοῦτος in 2:7) and the issue of the hope of the believers' calling in 2:11-22 (note that gentiles are described as being without hope in 2:12). C Arnold, *Ephesians: Power and Magic*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 72-75, probably overstates his case in saying that the prayer is ultimately one for the readers to be aware primarily of God's power.

⁸³ A possible association between the "enlightening" of 1:18 and the "darkened" of 4:18 is suggested by a number of commentators, including Abbott, *The Epistle to the Ephesians*, 129; Barth, *Ephesians 4-6*, 500; Gnilka, *Der Epheserbrief*, 223; Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 277; Schnackenburg, *Der Brief an die Epheser*, 200.

⁸⁴ Whether the πνεῦμα to be given to the readers refers to some human ontological aspect or to the Holy Spirit is, of course, a matter of debate, though the latter view seems to receive the majority of support. In favour of the former, see, principally, Abbott, *The Epistle to the Ephesians*, 28. The latter is argued explicitly by Barth, *Ephesians 1-3*, 148; Caird, *Paul's Letters from Prison*, 44; Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 56-57; and Masson, *L'Épître de Saint Paul aux Éphésiens*, 153.

God, but God himself.⁸⁵ The latter aspect is embellished in the clause that follows in vv 18-19: "that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power in us who believe" (RSV). Stated simply, this prayer combines knowing facts about God with experience of him.

The writer's desire for his readers to have an experiential knowledge of God appears even more elaborately in his prayer in 3:14-19. This covers three principal requests, represented by *ἵνα* clauses:⁸⁶ 1) that God would let his readers "be strengthened with might through his Spirit in the inner man, and that Christ may dwell in [their] hearts through faith" (3:16-17a, RSV);⁸⁷ 2) that his readers "may have power to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge" (3:18-19a, RSV); and 3) that they "may be filled with all the fulness of God" (3:19b, RSV). Though the third of these requests may seem esoterically enigmatic,⁸⁸ the first two clearly incorporate elements already seen in 1:16-19, namely concerns for the internal and for experiential knowledge of Christ. The highly liturgical language of the prayer embodies much more than this. But it clearly reflects the

⁸⁵ Schnackenburg, *Der Brief an die Epheser*, 73: "... eine allen Gläubigen mögliche Geisterfahrung."

⁸⁶ Arnold, *Ephesians: Power and Magic*, 86, focusses on these *ἵνα* clauses, but sees only the first two as containing requests, with the third being a summary statement. Neither the structure nor the semantics require this to be a summary. Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 197, considers all three to be requests. However, Meyer, *The Epistle to the Ephesians*, 424 and 427, treats the *ἵνα* clauses of vv 18 and 19 as successive purpose statements embellishing what precedes immediately, with the two requests being found in the infinitives of vv 16 and 17, namely, that the readers be strengthened in their inner person and that Christ may dwell in their hearts.

⁸⁷ Whether the two participles *ἐρριθωμένοι καὶ τεθεμελιωμένοι* form a third aspect of what the writer wishes God to grant his readers, (Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 197), whether they are the result of the readers' being strengthened and of Christ dwelling in their hearts (Arnold, *Ephesians: Power and Magic*, 87-89), or whether they are to be joined with the *ἵνα* clause that follows (Robinson, *The Epistle of St. Paul to the Ephesians*, 175; Masson, *L'Épître de Saint Paul aux Éphésiens*, 181), the writer's concerns for his readers to be strengthened internally and to know Christ better remain the same.

⁸⁸ Barth, *Ephesians 1-3*, 373-74, renders *ἵνα πληρωθῆτε εἰς πᾶν τὸ πλήρωμα τοῦ θεοῦ* as "May you become so perfect as to attain to the full perfection of God," basing his view on an OT concept of filling and relating this to God filling the temple. Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 214-15 explains this in terms of Col 1:29-2:10: "The fullness of God, which is best explained as his presence and power, his life and rule, immanent in his creation, has been mediated to believers through Christ, in whom the fullness was present bodily. . . As believers are strengthened through the Spirit in the inner person, as they allow Christ to dwell in their hearts through faith, and as they know more of the love of Christ, so the process of being filled up to all the fullness of the life and power of God will take place." According to both of these views, the final request in some form incorporates aspects of the previous two. The writer ultimately prays that the act of knowing Christ and of being internally strengthened will result in a life that increases in its conformity to God's ways.

writer's interest in what goes on in the minds and hearts of his readers as they respond to Christ or to God as a foundation for living appropriately.

The language of 4:17-24 is much more earthy by comparison. According to the writer's generalizations, since gentiles do not know God, their way of living cannot be right. By contrast, the readers have a divine perspective governing their perception of life around them, enabling them to discern the futility of the old way of life. They should become increasingly sensitive as to what sort of living God requires. The degree to which the readers actually live in accordance with the new person created in line with God and his ways (4:24) embodies for the writer one aspect of the degree to which his prayers of 1:16-19 and 3:14-19 are answered.

2.2 Once-Now in Ephesians

The writer's interest in the readers' former way of life is signalled overtly by the term *ποτέ*, found in 2:2, 3, 11 and 13, and also by *οὐκέτι* in 2:19.⁸⁹ It is contrasted in these sections by a concern for what would be the present reality for the Christian reader, signalled by the adverbs *νῦν* (2:2)⁹⁰ and *νυνί* (2:13), and especially depicted in 2:4-10 and 2:14-21. Additional descriptions of this appear in 3:5 and 10, where the writer addresses aspects of the plan currently in force during the present age.

The writer carries forward this basic awareness of a present reality in 4:17-23 when he urges his readers to live no longer as gentiles. Gentile lifestyle belongs to their past orientation. Life, according to the writer, is now different for them. The difference is not merely cosmic; it is practical, being discernible in the everyday conduct of all who believe.

The writer first develops this idea in 2:1-10. He reminds his readers that they formerly lived, or walked,⁹¹ in "trespasses and sins. . . following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work

⁸⁹ While I do not accept all of the analysis pertaining to Eph 2 of P Tachau, *"Einst" und "Jetzt" im Neuen Testament*, (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1972), 126-143, his overall description of Eph 2 as a contrast of pre- and post-conversion states is most helpful. Incorporating the criticisms of Tachau's conclusions on Eph 2 by Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 86-88, makes this contrast even sharper.

⁹⁰ Tachau, *"Einst" und "Jetzt" im Neuen Testament*, 141, sees this in spatial terms, with the then-now formula in vv 2-3 as signifying a break between two spheres of living rather than indicating a temporal-historical shift.

⁹¹ The verb in Greek is *περιπατέω*, the same term used in 4:17 to urge the readers how not to live.

in the sons of disobedience" (2:1b-2, RSV).⁹² Pre-conversion life is portrayed not only as a sinful life typical of all unbelievers, but as a life controlled by demonic powers. The writer elaborates further on the former life-orientation of his readers, saying, "Among these we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, following the desires of body and mind, and so we were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind" (2:3, RSV). He does not restrict his indictment here to gentiles, as in 4:17-19. Rather, all people outside of Christ, οἱ λοιποί, are considered to be "children of wrath" whether Jew or gentile.⁹³

This past orientation contrasts with the readers' current situation. First, they live in a world where the demonic powers still influence those outside of Christ to perform evil: "the spirit that is now [vôv] at work in the sons of disobedience" (2:2). But second, and more importantly, the readers are said to have been made alive from the deadness of their sins and to have been raised and seated in the heavenlies with Christ himself (2:4-6). Having been saved through faith (2:8), they now exist as God's "workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that [they] should walk in them" (2:10, RSV). Thus, sinful activity has been replaced with God-created works.

These concepts appear unmistakably in 4:17-24. Not only are the evil ways of living recalled, though with a different sort of language and description, but the new ways created by God are also to be "put on." Gentile corruption exists in the world as a present reality that the readers must resist. But God's good works created beforehand also exist, providing them with a new living-standard.

⁹² Tachau, *"Einst" und "Jetzt" im Neuen Testament*, 141, usefully describes the overall contrast between 2:1-3 and 2:4-7 in spatial-temporal terms, so that the sphere of "this world" is in ready contrast to the heavenlies. Recognition of such a contrast within the context favours a rendering of τὸν αἰῶνα τοῦ κόσμου τούτου in 2:2 in spatial-temporal rather than personal terms. This is counter to, among others, Schlier, *Der Brief an die Epheser*, 101-02, who sees a reference to a pagan deity, and Meyer, *The Epistle to the Ephesians*, 358, who sees only a period of time being referred to here. A useful summary of issues and commentators, also advocating the spatial-temporal view, can be found in Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 94-95.

⁹³ This is also indicated by the sudden stylistic shift in subject from "you," comprising the predominantly gentile audience, to "we," by which the writer includes at the very least himself along with his readers. Given the Jewish background the writer seems to display elsewhere, he implies that Jews as well as gentiles, "we all," would have likewise been under the influence of "the prince of the power of the air" prior to believing in Christ. This takes into account the warnings of, among others, Schnackenburg, *Der Brief an die Epheser*, 92, and Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 88, who rightly stress the change of subject as stylistic rather than indicative of "we Jews" versus "you gentiles". Schnackenburg, 93, goes on to say, "Das gleiche semantische Feld in Eph 2,3; 4,17f; 5,6 läßt keinen Zweifel daran, daß der Verf. an heidnische Lebensart denkt, also mit »wir alle« die ganze vorwiegend heidenchristliche Gemeinde meint, auch wenn Judenchristen dabei eingeschlossen sind."

The once-now schema takes on a slightly different nuance in 2:11-22. Here the writer emphasizes his readers' present acceptability before God. He reminds his readers, mostly gentiles,⁹⁴ that formerly they had been "separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world" (2:12, RSV). The writer has shifted his emphasis from present-spatial to historical-spatial descriptions of his readers' alienation from God.⁹⁵ In 2:1-10 he had contrasted pre- with post-conversion conditions, simultaneously indicating that other people currently live in the same pre-conversion state that his readers had formerly. Here the discussion shifts from a pre-/post-conversion to a pre-/post-Christ situation.⁹⁶

Admittedly, the distinctions seem blurred for the writer; both the readers' separation from Christ (χωρίς Χριστοῦ, 2:12) and their state of hopelessness and godlessness are presented as coterminous with their being alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and with their being strangers and foreigners to the covenants of promise.⁹⁷ The former two conditions would be true for any non-believer prior to conversion. The latter two would always be true for any non-proselyte gentile. God eventually accepts gentiles on the basis of their inclusion in the one new humanity (εἰς ἓνα καινὸν ἄνθρωπον, 2:15), in which both Jew and gentile have been combined. Gentiles are no longer "strangers and aliens" (2:19), but co-citizens and householders of God in a new kind of building founded on the apostles and prophets (2:20).

The writer consciously avoids saying that gentile believers are presently part of Israel and linked with the covenants, indicating instead that a new situation exists. This new situation, by inference, is both an advancement from the commonwealth of Israel and an expression of a different perspective on the

⁹⁴ Eph 2:11 reads: "you gentiles in the flesh" (ὁμεῖς τὰ ἔθνη ἐν σαρκί).

⁹⁵ This is contrary to Tachau, "Einst" und "Jetzt" im Neuen Testament, 140-41, who sees the same spatial concerns expressed in 2:2 and 2:12, 18 and 19.

⁹⁶ Schnackenburg, *Der Brief an die Epheser*, 104: the thought of vv 11-13 ". . . führt von der Gegenüberstellung der ehemaligen Heiden mit der »Gemeinde Israels« (Vv 11-12) über das Schema von »einst und jetzt« zu der neuen Situation, in der die Heiden zu »Nahen« durch das Blut Christi geworden sind (V 13)."

⁹⁷ Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 125, explains this as a combination of gentile pre-conversion with pre-Christ history: "What this use of the schema involves, then, is not a general depiction of the place of the Gentiles in the history of salvation nor a general contrast between Gentiles and Jews, but, more specifically, a contrast between the pre-Christian past in its relation to Israel's privileges and the Christian present of these particular Gentile addressees."

covenants of promise, since "the law of commandments and ordinances" (2:15) that separated Jew from gentile has been abolished.

The terms "near" and "far" (vv 13, 17) use spatial imagery to depict both historical ages and pre-/post-conversion states. Those who are now near are near through the blood of Christ (2:13), something that could not have been true prior to Christ's coming. Christ's death reconciles both Jew to gentile (v 16) and the two groups to God (v 17). With the once-now schema in 2:11-22, the writer shows that possibilities never-before existing for gentiles have now made both them and Jews beneficiaries of the same salvation.

In 2:12 and 4:18 the writer uses the term ἀπηλλοτριωμένοι to describe the current state of gentiles who are separated from a divine entity. But the entity of "the life of God" (4:18) is not identical to "the commonwealth of Israel" (2:12). The life of God comprises the same historical situation that exists for all who believe and is the advancement on the historical situation that previously allowed advantages only to those who were part of the commonwealth of Israel.

In living no longer as gentiles (4:17), as well as in living in accordance with the new person (4:24), the readers continue in a privileged standing. Additionally, they show that, unlike those outside the believing community, they have not hardened their hearts, nor remained ignorant, but have responded to the one who preached peace (2:17) to them. The writer's prior description of the new opportunities "now" existing for gentiles makes any emulation of gentile behaviour absurd.

Though Eph 3:5 does not follow the strict once-now formula of chapter 2, it contrasts separate ages. Here the writer speaks of himself as a minister of the "mystery of Christ" that had "in other generations" not been disclosed, but "has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit; that is, how the Gentiles are fellow heirs, members of the same body, and partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel" (3:5-6, RSV). What had been described in detail in chapter 2 is taken up slightly differently in chapter 3 with the "once" aspect referring clearly to past history and the "now" dimension referring to the writer's present historical situation.

He embellishes this "now" aspect in v 10 with an enigmatic purpose statement of his ministry in the "mystery": "that through the church the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known to the principalities and powers in the heavenly

places" (3:10, RSV). Whoever these "principalities and powers" may be for the writer, he has introduced a "heavenly" perspective to the once-now situation described in 2:11-22. He does this, according to 3:12-13, to comfort his readers about his own personal circumstances by relating his suffering in ministry on their behalf to the overall purposes of God. But, by connecting the changed historical perspective of gentiles, who are now "fellow heirs in the same body," to a disclosure to heavenly powers, he has also in effect tied together the "heavenly" status of the readers described in 2:6 with the changed historical status of 2:11-22. Those who are seated next to Christ are also co-equal participants with Jews in God's new scheme on earth. Such a present reality for the readers precludes any involvement in gentile-like behaviour.

2.3 Conclusions

The writer has prepared his readers for the moral teaching found in 4:17-24 in two main ways. He has sensitized them to the relationship between what they know and how they should behave through his prayers for the inner spiritual control of their lives. He has also emphasized the reorientation that has taken place in their lives as beneficiaries of the grace of God, as fellow-participants with Jews in the spiritual life of God and as participants in a new working of God within the world. Because he explains these things first, the writer bases his moral views not on his opinion of what comprises good behaviour but on what he thinks is in line with the present spiritual reality of his readers. Their moral lives are to be directed by and motivated from hearts that have been spiritually enlightened.

3 Eph 4:17-24 and Pauline Moral Traditions

Eph 4:17-24 shares four basic affinities with antecedent Pauline writings. The first of these to be examined involves Paul's statements about gentiles and gentile behaviour, found principally in Rom 1:18-32 and 1 Thess 4:1-8 but also throughout 1 Corinthians. Second, Paul's sin-lists in 2 Cor 12:21 and Gal 5:19 contain terms also found in Eph 4:19. Third, there are several comments made by Paul that are thought to resemble what is said in Eph 4:22-24. Fourth, Paul's attitudes about reception of teaching merit a comparison with Ephesians. After this, similarities between Eph 4:17-24 and Col 1:21, 2:6-7 and 3:5-10 will be discussed.

3.1 Paul and Gentiles

As is widely recognized, various statements in Eph 4:17-19 bear remarkable resemblance to some in Rom 1:18-32. Several vocabulary correspondences are

identified between these two passages:⁹⁸ the godless in Rom 1:21 became vain in their thinking - in Eph 4:17 gentiles live in the vanity of their minds;⁹⁹ the godless in Rom 1:21 are described as those whose senseless hearts have been darkened - in Eph 4:18 gentiles are portrayed as those whose understanding is darkened, who are basically ignorant and who are hardhearted;¹⁰⁰ and in Rom 1:24, God hands the godless over in the lusts of their hearts to uncleanness that includes sexual debauchery - in Eph 4:19 gentiles hand themselves over to sexual licentiousness leading to the practice of every sort of uncleanness along with covetousness.¹⁰¹

In spite of these similarities, there are also some major differences. In the first place, Eph 4:17-19 discusses gentiles exclusively, whereas Rom 1:18-32 also includes Jews within its denunciation of godlessness, an observation made only by a small number of commentators.¹⁰² That the statements following in vv 18-32 reflect Jewish attitudes about gentile idolatry is widely recognized.¹⁰³ But within a passage that indicts the godlessness and unrighteous of humanity in general (ἀνθρώπων, 1:18), Paul has also included (1:23) an allusion to Ps 106:20, a psalm excoriating Jewish idolatry at Mt Sinai. He has subtly incorporated Jews within his application of typical Jewish polemics directed against gentiles, a point that

⁹⁸ CL Mitton, *The Epistle to the Ephesians: Its Authorship, Origin and Purpose*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1951), 300-301.

⁹⁹ . . . ἐματαιώθησαν ἐν τοῖς διαλογισμοῖς αὐτῶν. . . (Rom 1:21) vs . . . περιπατεῖν ἐν ματαιότητι τοῦ νοῦς αὐτῶν. . . (Eph 4:17).

¹⁰⁰ . . . ἐσκοτίσθη ἡ ἀσύνετος αὐτῶν καρδιά. . . (Rom 4:21) vs . . . ἐσκοτωμένοι τῇ διανοίᾳ ὄντες. . . διὰ τὴν ἀγνοίαν τὴν οὖσαν ἐν αὐτοῖς, διὰ τὴν πωρωσιν τῆς καρδίας αὐτῶν. . . (Eph 4:18).

¹⁰¹ . . . παρέδωκεν αὐτοὺς ὁ θεὸς ἐν ταῖς ἐπιθυμίαις τῶν καρδιῶν εἰς ἀκαθαρσίαν. . . (Rom 1:24) vs . . . ἐαυτοὺς παρέδωκαν τῇ ἀσελείᾳ εἰς ἐργασίαν ἀκαθαρσίας πάσης ἐν πλεονεξίᾳ. . . (Eph 4:19).

¹⁰² See, especially JDG Dunn, *Romans 1-8*, (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1988), 55, 72; and CEB Cranfield, *Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, (Edinburgh: T & T Clark), I: 105-06. L Morris, *The Epistle to the Romans* (Grand Rapids: William B Eerdmans, 1988), 74 also recognizes this, but says, "By keeping this section general Paul is really indicting all mankind. . . The language he uses is especially applicable to the Gentiles, and we need not doubt that he has them primarily in mind." A Nygren, *Commentary on Romans*, tr by CC Rasmussen, (London: SCM Press, 1952), 101: "Though Paul does not say expressly that he here speaks of the Gentiles, the context makes that fact clear." J Ziesler, *Paul's Letter to the Romans*, (London: SCM Press, 1989), 76, makes a similar point.

¹⁰³ Principally Wis 11-15. See, e.g., CK Barrett, *The Epistle to the Romans*, (London: Adam & Charles Black, 1971), 33-41; FF Bruce, *The Letter of Paul to the Romans*, (Grand Rapids: William B Eerdmans, 1985), 79; Cranfield, *The Epistle to the Romans*, I: 104-135; Dunn, *Romans 1-8*, 53-76; M Black, *Romans*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989), 39-43; Ziesler, *Paul's Letter to the Romans*, 76.

would not have gone unrecognized by those gentiles familiar with the Scriptures.¹⁰⁴ Additionally, in Rom 1 idolatry is a major topic, while in Eph 4 it is not even mentioned. Further, in Rom 1:24 God penalizes the godless by giving them over to sexual impurity, whereas in Eph 4:19 the gentiles give themselves to it.

Some of this can be explained in terms of the emphases of each passage, since Rom 1 is demonstrating the unrighteousness of humanity while Eph 4 is urging its readers to behave in a certain way.¹⁰⁵ Further, the two letters have a different readership; Romans is directed to Jews and gentiles, whereas Ephesians mentions only gentile readers. By attributing such wicked behaviour to gentiles, Eph 4 is more in line with what is found in much Jewish paraenesis, whereas Rom 1 seems to change the standard line to include, in part, even Jews. But from another vantage point, Rom 1 is more in line with Jewish polemics against gentiles by discussing idolatry as well, whereas the failure to mention idolatry in Eph 4 is a striking omission, particularly when Paul included warnings against idolatry elsewhere in his paraenesis (Gal 5:20; 1 Cor 5:11; 10:14), and when the writer of Ephesians warns against idolatry only in passing (Eph 5:5).

The writer of Ephesians conveys Pauline thought, especially using vocabulary similar to Rom 1. He also conveys thoughts that could be at home within Judaism.¹⁰⁶ According to Rom 1:18-32, both gentile and Jew are known to have lived sinfully; wickedness is not presented as an exclusively gentile phenomenon. Eph 4:17-19 addresses only those aspects of gentile wickedness thought to be pertinent. In spite of their similarities, each has a unique message.

The view of gentiles expressed in 1 Thess 4:3-8, in some ways, is closer to what is found in Eph 4:17-19. In what may have been general paraenesis,¹⁰⁷ not

¹⁰⁴ Dunn, *Romans 1-8*, 73: "But it would probably not escape notice that the illustration Paul uses to document the typical Jewish polemic against idolatry is Israel itself! It is Israel who stands as a perpetual warning of how quickly man can turn from God and lose himself in things. The most devastating example of humankind's folly in turning its back on God is given by Paul's own people. Those among his largely Gentile audience who recognized the allusion would probably appreciate this unexpected twist in the Pauline emphasis--'Jew first and also Greek.'"

¹⁰⁵ Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 279, attributes the difference between Rom 1:24 and Eph 4:19 to "the needs of paraenesis," which attempts in this case to emphasize "the moral responsibility of the Gentiles." This is a more likely solution than the explanation that this verse reflects a need on the part of the writer to weaken Paul's harshness in Rom 1:24-32 when he attributes the evil behaviour to the judgment of God. So Gnlika, *Der Epheserbrief*, 225, and Mitton, *Ephesians*, 161.

¹⁰⁶ This point will be pursued in detail in §4.1, appearing later in this chapter.

¹⁰⁷ For a basic development, see AJ Malherbe, "Exhortation in 1 Thessalonians," in *Paul and the Popular Philosophers*, (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1990), 49-66, especially 60-66. He regards Paul as

directed toward any known circumstances, Paul urges his readers to be sexually pure. He does this by commanding them to "abstain from unchastity" (πορνεία, 1 Thess 4:3), to "take a wife . . . in holiness and honor" (4:4)¹⁰⁸ and by urging "that no man transgress, and wrong [πλεονεκτεῖν] his brother in this matter" (4:6).¹⁰⁹ He relates the discussion to "uncleanness" (ἀκαθαρσία, 4:7). He also considers that their behaviour should contrast markedly with "the passion of lust like^{the} heathen [τὰ ἔθνη] who do not know God" (4:5).

The passage in 1 Thess 4 resembles Eph 4:17-19 in two ways. First, gentile sexual morality is referred to. Second, the terms ἀκαθαρσία and πλεονεκτεῖν are virtually the same as the terms for "uncleanness" and "greed" found in Eph 4:19. Further, the term πορνεία appears here, the term that the writer of Ephesians substitutes in 5:2 and 5:5 for the more general ἀσέλγεια in 4:19. If neither passage were aimed at actual problems of immorality within the communities of their respective addressees, then these resemblances should not be surprising.¹¹⁰ Both the similarity of vocabulary and the generalizations of gentile sexual immorality may reflect common teaching traditions with which the readers in each community

conveying, principally, the uniqueness of the Thessalonians' faith by combining moral standards that were probably familiar to them with Christian motivations. Paul's point would be, not chiefly to correct wrong behaviour, but to show the uniqueness of living as a Christian.

¹⁰⁸ This is the RSV's rendering, as one of three totally different possibilities, but finds strong support from OL Yarbrough, *Not Like the Gentiles*, 68-73. FF Bruce, *1 & 2 Thessalonians* (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1982), 81-83, argues for a differently restrictive view, so that "vessel" should be taken to mean "body," citing LXX 1 Kgdms 21:5 as evidence for the terms being a euphemism for genitalia. E Best, *The First and Second Epistles to the Thessalonians*, (London: Adam & Charles Black, 1972), 160-64, argues in the other direction, saying both that "body" could not easily be separated from "human being" in the thought of Paul and that the notion of "keeping" a body is an incomprehensible concept for Paul.

¹⁰⁹ Yarbrough, *Not Like the Gentiles*, 73-76, states that although some of the terminology of 1 Thess 4:6 comes from the commercial world, as is also true regarding sexual matters in 1 Cor 7:3-5, it is also general enough that it would derive its meaning principally from the context at hand, which is sexual. Thus, the term πλεονεκτεῖν does not demand a special sexual orientation, nor must there be a necessary linkage between sexual morality and property rights. This differs from the subsequent observations of Countryman, *Dirt, Greed and Sex*, 108-09, 201-13, who sees Paul in 1 Thess 4 as discussing not sexual purity but "social greed." Regarding issues such as adultery and fornication, especially in 1 Cor, he concludes: "Christians were to restrict the satisfaction of this [sexual] appetite to forms consistent with the fact that they are the property of Christ. This demanded a respect for the property of others, and Paul retained major features of the existing property code for sexuality" (p 219). Best, *The First and Second Epistles to the Thessalonians*, 166, identifies a range of possibilities on the issue of sexual defrauding, opting for the meaning of committing adultery against a fellow Christian's wife, but acknowledging a possible euphemism for homosexuality.

¹¹⁰ This depends on the accuracy of Malherbe's analysis that Paul, in 1 Thess, emphasizes motivation for moral activity, not necessarily correcting known faults within the community.

may have been familiar.¹¹¹

The reference to gentiles is significant in that it shows Paul telling a gentile audience not to behave like gentiles. Paul, in 1 Thess 4:5, makes only a cursory allusion to gentile behaviour. But he does so in a manner that seems blatantly to disregard his readers' own gentile background with the passing expression "not like the Gentiles who do not know God." It may be possible that he means this in a restrictive sense; some gentiles, such as those to whom he writes, know God, but his readers are not to behave like the ones who do not.¹¹² More likely, he uses the expression as a stereotype; gentiles are to be categorized as those people who do not know God.¹¹³

While recognizing affinities between these two passages, one must also note their differences. In the first place, 1 Thess 4:3-8 seems to focus exclusively on sexual morality. The "uncleanness" and greed, or "defrauding," are more easily explained with sexual connotations. The similar terminology in Eph 4:19 is listed, rather than explained, making it more difficult to restrict it to sexual matters. Further, Eph 4:19 invites an expansion of meaning in the concepts of uncleanness and greed by talking about "works of every sort of uncleanness with greed" (RSV).¹¹⁴

Second, in 1 Thess 4:5 gentile behaviour is really only alluded to. In Eph 4:17-19, it is completely in view. Further, Eph 4:17-19 is more expansive, relating improper behaviour to improper mental and spiritual perception. In 1 Thess 4:5, Paul addresses not his readers' pre-Christian lives but their non-Christian environment. By contrast, the writer of Ephesians emphasizes his readers' behaving differently from their pre-conversion past.

Paul's attitudes toward gentile behaviour found in 1 Corinthians also warrant

¹¹¹ In reference to 1 Thess 4:3-8, this is certainly warranted by the observations of Malherbe, "Exhortation in 1 Thessalonians," 60-61, though he is more interested in seeing affinities with philosophical schools than with Christian communities.

¹¹² He seems to do this in Gal 2:15 when he characterizes gentiles as sinners, but does so in a partitive sense - i.e. sinners from among the gentiles. Likewise, in Gal 4:8 he refers to his gentile readers' pre-conversion past as the time when they did not know God, wording similar to 1 Thess 4:5, but softens the generalization by assuming that his gentile readers now do know God.

¹¹³ See Bruce, *1 & 2 Thessalonians*, 84, and Best, *The First and Second Epistles to the Thessalonians*, 165, both of whom cite LXX Ps 78:6 (Best also Jer 10:25) for the same phraseology associated with gentiles.

¹¹⁴ . . . εις εργασιαν ακαθαρσιας πασης εν πλεονεξια.

brief examination. He refers to gentiles five different ways in this letter. He mentions Greek/gentile ideas of wisdom, notions that reject the cross as foolishness (1:18-25). He makes a passing comment on the existence of gentile standards of morality (1 Cor 5:1). He equates gentile idol-worship with demon-worship (1 Cor 10:20). He speaks of gentiles, or more properly Greeks, as a separate grouping with Jews and "the churches of God" (1 Cor 10:32). Elsewhere he speaks of his readers pre-conversion past as the time "when [they] were gentiles" (1 Cor 12:2).¹¹⁵

Two immediate observations from these verses are plain. In the first place, Paul's generalizations of gentile behaviour differ from the Jewish or Christian stereotypes seen thus far. When he mentions idolatry, he does so with the awareness that this was not only a part of his readers' past (1 Cor 12:2), but is part of the ongoing practice of those who do not know Christ (1 Cor 10:20). His opinion that idols are demons in 1 Cor 10:20 can be considered Jewish (Deut 32:17, LXX Ps 95:5), but the overall thrust of the statement is that gentiles are currently involved in idol-worship. The statement that Greeks seek wisdom and Jews signs (1 Cor 1:22), while an over-generalization on the one hand, does, on the other, show some sensitivity to and awareness of Greek philosophical tradition.¹¹⁶ Even the comment, "It is actually reported that there is immorality among you, and of a kind that is not found even among pagans" (1 Cor 5:1, RSV), is a back-handed admission that gentiles do have some moral standards.

The second observation is that gentiles (τὰ ἔθνη), or Greeks (Ἕλληνες), seem to be in a category by themselves, in spite of the fact that the readership of 1 Corinthians is comprised largely of Greek gentiles. Jews are real people, not just stereotypes; Greeks and gentiles are real people, not just stereotypes; but also, "the church of God" is comprised of real people. Rather than reflecting a "third race" mentality, it probably indicates that to Paul, national heritage is meaningless when

¹¹⁵ The RSV translates ὅτε ἔθνη ἦτε as "when you were heathen." The term ἔθνη may possibly be used by Paul here as a reference to those who are "outsiders" to the community. Such a usage is not unknown within classical literature. See EL Hicks, "On Some Political Terms Employed in the New Testament," *The Classical Review*, 1 (1887): 42-43. This seems to be the approach of H Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians*, tr by JW Leitch, (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1975), 47, note 78: "τὰ ἔθνη is the Greeks' designation for foreigners." Even if ἔθνη should best be translated here as "pagan" or "heathen," Christian equivalents to "outsider," the point made below still stands that in 1 Corinthians Paul shows a disregard of the basic ethnic origins of his readers, considering them to be something else because they have believed in Christ.

¹¹⁶ G Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, (Grand Rapids: William B Eerdmans, 1987), 74-75, sees these statements reflecting "national characteristics." He goes further to cite Herodotus' comments on the zeal of Greeks to learn what they could about anything (*History* 4.77).

one believes in Christ, though some unbelievers may be Jews and others Greeks.¹¹⁷ This is the contextual thrust of the statement in 10:32:¹¹⁸ "Give no offense to Jews or to Greeks or to the church of God" (RSV).

This overview of Paul's attitudes concerning gentiles shows Paul's versatility. He can appeal to standard Jewish stereotypes, as in 1 Thess 4:5 and Rom 1:18-32, but he can also use different generalizations more pertinent to his arguments. Jews are drawn into the stereotype in Rom 1:18-32, while gentile behaviour is only a passing allusion in 1 Thess 4:5. In 1 Cor 10:32 and 12:2, gentiles' post-conversion life nullifies their pre-conversion heritage, so that in some way, gentile Christians are no longer regarded as gentiles. Both Rom 2:14-15 and 1 Cor 5:1 acknowledge the existence of gentile standards of morality.

The writer of Ephesians' portrayal of gentiles fits 1 Thess 4:5 quite closely. He does use the language of Rom 1:18-32, though that passage is not directed exclusively at gentile misbehaviour. A "third race" mentality may be in view in Ephesians, but it would seem to be no different from what Paul states in 1 Cor 10:32 and 12:2.

3.2 Pauline Sin-Lists and Eph 4:19

Though not requiring extensive discussion, the appearance of terminology from two of Paul's sin-lists in Eph 4:19 must be acknowledged. The terms ἀσέλγεια and ἀκαθαρσία appear together in Paul's lists in 2 Cor 12:21 and Gal 5:19.¹¹⁹ In both contexts the terms have clear sexual overtones.

In 2 Cor 12:21, the two terms appear with πορνεία. The overall context seems to be a combination of general paraenesis with a concern that the sins mentioned may actually be a part of the current Corinthian practice.¹²⁰ Sexual immorality has

¹¹⁷ Note the discussion of EP Sanders, *Paul, the Law and the Jewish People*, (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983), 173.

¹¹⁸ Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 489: "The old categories Jew and Gentile have given way to the new, 'being saved' and 'perishing'. . . On the basis of this passage, some of the early Church Fathers referred to the church as a 'third race'."

¹¹⁹ Though the overall correspondence between Col 3:5-10 and Eph 4:17-24 is more striking, as will be seen below, even the list in Col 3:5 only contains two terms found in Eph 4:19, ἀκαθαρσία and πλεονεξία. Eph 4:19 is the only NT statement linking ἀσέλγεια, ἀκαθαρσία and πλεονεξία.

¹²⁰ R Martin, *2 Corinthians*, (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1986), 460-469, emphasizes the likelihood that these sins represented actual problems within the Corinthian church, though the fact that Paul "fears" that these practices may still exist indicates that this need not actually be the case when he eventually visits the Corinthians. E Schweizer, "Traditional Ethical Patterns in the Pauline and Post-Pauline Letters and Their Development (Lists of Vices and House-Tables)," in *Text and Interpretation*, ed by E Best and R McL Wilson, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 197, however,

certainly been a part of the Corinthian church's past (1 Cor 5-6). That the Corinthians actually were actively committing each of the sins Paul lists is certainly possible. The list could also just as possibly describe the general types of problems that Paul feared he would see. An act of sexual "impurity" cannot readily be distinguished from acts of sexual "immorality" and "licentiousness." But all three terms taken together would paint a bleak picture of an overall moral atmosphere that Paul dreads. He seems to use a traditional listing to generalize the problematic situation existing in Corinth.

The well-known "works of the flesh" list in Gal 5:19-21 is also noted for its traditional generalities.¹²¹ In all likelihood aspects of this list refer to actual sins within the Galatian communities,¹²² though, as with 2 Cor 12:20-21, it is highly improbable that all the items mentioned refer to specific problems there. By mixing known sins with general sinfulness, Paul underscores the reprehensibility of the Galatians' misconduct.

The list itself evinces at least four broad categories: sexual sins, religious sins, factional sins and carousing sins. "Impurity" and "licentiousness" appear next to "fornication," at the head of the list, demonstrating obvious sexual nuances. The list then shifts dramatically to include the religious sins of "idolatry" and "sorcery."¹²³

An examination of other lists underscores the generalizations that the writer of Ephesians depicts. But the list in Ephesians lacks any statement that could tie any of the listed these problems to actual situations in the readers' community, unlike 2 Cor 12:21 and Gal 5:19-21. The writer of Ephesians paints with broad strokes, even widening the scope of "uncleanness" and "greed" to include other spheres beside that of sexual immorality.

observes the combination of a "traditional triad" of sins (v 21) with "typical acts of unbrotherly behaviour within a community" (v 20).

¹²¹ E Schweizer, "Traditional Ethical Patterns," 197-98. Note the closing expression τὰ ὅμοια τούτοις, "and things like these," indicating the broad brush-strokes used to paint the general picture of sinfulness.

¹²² J Barclay, *Obeying the Truth*, (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1988), 71, 152-53. The exhortation in 5:15 against "biting and devouring one another" seems to point to communal strife, an issue also addressed by the list of sins in 5:20-21.

¹²³ Countryman, *Dirt, Greed and Sex*, 106-08, on questionable grounds, considers a sexual nuance for the term "uncleanness" to be unlikely. He believes that in Gal 5:19 it refers either to religious sins such as cult prostitution, or to the exaltation of the self. He favours the latter, due to the prominence of sins of strife. Paul would not be censuring sexual immorality or impurity per se, but brotherly unkindness, an argument Countryman also applies to 2 Cor 12:21. This is because he believes that purity in Paul is completely metaphorical.

3.3 Pauline Language and Affinities with Eph 4:22-24

In his survey of Pauline similarities to Ephesians, CL Mitton identifies five other verses that use language similar to that which is found in Eph 4:22-24:¹²⁴ Rom 6:6 - the old person; Rom 12:2 - renewing the mind; Rom 13:12 - putting off deeds of darkness and putting on the armour of light; 2 Cor 5:17 - the new creation in Christ; Gal 3:27 - putting on Christ. Each of these statements will be examined, not exhaustively, but to comment on any resemblance they may have to the thoughts in Eph 4.

In Rom 6 Paul speaks of the old person, or "self" (RSV, lit *παλαιὸς ἄνθρωπος*), that has been "crucified." This forms part of his discussion about the transfer of dominions for the believer, from the reign of sin in death to the reign of grace through righteousness (Rom 5:21). After linking the death and resurrection of Christ with a spiritual death and resurrection of the believer (6:4-5),¹²⁵ Paul states that the old person was crucified with Christ. The concept of the death of the old person illustrates how sin as a power should hold no sway in the life of the believer (6:6-11). The old person in this setting refers to that aspect of the individual over whom sin, as a power, could have legal claim. Since, Paul says, that person has died, sin has lost its basis for any claim.¹²⁶

The concept of "old person" in Eph 4:22 is similar in that it is associated with a pre-faith aspect in the life of a believer. The influencing power of sin over this person, however, is missing from this passage. The "old person" in Eph 4:22 refers more to an orientation that can be shunned, "put off," rather than to an entity that has died. The similar terminology is just that, and little more.

Rom 12:2 compares much more favourably with Eph 4:22-24. Both passages are overtly paraenetic. Both address an orientation to living that is to be avoided, expressed in Rom 12:2 as non-conformity to the age (*αἰών*) and in Eph 4:22 as putting off the old person. Both refer to a renewal of the mind, albeit with

¹²⁴ CL Mitton, *The Epistle to the Ephesians: Its Authorship, Origin and Purpose*, 300-303.

¹²⁵ Dunn, *Romans 1-8*, 313-18, describes the complexity of these verses, also rightly seeing them as focussed, not on baptism, which is used as an explanatory motif, but on dying to sin and living a new kind of life. Ziesler, *Paul's Letter to the Romans*, 157, "Those who die and rise with [Christ] are those who have joined him in leaving the Old Age and embracing the New."

¹²⁶ Dunn, *Romans 1-8*, 318-20, notes that both grammar and language depict an eschatological setting where sin's power is weakened under the rule of grace as a portent of its ultimate removal in the final consummation. The "old person" in the context of Rom 6 may also refer backward to the discussion, in Rom 5:12-21, of Adam as head of an old era.

different vocabulary (ἀνακαινώσις, Rom 12:2; ἀνανέομαι, Eph 4:23), but with terminology having a good degree of semantic overlap.¹²⁷ Finally, both promote a new orientation to living, called a transformation in Rom 12:2 and a putting on of the new person in Eph 4:24.¹²⁸

Rom 13:12 provides the one definite use in the undisputed Pauline epistles of "put off" and "put on" language as a behavioural metaphor.¹²⁹ In 13:11 he speaks of the soon approaching "salvation" as the ending of night and the dawning of the hour of daylight. He continues the metaphor in v 12, saying, "the night is far gone, the day is at hand" (RSV). He then shifts metaphors in the very next statement, endowing the term "darkness" not with cosmic meaning but ethical.¹³⁰ The works of darkness are to be put off and the armour of light put on.

Paul again is referring to orientations to life. Works belonging to darkness, or performed in darkness,¹³¹ refer to the kinds of activities associated with unrighteousness, activities that he lists explicitly in v 13 as "reveling and drunkenness, . . . debauchery and licentiousness, . . . quarreling and jealousy" (RSV). By putting off works of darkness, the readers would be dissociating themselves from evil activities prevalent in their times, referred to as "the night". Likewise, by putting on the armour of light, the readers would associate themselves with Christ, the day-bringer, whom they are also enjoined to "put on". Rom 13:12-13, like Eph 4:22-24, uses clothing imagery to urge appropriate behaviour.

In 2 Cor 5:17 Paul refers to the believer as "a new creation." Here he also speaks of a new orientation, where "the old has passed away" and "the new has

¹²⁷ See discussion by Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 286, who cites RA Harrisville, "The Concept of Newness in the New Testament," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 74 (1955): 69-79. This is also stated, but not proven, by Bruce, *The Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians*, 358.

¹²⁸ Dunn, *Romans 9-16*, (Dallas, TX: Word Books, 1988), 717, refers to an "eschatological tension" between "resisting the danger of adapting too much to the norms and values of this age" and "submitting to the power of the risen one to renew from within." One would be hard-pressed to label such a tension in Eph 4:22-24 as "eschatological," perhaps signifying a major difference between the two passages.

¹²⁹ Ziesler, *Paul's Letter to the Romans*, 320, sees here the language of baptismal catechism. Cranfield, *The Epistle to the Romans*, II: 685, regards this as a possibility, but considers it improbable, especially if one takes the textual variant of ἀποβολόμεθα in view. Dunn, *Romans 9-16*, 787-88, emphasizes the frequency of this metaphor throughout both Graeco-Roman and Jewish thought.

¹³⁰ So Dunn, *Romans 9-16*, 784-85, 787-88, who also notes a "triple mixed metaphor" in v 12b.

¹³¹ See HAW Meyer, *Critical and Exegetical Handbook to the Epistle to the Romans*, tr by JC Moore and E Johnson, rev and ed by WP Dickson, (Winona Lake, IN: Alpha Publications, 1979 reprint of 1884 edition), 498.

come." However, 2 Cor 5:17 is not overtly paraenetic in the way Eph 4:22-24 is. Though the writer of Ephesians mentions a new person who has been created according to God (4:24), his general meaning is quite different from that of Paul in 2 Cor 5:17. 2 Cor 5:17 emphasizes a change in eras;¹³² Eph 4:22-24 emphasizes a change in ethical direction. Although Ephesians is not indifferent to a change of eras (Eph 2:11-21; 3:5-6), this concern is absent from Eph 4:22-24. Similarities between Eph 4:22-24 and 2 Cor 5:17 are really only superficial.

The final verse to consider is Gal 3:27. Its implications for Eph 4:22-24 stem from its language that is thought to reflect a pre-Pauline baptismal confession about the unity of humankind.¹³³ This assessment is derived basically from the appearance of the term "baptism" in the same environment as the concepts of "putting on" and of the unity of believers.

Gal 3:27 talks about believers, "as many of you as were baptized into Christ." These same people in v 26 were said to have been sons of God through faith in Christ. According to v 27, these believers "have put on Christ" (RSV). In the flow of thought, those who have faith have been baptized and those who have been baptized have put on Christ. The verse makes no overt mention of baptismal garments. Neither does it state when Christ was actually put on.¹³⁴

This does not negate the possibility that Gal 3:27-28 uses a traditional formula that also has implications for unity within the church. The resemblances between Gal 3:27-28, 1 Cor 12:13 and Col 3:10-11 strongly support the possibility. But it does weaken potential associations between Gal 3:27 and Eph 4:22-24. Since baptism does not have to motivate the use of clothing imagery in either place, there is no compelling reason to connect these passages. Both do use a clothing metaphor to express how the life of faith is different. But Gal 3:27-28 does not

¹³² Martin, *2 Corinthians*, 135-36, 151-52, points out that Paul is defending his own ministry, appealing to the change in eras as the criterion with which his ministry should be evaluated.

¹³³ This is developed most extensively as a "baptismal reunification formula" and applied to similar statements found in 1 Cor 12:13 and Col 3:10-11 by Meeks, "The Image of the Androgyne," 180-83.

¹³⁴ HAW Meyer, *Critical and Exegetical Handbook to the Epistle to the Galatians*, tr by GH Venables, rev and ed by HE Jacobs, (Winona Lake, IN: Alpha Publications, 1979 reprint of 1884 edition), 156-57, note 7, rejects a reference to the robing of the Christian in baptismal clothes "because the custom concerned cannot be shown to have existed in *apostolic* times; at any rate it has only originated from the N.T. idea of the putting on of the new man, and is its emblematic representation." Likewise, Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 284-85, notes the lateness of evidence often cited to demonstrate the association of put-off/put-on language in the Pauline writings with the putting off of old clothes and putting on of new garments at the moment of baptism.

develop it, whereas the writer of Ephesians uses it to fashion a moral principle.

3.4 The Pauline Concern with What is Taught

Expressed in a varied vocabulary, Paul demonstrates a clear concern for those in the churches to which he writes to receive proper teaching. The terminology includes concepts such as teaching (*διδάσκω, διδαχή, διδασκαλία*), learning (*μανθάνω*), hearing (*ἀκούω, ἀκοή*), receiving (*παραλαμβάνω*) and handing down (*παραδίδωμι, παράδοσις*). Some of this terminology is found in Eph 4:20-21.

Paul clearly cared about what his converts had learned and were continuing to learn. Among the undisputed Pauline epistles, only Philemon fails to make some sort of reference to what Paul's readers had been or would be taught. Paul wanted his readers to learn from him either directly, through the written word or his own presence, or indirectly, through his envoys.¹³⁵ The founder of a church would understandably be concerned for its continued welfare. Paul is also known to speak out against competitive teaching that he believes is misleading his converts.¹³⁶ To the church in Rome, a church that Paul himself did not found, he only refers to what he thinks his readers have learned, and provides some teaching of his own as well.¹³⁷

When the writer of Ephesians expresses an interest in what his readers have learned, he stands in the Pauline tradition. He does express this concern throughout the epistle, and relates it to the development of internal motivation - i.e. the heart (1:18), the inner person (3:16) and the spirit of the mind (4:23).

3.5 Colossians and Eph 4:17-24

Colossians exhibits the Pauline concern for proper teaching (1:23, 2:6-7). Its description, in 1:21, of the pre-conversion existence of its readers also resembles

¹³⁵ 1 Cor 4:17 - Timothy is to remind the Corinthians about what Paul teaches everywhere else; 1 Cor 11:2 - the Corinthians are adhering to the teachings that Paul had delivered to them; 1 Cor 11:23 - Paul received from Lord what he had delivered to them; 1 Cor 15:1, 3 - the Corinthians had received the gospel teaching Paul had preached to them; Paul had received gospel teaching and now passes it on again to the Corinthians; Phil 4:9 - the Philippians are to do what they have learned, received and heard from Paul; 1 Thess 2:13 - the Thessalonians had received the word from hearing Paul and others; 1 Thess 4:1 - the Thessalonians had received instruction from Paul and others on how to live; Paul urges them to abound in performing the instructed behaviour.

¹³⁶ E.g., Gal 1:9 warns against hearing the preaching of anyone evangelizing with a different message from what had been received from Paul.

¹³⁷ Rom 6:17 speaks of the readers having obeyed a form of teaching to which they were committed, and urges them to aim for righteousness; Rom 16:17 warns against people putting obstacles in the way, contrary to teaching they have learned. On a somewhat different note, Rom 15:4 upholds the scriptures as an appropriate source from which the Romans can learn.

that which appears in Eph 4:18 to portray gentile lifestyle. Notwithstanding, the most significant parallels with Eph 4:17-24 are found in Col 3:5-10: uncleanness and covetousness are censured, along with four other sins (3:5); these are said to have been a part of the readers' pre-conversion past that they are now to avoid (3:7); these and other sins are to be "taken off" (ἀπόθεσθε, 3:8); the old person is to be "taken off" (ἀπεκδυσόμενοι, 3:9); the new person is to be "put on" (3:10); this new person is being renewed in accordance with the image of its creator.¹³⁸

These similarities notwithstanding, the two passages do have their differences. Eph 4:19 uses the term licentiousness, which does not appear in Col 3:5. Eph 4:19 lists terms that typify the decadence of gentile lifestyle, whereas Col 3:5 emphasizes wicked behaviour that displeases God. The writer of Colossians uses the clothing metaphor twice, first to enunciate certain sinful practices that must be avoided (3:7), and then (3:10) applied to the old person, who represents a pre-conversion orientation to living.¹³⁹ But, in keeping with what he is trying to promote paraenetically, he adds the phrase "with its practices." Though the writer of Ephesians is interested in his readers conforming to a behavioural pattern, he describes the old person as that which is being corrupted in accordance with the lust of deceit. The old person in Ephesians is to be shunned because of what it stands for, the old person in Colossians because of what it does.¹⁴⁰

3.6 Conclusions

Though resembling many thoughts scattered throughout antecedent Pauline writings, Eph 4:17-24 does not reproduce any of them slavishly. The writer stereotypes gentiles in a manner reminiscent of several different Pauline approaches found in a variety of writings. He lists standard offenses also found in various Pauline sin-lists, but refers to them for his own purpose. He uses other imagery common to Pauline writings, again with his own special nuances. He

¹³⁸ Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 273-74, has a detailed summary of these similarities.

¹³⁹ E Lohse, *Colossians and Philemon*, tr by WR Poehlmann and RJ Karris, (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1971), 141-42. Though he relates this orientation principally to baptism, he nevertheless remarks that "the image illustrates the change of rule that has taken place. . ." where believers "have been transferred into the domain of Christ's rule and are called to conduct their lives in obedience."

¹⁴⁰ H Merklein, "Eph 4,1-5,20 als Rezeption von Kol 3,1-17," in P-G Müller, W Stenger ed, *Kontinuität und Einheit*, (Freiburg: Herder, 1981), 194-210, generalizes that Eph 4:17-24 transposes the earthly/heavenly, or below/above schema of Col 3:1-4 into pre-/post-conversion and gentile/Christian schemata. As useful as his observations are, one must not ignore that in Col 3:5-11 earthly/heavenly schema are also portrayed in pre-/post-conversion language and "find concrete expression and application," according to PT O'Brien, *Colossians, Philemon* (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1982), 194.

relates the typical Pauline concern for proper learning to another concern, internal spiritual development. Even the thought-patterns and vocabulary that overlap with Colossians have different emphases in Ephesians. These may reflect traditions that have been taken over.¹⁴¹ More accurately, they reflect an imbibed world view that is expressed in different ways for different moral requirements.

4 Eph 4:17-24 and Non-Christian Moral Traditions

Three main aspects of traditional elements will be considered here: 1) the stereotype of gentile behaviour found in Jewish writings;¹⁴² 2) relevant aspects of Graeco-Roman moral thought; 3) the prevalence throughout Jewish, Classical and Hellenistic literature of the twin terms "holiness" and "righteousness" found in 4:24.

4.1 Jewish Traditions of Gentile Behaviour

As mentioned earlier, the tenor of the comments in Eph 4:19 overlaps with some Jewish views about gentile morality. Though idolatry is often associated with these views, sometimes even posited as their cause, it is not the sole sin to be excoriated.

Throughout the LXX, idolatry is a major fault associated with gentiles. This is portrayed both negatively and positively. Negatively, gentiles are reproved for creating their own lifeless gods.¹⁴³ They are those who do not know God.¹⁴⁴ Against this negative background, however, are numerous remarks that speak of gentiles praising God or coming to know God or that address the need of believing Israelites to praise God among the gentiles.¹⁴⁵

¹⁴¹ The most extreme expression of this would be the Mitton-Goodspeed hypotheses that see the writer consciously borrowing from existing Pauline texts. See Mitton, *The Epistle to the Ephesians: Its Authorship, Origin and Purpose*.

¹⁴² This approach differs from that followed by J Gnilka, "Paränetische Traditionen im Epheserbrief," in *Mélanges Bibliques*, ed by A Descamps and A de Halleux, (Gembloux: Duculot, 1970), 401-03, who categorizes various statements in 4:17-19 as conversion terminology. As he partially demonstrates, much of the specific vocabulary used in 4:17-19 is found in Greek versions of OT Pseudepigrapha. But these statements refer to sinful people in general, not to a stereotype of gentile sinfulness as Eph 4:17-19 does. Thus I will not consider individual phrases in the same way as he, but will focus principally on the issue of stereotype.

¹⁴³ Deut 4:19, 29:16-18; Josh 23:7; LXX Pss 105:35-9; 113:12-16; 134:15-18; Jer 10:2-5 (LXX); Ezek 20:32, 23:30. In this regard, Wis 14:11-31 is a significant passage that will be treated in a more detailed manner in the pages that follow.

¹⁴⁴ Ps 78:6 (LXX); Jer 10:25 (LXX).

¹⁴⁵ These abound particularly in psalms and various prophetic writings. Among psalms, see LXX Pss 21:27-28; 45:6, 10; 65:7-8; 81:8; 101:11-15; 112:1-4; 116:1-2; and especially Pss 46:1-9; 66:1-7; 71:1-19 and 95:1-13. Among prophetic writings, see Isa 2:2-4; 11:10; 55:5; 60:3; 62:2; Jer 3:17; Mic 4:2-3; Zech 2:10-13; 8:20-23; 9:9-10. Note, also, Dan 7:14 and Tob 16:6.

Partly because of idolatry, but also because gentiles do not know God and his ways,¹⁴⁶ many LXX statements generalize gentile activity as being abominable. Such abominations include sexual sins,¹⁴⁷ murder,¹⁴⁸ and destructive injustice.¹⁴⁹ Sometimes sins of the mouth are presented as especially gentile sins.¹⁵⁰ Other times gentiles are just said to be deplorable without necessarily referring to specific activities.¹⁵¹

The discussion of gentile idolatry found in Wis 11-15, especially 14:11-31, ties many of these issues together in ways that are significant for Rom 1:18-32 and, by extension, Eph 4:17-19. Though idolatry is mentioned as a problem within the realia of Jewish history (Wis 11:1-26), 14:11 is most explicit in relating this to gentile activity: ἐν εἰδώλοις ἐθνῶν. Idolatry is cited as a cause of certain sins, the beginning of sexual immorality in 14:12 (ἀρχὴ πορνείας) and the beginning, cause and end of every evil (παντὸς ἀρχὴ κακοῦ καὶ αἰτία καὶ πέρας, 14:27).

In 14:22-26 this evil is elaborated in detail with a listing of specific sins. The list begins with moral problems associated ostensibly with idol cults: child sacrifice and ritual prostitution. These religious abominations accordingly gave way to all sorts of murder, adultery, theft and a host of other sins. This state prevailed because gentiles had persisted in their erroneous knowledge of God, not seeing the foolishness of their ways, calling the warfare of their ignorance "peace" (14:22).

The similarity with the flow of thought in Rom 1:18-32 is remarkable, principally because Rom 1:18-32 begins with idolatry as the first problem stemming from a failure to acknowledge God. By comparison, Eph 4:17-19 is much more like

¹⁴⁶ This attitude is implied by many of the statements cited in this overview, but stated quite clearly in Tob 4:19, where Tobit advises his son about where to seek counsel during his travels: "Bless the Lord God on every occasion; ask him that your ways may be made straight and that all your paths and plans may prosper. For none of the nations has understanding; but the Lord himself gives all good things, and according to his will he humbles whomever he wishes. So, my son, remember my commands, and do not let them be blotted out of your mind" (RSV).

¹⁴⁷ Lev 18:1-30; 2 Macc 6:4.

¹⁴⁸ Sometimes this refers to the practice of human sacrifice, LXX Ps 105:35-39. LXX Ps 58:5 equates bloody men, workers of iniquity and gentiles. 1 Macc 7:23 relates deceit and murder to gentile activity.

¹⁴⁹ Ps 9:6, 15, 17-8 (LXX).

¹⁵⁰ Ps 58:1-5, 11-15 (LXX).

¹⁵¹ 2 Chr 33:9; Ezek 5:6; 1 Esdr 7:13; 8:69, 84. 1 Macc 1:14 speaks of gentile abominations, but mentions a group of Jews building a gymnasium as being representative of this abominable activity. 2 Macc 10:4 and 13:11 refer to gentiles as blasphemous.

Rom 1 than Wis 14. Some themes and terminology overlap between Eph 4 and Wis 14 - the concept of ignorance and the prevalence of sexual sins, including licentiousness (ἀσέλγεια) as the last in the list in Wis 14:26. But the lack of concern about idolatry in Eph 4 is peculiar.

The logic of Eph 4 seems to be one step away from Rom 1 and two from Wis 14. Wis 14 tries to demonstrate how idolatry leads to sinfulness. Rom 1 tries to show how failure to acknowledge God leads to a false sense of wisdom, which in turn leads to idolatry, which in its turn leads to a host of other sins. Eph 4 lists a lack of understanding along with alienation from God as by-products of hard-heartedness that are accompanied by sexual immorality, impurity and greed. For all the similarities, perhaps the main difference between Eph 4 and the other two passages is that it focusses on gentile immorality, whereas Wis 14 is involved in polemic against idolatry, both gentile and Jewish, and Rom 1 is attempting to establish the sinfulness of all humanity.

Similar attitudes to what is found in the LXX prevail in various OT Pseudepigrapha. Some writings reflect the same hope of gentile salvation.¹⁵² Some also depict gentiles as godless people who commit all sorts of abominations, making them unclean even to associate with.¹⁵³ Several of these writings contain particularly graphic descriptions, with some linking abominations with idolatry and others not.

T Jud 23.1-3 lists "licentiousness and witchcraft and idolatry"¹⁵⁴ as precursors to involvement in "revolting gentile affairs." *T Dan* 5.5 refers to "chasing after wives of lawless men" and the motivation to do all sorts of wickedness (πάση πονηρία) as further aspects of "revolting acts of the gentiles." While principally castigating his hearers for disturbing any God-created order, Naphtali links actions of greed and the heeding of "empty phrases" to the same disregard of God-created order as gentile idolatry (*T Naph* 3.1-3). A few statements later he characterizes the gentile behaviour his listeners are to avoid as "wickedness" on a par with the

¹⁵² *T Sim* 7.2; *T Lev* 18.9; *T Ash* 7.3; *T Ben* 9.2; 10.5; 11.2-3.

¹⁵³ *Ep Arist* 139 refers to the law as a wall designed to separate gentiles from Jews; *4 Bar* 7.32 tells how Jeremiah taught the people to avoid gentile pollution; *Pss Sol* 8.13 refers to Jewish incest, adultery, theft and ceremonial sacrilege (generalized with the phrase ἀπο πάσης ἀκαθαρσίας) as all surpassing gentile sin.

¹⁵⁴ English translations of *T 12 Patr* are by HC Kee, in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, I: 782-828.

"lawlessness of Sodom" (4.1).

The third, fourth and fifth *Sibylline Oracles* contain some interesting generalizations about gentiles. *Sib Or* 3.218-235 describes Jews in terms of what they do not do in distinction from non-Jews: i.e. they avoid the practice of idolatry. Idolatry is then portrayed as the sin "from which many evils come upon mortals on earth/ so that they are misled as to good ways and righteous deeds" (*Sib Or* 3.232-33).¹⁵⁵ Though Jews are praised for their care for "righteousness and virtue," this is contrasted with "love of money, which begets innumerable evils/ for mortal men, war, and limitless famine" (*Sib Or* 3.234-35).

Sib Or 3.548-55 denounces the Greeks for their idolatry. This denunciation makes an interesting comparison with Ephesians 4:17 since the Greeks are told that on account of the dead idols that they worship they "have been taught vain thinking."¹⁵⁶ According to this statement of the Sibyl, it is the idol that leads to vain thinking. In Rom 1:19-21 Paul says that people worshipped idols as a consequence of becoming vain in their thinking, while the writer of Ephesians merely says that gentiles walk in the vanity of their minds without mentioning idolatry.

Another interesting description of Jews in 3.584-603 relates the difference that knowledge of the true God makes for them, a knowledge that is enabled by the "faith and understanding in their breasts" given by God. They not only pray daily and engage in ritual washing (3.590-91), honoring both God and parents, but,

Greatly, surpassing all men,/ they are mindful of holy wedlock,/ and they do not engage in impious intercourse with male children,/ as do Phoenicians, Egyptians, and Romans,/ specious Greece and many nations of others,/ Persians and Galatians and all Asia (*Sib Or* 3.592-97).

The nations are idolaters, and because they do not know God, they become ensnared in sinful sexual practices.

Sib Or 4.30-34 stands in the midst of a general blessing offered to all people, whether Jew or gentile, who reject idols. The result in their lives will be that

They will look to the great glory of the one God/ and commit no wicked murder, nor deal in/ dishonest gain, which are most horrible things./ Neither have they disgraceful desire for another's spouse/ for hateful and repulsive abuse of a male.

Sexual sins again are a part of this, but are preceded by murder and dishonest gain.

¹⁵⁵ English translations are by JJ Collins, in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, I: 362-405. Collins dates the Third Sibyl between 163-45 BCE (pp 354-55), the Fourth near 80 CE (pp 381-82) and the Fifth between 80-115 CE (pp 390-91).

¹⁵⁶ *Sib Or* 3.555: ὧν ἕνεκεν τὰ μάταια φρονεῖν ὑμῖν ὑπεδείχθη.

The fifth oracle contains a number of accusations levelled at a variety of the nations, Egypt and Rome among them, castigated for idolatry and for sexual immorality. Rome is particularly singled out for promoting gross sexual practices:

You will be among evil mortals, suffering evils,/ but you will remain utterly desolate for all ages yet,/ (it will exist, but it will remain utterly desolate forever),/ despising your soil, because you desired sorcery./ With you are found adulteries and illicit intercourse with boys./ Effeminate and unjust, evil city, ill-fated above all./ Alas, city of the Latin land, unclean [πάντ' ἀκάθαρτε] in all things,/ maenad, rejoicing in vipers, as a widow you will sit/ by the banks, and the river Tiber will weep for you, its consort./ You have a murderous heart and impious spirit (*Sib Or* 5.162-71).

Matricides, desist from boldness and evil daring,/ you who formerly impiously catered for pederasty/ and set up in houses prostitutes who were pure before,/ with insults and punishment and toilsome disgrace./ For in you mother had intercourse with child unlawfully,/ and daughter was joined with her begetter as bride./ In you also kings defiled their ill-fated mouths./ In you also evil men practiced bestiality./ Be silent, most lamentable evil city, which indulges in revelry./ For no longer in you will virgin maidens/ tend the divine fire of sacred nourishing wood (*Sib Or* 5.386-394).

While sexual sins feature prominently in these condemnations, they are not the only sins pointed out. In a statement expressing the hope for a world-wide turning to God, the Sibyl envisages:

For terrible things no longer happen to wretched mortals,/ no adulteries or illicit love of boys,/ no murder, or din of battle, but competition is fair among all./ It is the last time of holy people when God, who thunders on high,/ founder of the greatest temple, accomplishes these things (*Sib Or* 5.429-33).

The picture of different gentile groups depicted in various *Sibylline Oracles* is quite negative. Idolatry features most prominently, with sexual misdemeanors not far behind. Other acts of unrighteousness such as theft and murder are occasionally mentioned. Though often idolatry is a separate sin, there is sometimes a relationship implicit between this and other sins. All stem from a lack of knowing God, though worship of idols expresses this most clearly.

When the writer of Ephesians characterizes gentile behaviour, his tone ^{does} not differ ^{greatly} from the negative attitude found in Jewish writings. Except for his failure to mention idolatry, much of what he says could have appeared in any of the writings examined. To postulate why he omitted idolatry would encourage conjecture.¹⁵⁷ Ultimately the point is the same: gentiles do not know God. Because they do not know God, they do not know God's standards of righteousness, and thus commit all sorts of sinful deeds.

¹⁵⁷ BS Easton, "New Testament Ethical Lists," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 51 (1932): 1-12, e.g., is not very convincing when he argues that idolatry appears in some NT paraenetic lists as an oversight resulting from the taking over of the list from Jewish paraenesis, and that because of this both Col 3:8 and Eph 5:5 adapted the tradition from "covetousness and idolatry" to "covetousness which is idolatry." Christians, he maintains, had already turned from idols, so certainly would not have needed a reminder to abstain from idolatry.

Though the description of gentiles would fit within Jewish writings, the particular combination of sins would be somewhat unusual. Uncleanliness and greed, or covetousness, do appear in some of the above-cited passages, but they also are common in sin-lists found throughout the New Testament.¹⁵⁸ Commonly referred-to sins are combined with Jewish views about gentiles.

The writer of Ephesians, in urging his readers to act no longer as gentiles, creates a sense of "guilt-by-association." If his readers commit such deeds they would be acting like those who do not know God. The writer affirms that they have heard Christ and come to know him (4:20-21). This means for them that they have an entirely new orientation to living.

4.2 Graeco-Roman Traditions on Sexual Morality

The combination of licentiousness, uncleanliness and covetousness seems to have been unique to Ephesians and to those writings that postdate it.¹⁵⁹ As far as specific terminology is concerned, the writer of Ephesians does not seem to have been dependent on any single piece of known writing.

But, it would be highly misleading to portray Ephesians, or even Jewish writings, as unique in their promotion of monogamous marital morality. A wide variety of Graeco-Roman philosophical traditions offer strong moral statements opposing sexual licence. In Plato's *Laws*, for example, his Athenian character denigrates the licentious (ἀκόλαστος) in favour of the temperate (σώφρων, *Laws* 733D-734D). Though he refers to more than sexual issues, he clearly endorses such moral control:

... our citizens must not be worse than fowls and many other animals which are produced in large broods, and which live chaste and celibate lives without sexual intercourse until they arrive at the age for breeding; and when they reach this age they pair off, as instinct moves them, male with female and female with male; and thereafter they live in a way that is holy and just [ὁσίως καὶ δικαίως], remaining constant to their first contracts of love: surely our citizens should at least be better than these animals.¹⁶⁰

Aristotle uses similar logic to contrast temperance with licentiousness as an excessive lifestyle that unduly seeks sexual and other pleasures beyond natural

¹⁵⁸ Easton, "New Testament Ethical Lists," 3-8, lists 1 Cor 5:10; 6:9-10; Gal 5:19-21; Col 3:5, 8; 1 Pet 4:3; and Mark 7:21-22.

¹⁵⁹ This premise is founded on a computer search through the extant Greek literature available in the *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae* for "ασελεγ," "ακαθαρ" and "πλεονε" all appearing within four lines of each other.

¹⁶⁰ Plato, *Laws* 840D-E, tr by RG Bury, (London: William Heinemann, 1926), II: 165. The discussion on sexual laws is lengthier, spanning 836D-842A (II: 151-69 in tr).

animal-like needs (*Nicomachean Ethics* III.x.3-III.xi.5, 1118a-1118b).¹⁶¹

Various Stoic and Cynic philosophers advocated similar behaviour. Musonius Rufus, for example, says,

Not the least significant part of the life of luxury and self-indulgence lies also in sexual excess; for example those who lead such a life crave a variety of loves not only lawful but unlawful ones as well, not women alone but also men; sometimes they pursue one love and sometimes another, and not being satisfied with those which are available, pursue those which are rare and inaccessible, and invent shameful intimacies, all of which constitute a grave indictment of manhood.¹⁶²

He continues by censuring pleasure-seeking sex within marriage (as opposed to sex for procreation), all forms of adultery and all sex outside the legal bounds of marriage whether with courtesans, free-women or slaves. Seneca reflects a similar mentality when he says,

You know that a man does wrong in requiring chastity of his wife while he himself is intriguing with the wives of other men; you know that as your wife should have no dealings with a lover, neither should you yourself with a mistress.¹⁶³

And emphasizing sexual immorality as a partner with other human tragedies associated with war, the Cynic Heraclitus writes,

A land is denuded of trees, is sacked, old age is treated with contempt, women are seduced, children are snatched from their arms, bedrooms are corrupted, virgins are made concubines, young men become effeminate, free men are clapped into irons, temples of the gods are pulled to the ground, profane deeds and thank offerings are made to the gods for injustice.¹⁶⁴

Earlier, Heraclitus had associated sexual immorality with uncontrolled, damaging and inhumane behaviour:

Should I laugh when I see men. . . neglect their clothes and beards and hair, or a woman who attacks her child with drugs, or youths who have devoured their substance, or a citizen deprived of his wife, or a young woman losing her virginity by force during nocturnal festivals, or a courtesan who is not yet a wife but who already has all the misfortunes of a wife, or a single young man who through licentiousness is the lover of an entire city, or the ruining of olives in perfumes, or men at banquets who increase their size through their fingers, or the extravagance in foods and diarrhetic bellies, or the

¹⁶¹ Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, tr by H Rackham, (London: William Heinemann, 1926), 175-81. Elsewhere in his ethics he says: "Again, suppose two men to commit adultery, one for profit, and gaining by the act, the other from desire, and having to pay, and so losing by it: then the latter would be deemed to be a profligate [ἀκόλαστος] rather than a man who takes more than his due [πλεονέκτης], while the former would be deemed unjust, but not profligate" (1129b, V.ii.4, p 263).

¹⁶² "On Sexual Indulgence", Fragment 12, as translated and cited by AJ Malherbe, *Moral Exhortation, a Greco-Roman Sourcebook*, (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1986), 152-53.

¹⁶³ *Epistle* 94.26, in Malherbe, *Moral Exhortation*, 128.

¹⁶⁴ Letter 7, *To Hermodorus* §8, tr by DR Worley in *The Cynic Epistles*, ed by AJ Malherbe, (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1977), 205.

important lawsuits for the common people judged on the stage? Will virtue, when ranked after wickedness, make my face light up?¹⁶⁵

The concern with behavioural patterns need not be restricted to issues of sexual morality. The scope of Eph 4:19 can certainly extend beyond sexual greed. Basic greed was commonly addressed within Hellenism. Dio Chrysostom dedicated an entire oration to the topic.¹⁶⁶ Though his concern ranges widely on this topic, he seems most interested in communal harmony and personal satisfaction.¹⁶⁷

The writer of Ephesians promotes a similar kind of outward behaviour. Eph 4:17-19 lacks any indications of dependence on a Graeco-Roman paraenetic source.¹⁶⁸ But such dependence, even if proven, would not undermine the validity or importance of the moral teaching for a first-century Christian readership. The philosophers represented an educated elite whose insights and observations on their society were made "from the top down."¹⁶⁹ Their views were not necessarily majority views, while the behaviour they promoted may even have appeared to be unusual to many. It is more likely that Eph 4:17-19 overlaps, probably unconsciously, with prevailing philosophical views, not to gain a hearing but to address problems inherent in the prevailing non-Jewish culture of the day.

Various philosophers stressed the need for reminders on issues such as sexual immorality and greed. People continually fell short of the ideals. For example, Seneca writes:

People say: "What good does it do to point out the obvious?" A great deal of good; for we sometimes know facts without paying attention to them. Advice is not teaching; it merely engages the attention and rouses us, and concentrates the memory, and keeps it

¹⁶⁵ *To Hermadorus* §5, in *The Cynic Epistles*, 203.

¹⁶⁶ "On Covetousness," Discourse 17. See, also, the combination of licentiousness with greed in the quotation from Aristotle found above in note 161, p 118.

¹⁶⁷ JW Cohoon, *Dio Chrysostom*, tr by JW Cohoon, (London: William Heinemann, 1939), II: 187, summarizes Dio's interest in the subject by noting that he seems to cross greed with ambition.

¹⁶⁸ There is room to modify, in part, the observations of Malherbe, "Exhortation in 1 Thessalonians," 60-61. He cites valid textual evidence within 1 Thess that shows Paul using a style prevalent in certain philosophical writings. From this, however, he seems to imply that Paul took over such traditions, modifying them by adding special motivational language unique to Christianity (e.g. "sanctification" vv 3, 7 and "Holy Spirit" v 8): "I suggest that it is precisely this kind of motivation that in Paul's eyes and probably his readers' made his instruction different from the popular philosophical traditions he uses." Both Paul's undisputed writings and Ephesians may be purposefully modifying existing traditions. Probably, they are appealing to a sense of rightness that they link with God, a rightness that would also have been understandable to their respective readers. Ultimately, both indicate that the actual behaviour of their readers must contrast sharply with behaviour considered to be typical of the unconverted majority.

¹⁶⁹ W Meeks, *The Moral World of the First Christians*, (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1986), 40.

from losing grip. We miss much that is set before our very eyes. Advice is, in fact, a sort of exhortation.¹⁷⁰

Immediately following the statement on sexual morality quoted earlier on page 118, Seneca adds, ". . . you must be continually brought to remember these facts; for they should not be in storage, but ready for use."¹⁷¹ In like fashion, Dio Chrysostom, in justifying his discourse on covetousness, admits:

Yet for my own part, if I saw that we were holding to what we believe to be right and were doing nothing out of harmony with the view we already have, I should not myself hold it necessary to insist on matters that are perfectly clear. However, since I observe that it is not our ignorance of the difference between good and evil that hurts us, so much as it is our failure to heed the dictates of reason on these matters and to be true to our personal opinions, I consider it most salutary to remind men of this without ceasing, and to appeal to their reason to give heed and in their acts to observe what is right and proper.¹⁷²

These philosophers see themselves addressing common faults and shortcomings. In these instances they are not excusing bad behaviour; they are urging what they consider to be proper.

In addition to self-admitted gentile faults, some philosophers seemed to approve of behaviour that might have received outright rejection from Jews, Christians and perhaps by some non-Christian philosophers. The Middle Platonist Plutarch, while upholding some aspects of a conservative morality, nonetheless seems to be slow to condemn certain activities with which he himself is uncomfortable. Though he clearly does not approve of the behaviour of Persian kings who express their drunken licentiousness with courtesans, he considers their action laudable because they seem to show respect to their wives by banishing them from the room beforehand. He offers this not as advice to the "groom" but to the "bride," so that she can consider any licentiousness on the part of her husband toward another woman as showing respect for her: he would not have debauched her, but some other lesser character.¹⁷³

When the writer of Ephesians depicts gentiles as unenlightened, godless, sexually immoral, unclean and greedy, he seems to have some basis in reality for

¹⁷⁰ Seneca, *Epistle* 94.25, as translated and cited in Malherbe, *Moral Exhortation*, 127.

¹⁷¹ *Epistle* 94.26, in Malherbe, *Moral Exhortation*, 128.

¹⁷² "On Covetousness," 17.2, II: 189 in tr.

¹⁷³ Plutarch, "Advice to Bride and Groom," *Moralia* 140B, in *Plutarch's Moralia*, tr by FC Babbitt, (London: William Heinemann, 1928), II: 309.

so doing.¹⁷⁴ The description is clearly stereotypical. Paul certainly acknowledged that some gentiles act morally (Rom 2:14-15), a view the writer of Ephesians would undoubtedly have known. And yet, as stereotype, the description serves the writer's purpose of guilt-by-association. He condemns gentile lifestyle, wanting his readers to avoid this in every way possible.

4.3 Holiness and Righteousness

Volumes could be written on these two terms, not simply as they appear within the LXX and other Jewish writings, but especially as they are used by Classical and Hellenistic writers. These two terms, whether in adjectival, adverbial or nominal forms, appear together in an amazingly large number of passages across a broad cross-section of writers.¹⁷⁵ One cannot determine for certain whether their appearance in Eph 4:24 stems from Greek or Jewish influence. The answer is probably both. These terms form a hendiadys common throughout that culture.

The writer of Ephesians may reflect some dependence on a non-Christian/non-Jewish tradition when he says that holiness and righteousness come from the

¹⁷⁴ E Ferguson, *Backgrounds of Early Christianity*, (Grand Rapids: William B Eerdmans, 1987), 52-53, reaches this conclusion, citing different evidence from that discussed here.

¹⁷⁵ At least seven times in Demosthenes' *Orationes*, most often in a legal sense in reference to the type of verdict a jury should render or to the kind of laws being upheld: 19.311, 21.227, 23.38, 23.73, 24.104, 43.65, 47.82. Dio Chrysostom has a similar usage in summarizing the way the Athenians did not behave toward Socrates, Discourse 47.7, and also includes these two terms among four qualities describing a wise man, Discourse 23.8. Epictetus summarizes the quality of the rule of Heracles with these terms, III.xxvi.32, and also describes the value of philosophical training as allowing one to distinguish between these qualities and their opposites, I.xxix.54. The paired terms appear seven times in Isocrates describing the conduct of office holders or outstanding citizens: *Plat* 2, *Nic* 13, *Evag* 26, 38, *Antid* 76, 284, 321, *Panath* 187. The combination appears once in Lucian to describe duty to parents, *Tox* 9. The terms appear together nearly fifty times in Plato's writings alone, though many of these appear in clusters when these qualities themselves are under discussion. One of these sections, *Prot* 324-349, relates one of Socrates' debates where an attempt to differentiate between "holiness," "righteousness" and several other virtues is under discussion. *Resp* 331A uses them together to summarize how a man should live out his days; *Resp* 461 remarks how anyone meddling with the law is neither *δσιον* nor *δικαιον*; in *Resp* 615 the one who is kind is considered just and holy; and the *Laws* speak often of people needing to live just and holy lives: *Laws* 661B, 663A, 663D, 778D, 840D, 959B. Plutarch uses these terms, sometimes paired and sometimes in the same environment: *Thest* 10.2 (Aeacus was a good and *δικαιων* man and considered *δσιωτατων* among Greeks), *Sol* 21.1 (*δσιον* to regard deceased as sacred and *δικαιον* to spare those absent from being victims of gossip), *Cam* 17.8 (a general practice deemed *δσια και δικαιοα*), *Eum* 17.11 (to describe what was sarcastically being referred to as a common courtesy) and various times in the *Moralia* 70.70A, 76.102A, 120F, 123.857A, 139.1105C. In the LXX they are found describing human attributes only in Deut 9:5; Ps 131:9; Prov 14:22, 17:26; Wis 9:3, 14:30. In OT Pseudepigrapha they appear together in *I Enoch* 25.4, 102.4-5, 103.9, 104.12, 106.18; *T Abr* 1.1.2, 1.9.2; *T Ben* 5.4; *Pss Sol* 3.7-8, 4.8, 14.2-3, 9-10, 15.3, 7; *Ep Arist* 18, 306; *Pseudo-Phoc* 5, 37 (in these last two, *δσιοι* people and means are contrasted with *αδικοι*). Philo uses them in lists of virtues: *Sac* 27, 37, *De Somnis* 2.296, 297, *De Vita Mosis* 2.216, *De Virtutibus* 41, *De Praemiis et Poemis* 160, *Quod Omnis Probus Liber Sit* 83. He also pairs them in referring to ideal human behaviour: *De Vita Mosis* 2.108, *De Specialibus Legibus* 1.304, 2.180, *De Virtutibus* 50. Josephus also uses the pair to summarize virtuous behaviour: *Antiquities* 6.87, 8.245, 8.295, 9.35, 15.138, though often this describes an individual's orientation to God as well.

truth. He may be implying that his readers know of one kind of holiness and righteousness, but the proper kind originates only from the gospel.¹⁷⁶ In all likelihood, however, he is not engaging in polemics. His point is that holiness and righteousness come from the gospel that they have believed, bringing about consequent changes in their lives. That there may be some overlap with Greek philosophical categories would probably pose no problem to the writer. Holiness and righteousness are to characterize the life of the believer as attributes that, from the perspective of the writer, fail to appear in the lives of gentiles.

5 Eph 4:17-24 - Morality in a New Religious Movement

Eph 4:17-24 assumes a converted readership. The writer urges his readers, a predominantly gentile audience, no longer to live as gentiles. Using stereotypical language, he castigates the lifestyle he forbids. He then appeals to the teaching his readers should have received, reminding them that they are to turn away from their old orientation to living, to be renewed internally, and to embrace a new orientation to living that comes from God. Some of this teaching resembles ideas found in some gentile philosophers.

Several different social science approaches could help clarify the life-like dynamics of this conversion situation. Conflict theory,¹⁷⁷ cultural dyadism¹⁷⁸ and purity standards¹⁷⁹ are all possible avenues commonly explored in current literature,

¹⁷⁶ RA Wild, "Be Imitators of God': Discipleship in the Letter to the Ephesians," in *Discipleship in the New Testament*, ed by FF Segovia, (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985), 134, is perhaps among the most explicit in this, suggesting the following paraphrase: "Only ours is the true justice and holiness."

¹⁷⁷ The readers are being told to avoid something. LA Coser, *The Functions of Social Conflict*, (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1956, reprinted 1968), defines conflict as a competition over "values" as well as "claims to scarce status, power and resources." With regard to Ephesians, whether the threatened competition comes from identifiable human groups, or even from demonic powers, exact circumstances are nearly impossible to detect. However, the distinctiveness that the readers are enjoined to maintain against outsiders does have unifying effects much the same as suggested by Coser, 38: "Conflict serves to establish and maintain the identity and boundary lines of societies and groups . . . Conflict with other groups contributes to the establishment and reaffirmation of the identity of the group and maintains its boundaries against the surrounding social world."

¹⁷⁸ This is reflected both in the stereotypical language about gentile behaviour and in the idealistic language about Christian morals. See B Malina, *The New Testament World*, (Atlanta, Georgia: John Knox Press, 1981) 53-60; "The Individual and the Community - Personality in the Social World of Early Christianity," *Biblical Theology Bulletin* 9 (1979): 126-38. He regards the "first century" "Mediterranean" personality to be defined, not on the basis of individualism but on an individual's relation to others around him or herself. Biblical data may show some dyadism, but to say that all biblical personality is dyadic may be a gross over-generalization, a criticism aimed at much of Malina's work by HC Kee, *Knowing the Truth*, (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1989), 113.

¹⁷⁹ Principles set forth by M Douglas, *Purity and Danger*, have been applied to New Testament data by B Malina, *The New Testament World*, 122-52, by M Newton, *The Concept of Purity at Qumran and in the Letters of Paul*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), and with regard to sexual

also having some relevance here. None of these possibilities really capture the overall thrust of the passage. Eph 4:17-24 urges its readers to live a different sort of life, presented as distinct from what they once lived. Such exclusivity seems to be illumined by the concept of sectarianism.

Appeals to this concept are not without problems. It is difficult to apply both to non-Western and to historical situations.¹⁸⁰ Further, approaches to the study of sects have changed considerably in recent years. Consequently, this study begins with a critical summary of basic applications particularly with regard to Ephesians.

5.1 Sectarianism and Ephesians

The church-sect model growing from the analyses of M Weber and E Troeltsch is certainly well-known. "Church" depicts a majority position that affirms the surrounding social world and promotes conservative values, while a "sect" either ignores or rejects that world, proposing its unique, righteous alternative.¹⁸¹ People are born into churches; they must be converted to belong to sects. Churches support ruling-class values; sects appeal to the marginalized. Churches are organized hierarchically; sects are egalitarian.¹⁸²

ethics, by Countryman, *Dirt, Greed and Sex*.

¹⁸⁰ B Holmberg, *Sociology and the New Testament*, (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990), 108-110 and 116. He particularly questions the structuralist-functionalist presupposition that human behavioural patterns remain basically the same throughout history, a presupposition he strongly disallows. B Malina, "The Social Sciences and Biblical Interpretation," *Interpretation* 36 (1982): 240-41, warns that many models set forth by present-day sociologists of religion distinctly lack a cross-cultural application since they are "based on the contemporary experience of religion. In our society religion is a formal, independent, unembedded social institution. It was not such in the world of the Bible."

¹⁸¹ A useful brief summary of this appears in B Holmberg, *Sociology and the New Testament*, 86-88.

¹⁸² R Scroggs, "The Earliest Christian Communities as Sectarian Movement," in *Christianity, Judaism and Other Greco-Roman Cults*, ed by J Neusner, (Leiden: EJ Brill, 1975), II: 3-7. Scroggs was one of the first people to appeal to sect theory in relation to NT studies. As a basis for comparison with gospel accounts, he identified seven basic characteristics of sects: 1) they begin as protest movements; 2) they reject the establishment's view of reality; 3) they are egalitarian; 4) they offer loving, accepting environments; 5) they are voluntary; 6) they demand total commitment; 7) they are sometimes adventist. Somewhat different to this listing is that of B Wilson, *Religion in Sociological Perspective*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), 91-92, who identifies eight characteristics: 1) exclusivity; 2) claims to a monopoly of the truth; 3) run by laity, rather than trained professionals; 4) reject "religious virtuosity" of any member, except perhaps the founder; 5) voluntary organizations; 6) maintain rigid obedience sanctions; 7) "demand total allegiance;" 8) "a protest group."

The writer of Ephesians seems to maintain sectarian¹⁸³ and church-like¹⁸⁴ outlooks simultaneously. He might represent a sectarian position in the process of becoming a church. Yet, to apply the church-sect model to Ephesians would be fallaciously circular. The model itself grows from observations on later periods in the church's history, periods when the people involved were attempting to return to what they thought the early church actually did.¹⁸⁵

Recognizing this difficulty some biblical scholars have embraced the more recent work of B Wilson. He proposed defining a sect by its overall orientation to the world, a stance that appears more immediately applicable to non-Western cultures. He identified seven types of sectarian responses,¹⁸⁶ regarding the "conversionist" as the most relevant to first-century Christianity,¹⁸⁷ a response that rejects a "corrupt" world that can only be changed as people are changed.¹⁸⁸

Using these ideas M MacDonald has attempted to fit Ephesians within a continuum that recognizes the interplay between an external environment, objectified ideas formed as a social response to that environment and the internalization of those ideas by individuals within a given community.¹⁸⁹ As the ideas circulate within a society, a society may be challenged to change; as the

¹⁸³ He views the world negatively as disapproved of by God (2:1-3), under the influence of demonic powers (2:2; 6:10-13) and horribly ignorant and sinful (4:17-19).

¹⁸⁴ Egalitarianism seems to give way to a venerated, hierarchical leadership (2:20, 3:5, 4:7-16); conservative Graeco-Roman views of the household seem to be reflected (5:21-6:9). For similarities between aspects of Eph 4:17-24 and Graeco-Roman philosophy, see §4.2 and §4.3 above.

¹⁸⁵ Holmberg, *Sociology and the New Testament*, 109-110: "... the traditional church-sect distinction is not the neutral, cross-cultural, ideal-type sociological model claimed by many sociologists (and believed by some exegetes), but rather strongly limited to one specific culture, the Christian. This diminishes its general value, but becomes a very serious shortcoming when it is applied to early Christianity. I refer, of course, to the circular reasoning involved in using Christian sects of later ages to analyse and explain that very movement that they all wanted to imitate to the best of their capacity: New Testament Christianity!"

¹⁸⁶ These are: conversionist, revolutionist, introversionist, manipulationist, thaumaturgical, reformist and utopian. BR Wilson, *Magic and the Millennium*, (London: Heinemann, 1973), 18-26.

¹⁸⁷ Wilson, *Magic and the Millennium*, 38.

¹⁸⁸ Wilson, *Magic and the Millennium*, 22: "The world is corrupt because men are corrupt: if men can be changed then the world will be changed. Salvation is seen not as available through objective agencies but only by a profoundly felt, supernaturally wrought transformation of the self. The objective world will not change but the acquisition of a new subjective orientation to it will itself be salvation."

¹⁸⁹ MY MacDonald, *The Pauline Churches*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988). The framework is described by PL Berger and T Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality*, (London: Penguin, 1966). MacDonald summarizes her reading of Berger and Luckmann on pages 10-18.

society changes, the ideas are adapted as well. For her, three points in the history of Pauline churches illustrate this: the undisputed epistles, the epistles of Ephesians and Colossians, and the Pastorals. She recognizes a conversionist response to the world at each point, but sees growing institutionalization reflected in their different approaches to ethics, leadership and household issues.

According to MacDonald, the rejection, in Ephesians, of the gentile world on the one hand and the acceptance of aspects of this world on the other indicates some sort of social tension. This tension may reflect the difficulties inherent in being simultaneously separate and evangelistic; certain world standards are adopted to offset the oddness of the message to outsiders.¹⁹⁰ The group struggles to remain distinct, while compromising in order to ensure its continuation.

This is a post-predictive use of sociological theory. In the absence of specific detail a sociological model fills in present gaps.

5.2 Sectarianism and Current Thought

Though attractive, the above-described application does not deal with the current range of theories that interpret the growth and development of religious movements.¹⁹¹ Various models, many recently proposed, attempt to explain the proliferation of movements in Western society, trying also to account for the entry of alien thought-forms from different cultures. Social science terminology and typologies both reflect the different sorts of models that are utilized.

5.2.1 Variations in terminology

Unlike most sociologists of religion R Stark and WS Bainbridge distinguish sharply between a sect and a cult.¹⁹² As religious groups sects, they say, are

¹⁹⁰ MacDonald, *The Pauline Churches*, 103: "Thus, in both Colossians and Ephesians we discover the same tension between a desire to evangelize and a desire to separate from the outside world that we found in Paul's writings. The emphasis on growth of the body in both writings may imply that rapid growth of the sect is taking place. Expansion presupposes greater visibility which, in turn, increases the demands for social respectability."

¹⁹¹ Even Wilson admits the need to move beyond his earlier typology. See *Religion in Sociological Perspective*, 111-13, where he endorses a variation of his responses-to-the-world theory developed by one of his students, Roy Wallis. This theory will be explored below.

¹⁹² For a clear explanation of their definitions, see R Stark and WS Bainbridge, "Of Churches, Sects, and Cults: Preliminary Concepts for a Theory of Religious Movements," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 18 (1979): 117-131. On p 125, they say "To be a sect a religious movement must have been founded by persons who left another religious body for the purpose of founding the sect. The term sect, therefore, applies only to schismatic movements;" and "Cults. . . do not have a prior tie with another established religious body in the society in question. The cult may represent an alien (external) religion, or it may have originated in the host society--but through innovation, not fission. . . Cults, then, represent an independent religious tradition in a society."

indigenous movements of dissent while cults introduce innovations alien to a given culture or world view. Since "sect" and "cult" are defined in relation to the surrounding culture, sects may become cults when introduced to an alien culture, while cults themselves may produce sectarian splits.¹⁹³

Sociologists have not failed to criticize these distinctions.¹⁹⁴ Two responses are worth highlighting. First, a schism resulting from the emphasis of a disregarded tradition does not differ substantially from a religious innovation, particularly when attracting converts, yet the former fits the definition of a sect while the latter a cult.¹⁹⁵ Second, foreignness in relation to the surrounding culture is an insufficient focal point, especially when elements from the host culture remain intact within the new religious groups.¹⁹⁶

Stark applies his terminology to the origins of Christianity, identifying the early followers of Jesus as a Jewish sect that became a cult after the empty tomb on the third day.¹⁹⁷ Accordingly social analysis of Christianity should focus on the interplay between a foreign message and the group it attempts to penetrate, rather than on sectarian exclusivity. Since, according to Stark, Pauline Christianity was a cult, it attracted successful people.¹⁹⁸ Only those with enough intellectual training and interest would be able to say that a prevailing world view is wrong and a foreign view is right.

This theory would not be elaborated here were it not for the following it has engendered among some biblical scholars.¹⁹⁹ While not ^{accepting the theory} uncritically,²⁰⁰ this

¹⁹³ Stark and Bainbridge, "Of Churches, Sects, and Cults," 125-26.

¹⁹⁴ These have been nicely summarized by T Robbins, *Cults, Converts and Charisma*, (London: Sage Publications, 1988), 152-54.

¹⁹⁵ Robbins, *Cults, Converts and Charisma*, 152-53, bases his own criticism primarily on earlier attempts to define cults based on "novelty and esoterism" and draws on R Wallis' comments found in "Societal Reaction to Scientology" and "The Cult and its Transformation," in *Sectarianism*, ed by R Wallis, (New York: Halstead, 1975), 39 and 90.

¹⁹⁶ According to Robbins, *Cults, Converts and Charisma*, 153, a principal proponent of this criticism is David Martin, "A Definition of Cult: Terms and Approaches" in *Alternatives to American Mainline Churches*, ed by JH Fichter, (Barrytown, NY: Unification Theological Seminary, 1983), 27-42.

¹⁹⁷ R Stark, "The Class Basis of Early Christianity," *Sociological Analysis* 47 (1986): 223-24.

¹⁹⁸ R Stark, "The Class Basis of Early Christianity," 219-20.

¹⁹⁹ The general Stark-Bainbridge line of thought is pursued in detail with reference to Pauline Christianity by DJ Atwood and RB Flowers, "Christianity as a Cult Movement," *Encounter* 44 (1983): 245-261. LM White also accepts the basic premises of the Stark-Bainbridge definitions, though not uncritically. See the following notes for specific references.

following has espoused the basic notion that a sect differs from a cult, a difference thought to illumine aspects of the social-setting.²⁰¹

Instead of using terms such as sect and cult, which are also pejorative to the uninitiated,²⁰² it may be worthwhile utilizing the jargon of many sociologists of religion in the more neutral expression, New Religious Movement, or NRM. Many social scientists use NRM, sect and cult interchangeably. An awareness of this by biblical scholars might rescue some from trying to make difficult distinctions in terminology.

Though more neutral, the label New Religious Movement must be qualified. The modern proliferation of religious movements is not necessarily a new phenomenon.²⁰³ Further, many religious movements currently under study are themselves not new.²⁰⁴ In early Christianity, initial affinities with Jewish synagogues may have reduced its newness in urban centres in the Roman Empire.²⁰⁵ The label NRM is relative. NRM can only refer to a religious expression new to a specific society.

²⁰⁰ LM White, "Sociological Analysis of Early Christian Groups: A Social Historians' Response," *Sociological Analysis* 47 (1986): 249-66, responds to Stark's application of his theories to Christian origins, remarking that it would be equally wrong suddenly to classify Christianity as Middle Class. Additionally he points out that in spite of the various forms of Diaspora Judaism, the existence of synagogues in urban centres may have helped to ameliorate the foreignness of a fledgling Christianity.

²⁰¹ LM White, "Shifting Sectarian Boundaries in Early Christianity," *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library* 70 (1988): 19-20. He regards sectarian qualities exhibited in Palestine to have been transferred to cultic qualities outside, with the overall difference between a sect and cult in the same culture being that "cult rhetoric tends to stress the similarities [with the dominant culture], while sect rhetoric will tend to stress differences."

²⁰² Wilson, *Religion in Sociological Perspective*, 89-90, claims that while common usage is pejorative, social scientists employ such terminology neutrally.

²⁰³ R Stark and WS Bainbridge, *The Future of Religion: Secularization, Revival and Cult Formation*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985). They propose (pp 1-3, 429-456) the existence of the socio-historical cycle of secularization, giving way both to "revival" and to "religious innovation," which, when exceeding their original enthusiasm, give way once more to secularization. Further, they attempt to give evidence of this from American history (pp 234-262).

²⁰⁴ Robbins, *Cults, Converts and Charisma*, 159, asks ". . . what is a 'new religion' and how new are NRMs?" E.g. a Hindu NRM may be new to American society but quite ancient to its culture of origin.

²⁰⁵ White, "Sociological Analysis of Early Christian Groups: A Social Historians' Response," 259.

5.2.2 Typology of NRMs

NRM models permit useful comparisons.²⁰⁶ The present abundance of groups allows a wide range of observations not only of different groups with different emphases, but of how these groups promote religious innovation.

These models have limited applicability to New Testament data, especially for purposes beyond description.²⁰⁷ The society on which they are based is itself secularized, which partly accounts for the proliferation of NRMs.²⁰⁸ Further, one must make post-predictions warily. Even modern NRMs exhibit radically different social effects in different environments.²⁰⁹ Regarding Ephesians, the data itself should point to sociological tensions or ideological deviations, not the mere conformity to aspects of a modern model.

In his useful analysis of recent sociological thought, T Robbins identifies three different kinds of descriptive groupings or typologies recently developed to

²⁰⁶ Holmberg, *Sociology and the New Testament*, 114-17, sees attempts to apply church-sect theory to NT studies as a use of "the comparative method" (p 114). He concludes (pp 116-17), ". . . what we should expect from the comparative application of the church-sect typology is not verification but rather interesting new ideas and hypotheses for future work. . . The comparative method is in itself so fruitful that one learns much, simply by beginning to use it, even if the categories at hand are rather primitive."

²⁰⁷ Roy Wallis, *Elementary Forms of the New Religious Life*, (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1984), 4, points out that the value of a typology lies not simply in the variety of descriptive categories being used but in the sociological analyses and predictions it allows. Since, however, this kind of use of a model depends heavily on large amounts of data, it is doubtful whether the same sorts of sociological and predictive conclusions can necessarily be applied backwards in time without substantial pieces of data to corroborate the applicability of these conclusions.

²⁰⁸ Note the observations of Wilson, *Religion in Sociological Perspective*, 131-39. Though Robbins refers to the discussion promoted by HL Moore and Stark-Bainbridge that points out that a variety of religious movements seems always to have been part of the American religious landscape, this landscape has always been in the process of secularizing. See Robbins, *Cults, Converts and Charisma*, 26-27 and the lengthy discussion on secularization by P Berger, *The Social Reality of Religion*, (London: Faber and Faber, 1969), who sees the process as ongoing throughout the past 300-400 years of Western civilization. Wallis, *Elementary Forms of the New Religious Life*, 57-72, has an extensive discussion of the relationship between secularization and the extension of NRMs, interacting with and criticizing the Stark-Bainbridge views, and affirming that secularization has promoted the modern phenomenon. The studies of M Douglas, both "Heathen Darkness," in *Implicit Meanings*, (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1975), 73-82 and *Natural Symbols*, (London: Barrie & Rockliff, The Cresset Press, 1970), portray the difficulties inherent in expecting similar religious patterns to exist in different societies. However, her observations do point out the potential viability of comparisons, even across time, of societies that seem to have certain characteristics in common.

²⁰⁹ Wilson, *Religion in Sociological Perspective*, 114, points out just such an occurrence with modern day Jehovah's Witnesses and Seventh-day Adventists: ". . . we may find between one cultural context and another, that a sect's composition varies: what is a poor sect in one society, or even in one region, may be constituted from a rather different spread of the population in some other context."

analyze NRMs:²¹⁰ moral accountability;²¹¹ corporate types;²¹² and world orientations. Though none of these typologies are mutually exclusive, the world-orientation scheme illumines the presentation in Ephesians more than the others. Promoted primarily by Roy Wallis,²¹³ this typology resembles Wilson's sectarian analysis, but measures NRMs in a triangular continuum based on their tendency toward rejection of, affirmation of, or accommodation to the social world.

This model attractively presents ideal types not as categories to be approximated but as tendencies to be compared with one another. It also recognizes that a given group may shift gradually from one point of the triangle to another over the course of its acceptance by a particular society.²¹⁴

This categorization has drawn two major criticisms.²¹⁵ First, it stands squarely in the tradition of church-sect analysis.²¹⁶ Notwithstanding, it refines and

²¹⁰ Robbins, *Cults, Converts and Charisma*, 144-50. In addition to these three, he also evaluates the typology of Dick Anthony, and another somewhat related to it formulated by Ken Wilber, which combine sociological and psychological elements to explain modern phenomena in terms of an overall cultural shift from "paternalistic to autonomous authority" and thus have a significant psychological component to them. The Anthony typology, dividing its categorization into three pairs - monistic vs dualistic metaphysics, technical vs charismatic "mode of practice" and unilevel vs multilevel world view - has been praised for the way it explains developments in modern Western society but criticized for the difficulty with which some of the distinctions, particularly unilevel v multilevel interpretation of phenomena, can be applied with certainty to the data available. As such, it seems to have limited value in the present discussion about biblical data.

²¹¹ This analyses modern movements in terms of the tendencies of its adherents to be accountable to a specific kind of moral thought either as "devotees" of a particular leader, "disciples" within a particular "spiritual/psychic/physical" domain or "apprentices" of a particular range of spiritual skills.

²¹² These study "organizational" and "communal" issues within an NRM, designating groups either as "clinics," "congregations," "collectives," corps" or "colonies."

²¹³ Though referred to in earlier, less developed forms (e.g. Wilson, *Religion in Sociological Perspective*, 111-12), it is most extensively worked out throughout his book by R Wallis, *Elementary Forms of the New Religious Life*.

²¹⁴ Wallis, *Elementary Forms of the New Religious Life*, 6.

²¹⁵ These are voiced principally by Larry D Shin, "Review of R Wallis's *The Elementary Forms of New Religious Consciousness*," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 15 (1985): 177-85; and Hans Mol, "Review of Roy Wallis's *The Elementary Forms of New Religious Consciousness*," *Review of Religious Research* 27 (1985): 94-95. Main features of the arguments are summarized in Robbins, *Cults, Converts and Charisma*, 148-49, who also points out that Wallis concentrates his observations on the world-rejecting and world-affirming groups and thus does not convince him that three types exist. Wallis does point out, 5, that world-accommodating groups do exist, but that they have not proliferated as widely since the Second World War. Further, he clearly demonstrates the propensity of movements to pass through an accommodation phase, eventually settling there on cultural acceptance (pp 73-85).

²¹⁶ See, for example, the analysis applied to church history of H Richard Niebuhr, *Christ and Culture*, (New York: Harper and Row, 1951), 40-44, though he presents five categories instead of Roy Wallis' three.

approaches its categories in a more realistic way. Elements of all three types are recognized as present in any movement, allowing more potential for understanding deviations from each pole.

Second, the proposed continuum is not fully adaptable to historical analysis. The world that Wallis refers to as being rejected, affirmed or accommodated is a twentieth-century Western world. Wallis himself disclaims the applicability of his model for historical analysis.²¹⁷ It is appealed to here cautiously. If it warrants at least a partial application to any aspect of a first-century environment, it must deal exclusively with first-century data.

The Wallis model valuably compares groups with their surrounding environment. Though this resembles both the Stark-Bainbridge cult analysis and the Wilson sectarian analysis, the Wallis model also accounts for a variety of simultaneous responses.

Groups tending toward world-rejecting evince some form of social withdrawal, minimizing contact with what is being rejected.²¹⁸ In a modern Western context they also advocate communalism, centred around a strong leader or figurehead to maintain the fervor of rejection. World-affirming groups try to enhance life in the world, promising some form of success by adherence to special principles.²¹⁹ In a modern Western context these groups tend to promote individualism, often through mastery of special techniques. World-accommodating groups tend to correct the inadequacies of existing religious expression with a basic indifference to or passive acceptance of world institutions but an emphasis on religious virtuosity.²²⁰ Any enhancement of followers' abilities to function in the world is an unintended by-product. In a modern Western context this too is highly individualistic, focussing on personal piety and a separation of sacred and secular.

Before applying this model to Ephesians, one important issue must be sharpened. In speaking of orientation to the world, Wallis refers to "the social world."²²¹ What actually comprises this world is unclear.

²¹⁷ Wallis, *Elementary Forms of the New Religious Life*, 5-6.

²¹⁸ Wallis, *Elementary Forms of the New Religious Life*, 9-20.

²¹⁹ Wallis, *Elementary Forms of the New Religious Life*, 20-35.

²²⁰ Wallis, *Elementary Forms of the New Religious Life*, 34-39.

²²¹ Wallis, *Elementary Forms of the New Religious Life*, 4.

R Münch criticizes this sort of ambiguity on the part of social scientists and suggests a development of the "systems theory" initially presented by T Parsons to distinguish various aspects of the "human condition,"²²² a condition, one must note, presented in highly materialistic, Western terminology.²²³ For him the social world ("social system") has four basic components: Economic, political, community and social/cultural systems.²²⁴

Each of these systems represents a position on a continuum that measures the complexity of meaning ("symbolic complexity") promoted by the system on the one hand and the possible human behaviours performed ("contingency of action") on the other. Within the social system, the community system, which defines the "mutual attachment" between community members, deals with a more restricted set of actions than the social/cultural system, which itself establishes the "value commitments" of the society. The former is said to be more concerned with integrating people within society while the latter deals with the maintenance of societal behavioural patterns. Both of these systems are infused by people with less ideology or meaning than the political and economic systems. None of these systems operates exclusively from the other, but recognizing their distinctions helps in applying Wallis' world-orientation model by allowing a clearer articulation of what is being rejected, affirmed or accommodated.²²⁵

²²² R Münch, "Parsonian Theory Today: In Search of a New Synthesis," in *Social Theory Today*, ed by A Giddens and JH Turner, (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1987), 116-155.

²²³ B Malina, "'Religion' in the World of Paul," *Biblical Theology Bulletin* 16 (1986): 92-101, criticizes these sorts of theories for imposing a modern western view of religion on a foreign culture. He maintains that no one in the Eastern Roman Empire would have thought in terms of religion and religious systems because religion was embedded in the world view. Though he offers a useful caution, his view is somewhat extreme. Münch's theory accommodates Malina's objection by positing the existence of a cultural system alongside the social system and containing elements that Malina says were a part of an ancient view of religion.

²²⁴ This "social system" is itself nested within the "action system" comprised also of behavioural, personality and cultural systems. And, in turn, the "action system" is but one of four systems, including physico-chemical, organic and telic systems.

²²⁵ An additional value to Münch's organization of systems is the recognition of differences between cultural and social systems. Much work today in the use of social sciences in NT interpretation attempts to analyse aspects of the cultural system without carefully articulating how this differs from the social system. The social system establishes the attachments between people while the cultural system defines the societal values. When, for example, J Neyrey, *Paul, in Other Words*, (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1990), 53, concludes that Paul maintains a Jewish cultural view of order, he is analysing the cultural system. When, on the other hand, he discusses the newness of the Christian ways in comparison to Jewish behaviour, 56-74, he is describing changes within the social system, particularly in relation to community and social/cultural systems.

5.3 Ephesians and World-Accommodation

Though in-depth research must substantiate the point, a cursory glance at the landscape of the first-century Eastern Roman Empire partially supports the general validity of Wallis' categories for that time-period. The Qumran community, for example, looks like a world-rejecting type, affecting economic, political, community and social/cultural systems. The *Community Rule* describes the significance of group-entry as follows:

And this is the rule for the members of the Community, for those who volunteer to be converted from all evil and to cling to all His commands according to His will; to separate themselves from the congregation of perverse men, to become a Community in the Law and with regard to property and [laws] under the authority of the sons of Zadok the priests who keep the Covenant, and under the authority of the majority of the members of the Community, they who cling to the Covenant. Under their authority shall destiny be decreed in all things, whether it concern the Law, or property, or justice. They shall practise truth in common, and humility, and righteousness and justice and loving charity, and modesty in all their ways (1QS 5.1-4).²²⁶

Certain philosophical schools, while not exactly religions,²²⁷ do seem to promote world-affirmation. When, for example, Plutarch advises Pollianus and Eurydice on how to conduct their marriage, he says,

Of the many admirable themes contained in philosophy, that which deals with marriage deserves no less serious attention than any other, for by means of it philosophy weaves a spell over those who are entering together into a lifelong partnership, and renders them gentle and amiable toward each other.²²⁸

and then proceeds to describe the roles of the gods in merging reason and marriage. Here is affirmation of a community system structure with reasoning supplied from the social/cultural.

Ephesians' paraenesis displays both world-affirmation and rejection. The exhortation for children to obey their parents (6:3) shows world-affirmation within the community system by including the remarks "that it may go well with you on the earth" when quoting Exod 20:12/Deut 5:16. This world-affirmation is minimal both because it is an unusual statement for Ephesians and because the statement speaks of success in life rather than success in the social institution mentioned. Eph 4:17-19 shows world-rejection when the writer urges his gentile readers no longer to live as gentiles, casting the dominant societal influence on his readers'

²²⁶ Tr by A Dupont-Sommer, in *The Essene Writings from Qumran*, tr by G Vermes, (Gloucester, MA: Peter Smith, 1973), 82.

²²⁷ Note that AD Nock, *Conversion*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1933), 164-186, does refer to a "conversion" to philosophy.

²²⁸ Plutarch, "Advice to Bride and Groom" 138, II: 299 in tr.

behaviour in a negative stereotype. This rejection occurs primarily within the social/cultural system. Value commitments and their ensuing behaviours that do not match those required by faith in Christ are scorned.

These affirmation and rejection facets notwithstanding, it is the writer of Ephesians' basic indifference to or passive acceptance of social system structures that indicates his accommodation outlook. Even his rejection of selected aspects of the social/cultural system indicates accommodation when he partly attributes gentile misbehaviour to the failure of the gentile religious system: gentiles are alienated from the life of God (4:18). Alongside this rejection, and partially motivating it, is a concern for religious virtuosity, not in expressing individual piety, but in conformity to standards of righteousness said to be associated with Christ, standards that pertain to a group orientation more than to individualistic expression:

You did not so learn Christ! -- assuming that you have heard about him and were taught in him, as the truth is in Jesus. Put off your old nature which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful lusts, and be renewed in the spirit of your minds, and put on the new nature, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness (4:20-24, RSV).

These standards are to prevail not so that the readers can prosper but so that they can more effectively "lead a life worthy of the calling to which [they] have been called" (4:1, RSV). The readers are to replace certain prevailing social attitudes and behaviours with new attitudes and behaviours that please God and enhance their religious performance.

Though the writer rejects features of a gentile social/cultural system in favour of a new orientation to living, he passively accepts other aspects of the social system. He calls on these, not to undergird them but to use them to promote religious virtuosity. The household instructions, for example, appeal to established elements of the community system, or perhaps even the political system,²²⁹ not to make the readers better members of their respective households, but to make them better followers of Christ as those who live wisely and know God's will (5:15, 17).²³⁰

Further, the writer only partially rejects aspects of the social/cultural system.

²²⁹ The work of DL Balch, *Let the Wives be Submissive*, (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1981), 23-59, shows how household relations formed a part of the political thinking of the Graeco-Roman world.

²³⁰ Though the household material is quite lengthy, it is clearly attached to the injunction for wise behaviour by the participle *υποτασσόμενοι* in 5:21, a participle which itself modifies the verb *πληροῦσθε* of 5:18. The injunction for the readers to be subject to one another is clearly connected to the initial injunction to be filled with the Spirit, an entreaty given as the first positive example of what it would mean for the readers to live wisely and know God's will.

As already seen, some gentile philosophers also denounced sexual licence, impurity and greed. Without assuming that the writer of Ephesians knew this, one may still observe him to express values known to be familiar within the societies in which his readers lived, values, from his perspective, so blatantly ignored that he could resort to stereotype and assume concurrence from his gentile readership. The twin categories of holiness and righteousness found in Eph 4:24 also commonly appeared in a wide range of Hellenistic writings. By applying these categories to the truth of the gospel the writer of Ephesians redirects common terminology from the social/cultural system to the particular religious ends that he promotes.²³¹ These are examples of a subtle but powerful accommodation that draws on readily accessible notions to help people understand the uniqueness of their new faith. Viewed this way, it seems inappropriate to suggest either the existence of tension between world-rejection and conformity to world institutions on the one hand or assimilation of world standards as a result of second-generation institutionalizing on the other.

Such accommodation, if correctly surmised, would not be surprising coming either from Paul or from any Paulinist. Behind the Pauline attempt to be all things to all people (1 Cor 9:22) stands a desire to remove cultural hindrances from the gospel, not simply to make it more believable²³² but because institutional support is not inherent in the message itself. Gentiles and Jews believe the same gospel. Paul certainly relates his gospel ministry to his own religious performance, also displaying a concern for how his churches are relating to God.²³³ The basic indifference of the writer of Ephesians to social institutions is overshadowed by his concern to see his readers enhance their Christian lives. Wives do not merely submit to husbands; they follow the model of Christ and the church (5:21-22). The

²³¹ Though this could be viewed as a polemical statement, the writer of Ephesians does not indicate that holiness and righteousness related to the gospel are superior to any other kind of holiness and righteousness that the readers might have known.

²³² This is the premise of F Watson, *Paul, Judaism and the Gentiles*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), who appeals to yet a different church-sect theory to see Paul stripping away the Jewish law to make the gospel more easily believable to gentiles as Christianity moves from a Jewish reform-movement to become a sect.

²³³ Note in 1 Cor 9:19-27 the terminology that refers both to Paul's and to his readers' personal gain in the religious sphere: v 23: "I do it all for the sake of the gospel, that I may share in its blessings" (RSV); v 24: "So run that you may obtain it" (RSV); v 27: "but I pommel my body and subdue it, lest after preaching to others I myself should be disqualified" (RSV). Elsewhere, he even urges Christian obedience as an act of worship (Rom 12:1-2).

new way of living is created by God, originating in the truth of the gospel and expressed in a unique holiness and righteousness (4:24).

5.4 Conclusions

In summarizing the sectarian analysis used by biblical scholars, Holmberg criticizes the unrelated variety of resulting conclusions.²³⁴ He suggests that perhaps these would be less conflicting and more assured if scholars moved beyond church-sect ideas. The appeal here to Wallis' NRM theory may appear somewhat regressive. Yet, it moves beyond studies of the recent past.

This survey suggests that the variety of conclusions may be due, in part, to the use of inappropriate models. Ascriptions of social tensions or of deviations from an ideological norm are based not primarily on available data but post-predictively on theories that themselves have limited usefulness even in present-day analysis. An appeal to a different sort of model has shown that the existing data by *themselves* can account for an apparent contradiction without introducing elements foreign to *those data*.

When the writer urges his readers to live no longer as gentiles, he does not contradict himself by upholding standards with which some gentiles would agree; his rejection is selective. His concern is with moral issues as they relate to the overall character of those who have believed. Social structures are tools to promote community holiness and righteousness. Only by appropriating the new person created according to God can believers live a life commensurate with the salvation they have received. Living worthily of this salvation is the writer's principal concern.

6 Conclusions on Eph 4:17-24

The primary message of these verses is found in the opening statement: no longer live as gentiles (4:17). The writer develops this exhortation in two principal ways. He paints a stereotypical picture of gentile behaviour, briefly demonstrating its futility. Second, he refers to the tradition of teaching that he presumes his readers to have received, a tradition that urges them to renounce the old ways and embrace the new. In all of this he assumes the conversion of his readers. They are to be rejecting their former way of life in favour of what is appropriate to the faith they have embraced.

A comparison of these verses with statements from the first half of Ephesians

²³⁴ Holmberg, *Sociology and the New Testament*, 117.

shows how the exhortation reflects concerns expressed earlier in the epistle. Principally, the writer has contrasted the deficiencies of his readers' former way of life with their current orientation by drawing on the once-now formulation found mainly in 2:1-10 and 2:11-22. In two elaborate prayers (1:15-19 and 3:14-19) he has also expressed a concern for what his readers should be learning, not simply in terms of facts, but in terms of life-changing attitudes. He repeats this concern throughout 4:17-24.

When the message of 4:17-24 is compared with passages in the undisputed Pauline writings that bear some resemblance, it has been found that in some respects, the writer is saying nothing new. But in other ways, particularly in his development of gentile stereotype and in his summary of the teaching he presumes his readers to have received, the writer of Ephesians is expressing himself freshly. Even his overlapping with Colossians represents a reprocessing rather than a simple borrowing of that material.

The writer of Ephesians is by no means unique in his time and place by advocating the kind of morality that he does. There is significant overlap between what he says and what other moral teachings promote, whether Jewish or Graeco-Roman. The similarity with some aspects of gentile philosophy would seem to pose a contradiction for the writer, especially since he urges his readers to live no longer as gentiles. An exploration into sociological ideal types of new religious movements, however, seems to provide a valuable typology that explains such a potentially inherent contradiction. The writer seems to reject only that part of the non-converted world that is in direct contradiction with his gospel message. His main concern is in furthering his readers' response to God, not in helping them to succeed in worldly endeavors. The writer urges a renunciation of gentile moral lifestyle because that lifestyle is in total opposition to the new orientation to God through Christ.

Chapter 3

1 Eph 4:25-5:2 - Exegetical and Behavioural Issues

The statements in 4:25-5:2 flow directly from 4:17-24. One could assert that they are a part of the same passage, not needing separate treatment.¹ Nevertheless, one must admit a subtle shift in argument. Rather than castigate the demeanor of his readers' dominant culture, the writer specifies how they should behave differently.

In catchword fashion, the writer repeats the put-off language from 4:22 and draws on the concepts of deceit in 4:22 and truth in 4:24.² Though a pattern using the put-off/put-on scheme does appear,³ the writer does not apply this consistently. Vv 25, 28 and 29 all contrast an improper behaviour with a righteous counterpart, but vv 26, 27 and 30 all contain negative exhortations. Further, v 31 lists a number of sins to be avoided, while the positive counterparts in v 32 are not exact opposites. Rather, the entire passage builds toward the positive exhortation in 5:2⁴ that stands as the antithesis to the negative statement in 4:17. Negatively, the readers are to refrain from gentile behaviour; positively, they are to live a Christ-like life of love.

Each exhortation in 4:25-5:2 will be examined under its appropriate topic. Before doing this, three pertinent issues must be addressed: 1) indicators of the readers' situation; 2) differences from the gentile stereotype of 4:17-24; 3) the order of appearance.

1.0.1 The situation of the original readers

The exhortations shed no light on the original readers' situation. Rather, they display characteristics of general paraenesis, especially when contrasting one

¹ This is certainly indicated in the outlines proposed by several commentators. See M Barth, *Ephesians 4-6*, (New York: Doubleday, 1974), 525-26; J Gnllka, *Der Epheserbrief*, (Freiburg: Herder, 1971), 221-22; CL Mitton, *Ephesians*, (London: Marshall, Morgan & Scott, 1973), 35, 158.

² So R Schnackenburg, *Der Brief an die Epheser*, (Zürich: Benziger Verlag, 1982), 210-11; and JA Robinson, *St. Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians*, (London: MacMillan, 1928), 192, who also points out the different nuances that the similar terminology takes on in v 25.

³ M Barth, *Ephesians 4-6*, 545, and FF Bruce, *The Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians*, (Grand Rapids: William B Eerdmans, 1984), 360, both see this pattern to be active throughout the passage.

⁴ So Lincoln, *Ephesians*, (Dallas, TX: Word Books, 1990), 293-94; Schlier, *Der Brief an die Epheser*, 232.

behaviour to be avoided with another to be embraced.⁵ The topics referred to in 4:25-5:2, truthful speech, anger, stealing/giving, edifying speech, forgiveness and love, are all topics common both in Hellenistic exhortation and Christian teaching. Within this environment, the arrangement of material in "sentences,"⁶ which again often deal with general, non-situational exhortations,⁷ may indicate the same quality for Eph 4:25-5:2. Nothing concrete can be surmised about the situation of the original readers of Ephesians without clear textual markers indicating the pertinence of the exhortations to their specific circumstances.

1.0.2 The exhortations and the gentile stereotype

The writer has shifted his emphasis in the way he presents improper behaviour in 4:25-5:2. Falsehood, anger, stealing and "corrupt" speech are not portrayed as exclusively gentile; rather, they belong to the old person (v 22). Though the two are arguably the same for the readers, the writer has moved from a guilt-by-association stance to one that presents wrong behaviour as contrary to the new way of life. Falsehood, stealing and kinds of improper speech do appear in some Jewish lists of gentile sins. The writer does not refer to them in this regard. He principally describes positive features of proper behaviour in contrast with its opposite. He treats these sins as potential wrongdoings for his readers. Positively, he shows his readers how to live as Christians. He refers to specific sins not as a stereotype of non-Christian behaviour but as a gateway to examples of ideal Christian conduct.

1.0.3 The order of appearance

The topics in these verses seem to be chosen randomly. The first exhortation appears through the influence of catchwords. The second does not. Some commentators express surprise at the shift from anger to stealing.⁸ One might ask

⁵ For a basic discussion of Eph 4:1-6:20 as situationless, general moral teaching, see the *Introduction*, §2.6.

⁶ See the summarizing discussion of Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 294-95, who prefers the categorization "sentences" or *sententiae* to the difficult-to-identify concept of *topoi*.

⁷ The term *sententia* is generally used in reference to Latin literature, while the *gnome* (γνώμη) is its Greek counterpart. Both refer to "striking thoughts expressed in [a] terse, pointed manner" - "Sententia," in *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*, ed by NGL Hammond and HH Scullard, (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1970), 977. These kinds of statements were considered proverbial, expressing general wisdom. Also see DL Clark, *Rhetoric in Greco-Roman Education*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1967), 188-90.

⁸ E.g. Schnackenburg, *Der Brief an die Epheser*, 212; Schlier, *Der Brief an die Epheser*, 225.

why any of the topics arise. Anger may follow truth-falsehood based on at least one traditional combination of the two sins in *T Dan*.⁹ Additionally, *T Dan* 4.7-5.1 associates the devil with prevailing anger. But this seems at best only formal, since *T Dan* is more concerned with the broader concept of deception than with the more specific issue of lying.¹⁰ Anger, lying and improper speech appear together in Col 3:8-9. But stealing also surfaces in Pauline sin-lists in the same environment as sexual immorality, greed and reviling (an improper form of speech). The exhortation to proper speech, v 29, does flow from the exhortation to giving, v 28, based certainly on catchwords but perhaps also on anatomical metaphor,¹¹ or even on the familiar ethical pairing of "word and deed."¹² But nothing inherent in any of the topics raised in these verses links them necessarily.

1.1 Truth-speaking

The first exhortation, v 25, enjoins the readers to "put off the false" (ἀποθέμενοι τὸ ψεῦδος). Positively, the readers should speak the truth

⁹ See Lincoln, "The Use of the OT in Ephesians," *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 14 (1982): 42-43.

¹⁰ In *T Dan* 1.7 Dan relates how "the spirit of anger" had convinced him of the false reality that his father would love him more if he killed Joseph. In 2.2 he says "There is blindness in anger, my children, and there is no angry person who can perceive the face of truth," while in 2.4 he reasons "the spirit of anger ensnares [a person] in the nets of deceit, blinds his eyes literally, darkens his understanding by means of a lie, and provides him with its own peculiar perspective." In this atmosphere, he says, in 4.7, that "Anger and falsehood together are a double-edged evil, and work together to perturb the reason." Anger works together with falsehood because it is an emotional response based on an untrue appraisal of a given situation. This carries over to the very next statement in 5.1: "Avoid wrath, / and hate lying, / in order that the Lord may dwell among you, / and Beliar may flee from you." The above statements are translated by HC Kee, in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, ed by JH Charlesworth, (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1983), who has added to the confusion by translating τὸ ψεῦδος as "lying" instead of "deception" or "falsehood". The logic of the passage asserts that if one hates being deceived, then one can have a more accurate perception of reality and avoid being a tool of the devil the way Dan himself claims he was.

¹¹ I.e., what the readers do, with their hands, and what they say, with their mouths. See Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 306. M Barth, *Ephesians 4-6*, 525, goes beyond this, rather unconvincingly, observing not only hand and mouth in 28-29, but also seeing a reference in 4:32 to heart, thinking that the writer is correlating human body-terms with his previous reference to the church as Christ's body.

¹² The expression λόγος καὶ ἔργον (word and deed) is common enough to suggest a pattern of order. Eph 4:28 uses the verbal form, ἐργάζομαι. Other NT uses of the pair may be found in Luke 24:19, a summary of Jesus' life; Acts 7:22, a summary of Moses' character; Rom 15:18, a summary of Paul's conduct toward gentiles; 2 Cor 10:11, a statement of Paul's consistency between what he says in his letters and what he is in person; 2 Thess 2:17, a summary of how God and Christ may encourage the Thessalonians; and, perhaps more significantly for Ephesians given its general dependence on Colossians, Col 3:17, where all that the readers do and say are to be to God's glory. References external to the NT of the use of this summarizing hendiadys are far too numerous to list.

"everyone. . . with his neighbour," a citation of Zech 8:16.¹³ The writer gives an enigmatic explanation for this activity: "for we are members one of another" (RSV).

One must first determine what sort of truth and falsehood is meant here.¹⁴ The arthrous term ψεύδος (falsehood) may refer, generically, to the activity of lying.¹⁵ Or, it may refer to "the lie," that is the deceitful, gentile-like lifestyle described in 4:17-19.¹⁶ Antecedent uses of the term "truth" in Eph 1:13, 4:21 and, most significantly, 4:24, all refer to the gospel,¹⁷ not to the opposite of lying. If that is also in view here, then "falsehood" would involve more than lying, and truth-speaking more than the opposite of lying.

Antecedent expressions notwithstanding, v 25 advocates basic honesty. Catchwords need not transfer semantic content.¹⁸ Further, the immediate context does not contrast a body of falsehoods with "the truth." The gentile vanities of 4:17-24 are faults of a sinful lifestyle that is to be "put off," not false teachings.

¹³ Zech 8:16 reads λαλεῖτε ἀλήθειαν ἕκαστος πρὸς τὸν πλησίον αὐτοῦ, identical to Eph 4:25, except that Eph uses μέτα instead of πρὸς. Partly because it lacks the normal formula for introducing quotations, and also because of the variation of prepositions, Lincoln, "The Use of the OT in Ephesians," 42-43 and *Ephesians*, 300, suggests that this may not exactly be a scripture quotation, but instead a use of the paraenetic tradition in much the same way that *T Dan* 5:2 recalls the same passage from Zech and that *T Ben* 10:3 expresses a similar thought, even using the same preposition as Eph 4:25. One must observe, however, that Eph 4:25 is closer to Zech 8:16 than either passage in the *T 12 Patr.* *T Dan* 5:2 uses the term φθέγεσθε instead of λαλεῖτε, and also puts ἀλήθειαν before the verb, while *T Ben* 10:3 refers, not to truth-speaking but, to doing truth and righteousness: ποιήσατε οὖν ἀλήθειαν καὶ δικαιοσύνην ἕκαστος μετὰ τοῦ πλησίον.

¹⁴ Some commentators think that "falsehood" refers to more than lying. See F Mußner *Der Brief an die Epheser*, (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus Mohn, 1982), 139; TK Abbott, *The Epistles to the Ephesians and to the Colossians*, (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1897), 139; F Foulkes, *The Epistle of Paul to the Ephesians*, (London: Tyndale Press, 1963), 132; Robinson, *St. Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians*, 154. Others see it as the antithesis to truth speaking. See Mitton, *Ephesians*, 167; EF Scott, *The Epistles of Paul to the Colossians, to Philemon and to the Ephesians*, (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1930), 221; HAW Meyer, *Critical and Exegetical Hand-book to the Epistle to the Ephesians*, tr by MJ Evans, rev and ed by WP Dickson, (Winona Lake, IN: Alpha Publications, 1979 reprint of 1884 edition), 477; R Schnackenburg, *Der Brief an die Epheser*, 210-11. Barth, *Ephesians 4-6*, 512, is unusual in advocating something other than spoken truth. Mitton, 167, Robinson, 154, and Schnackenburg, 211, would represent those who see truthful speech as the focus of discussion, the majority opinion.

¹⁵ Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 300, also mentions that τὸ ψεύδος in the singular can often have a collective meaning.

¹⁶ Mußner, *Der Brief an die Epheser*, 139. This is certainly the case in Rom 1:25.

¹⁷ Though a verbal form, the term ἀληθεύω in 4:15 could certainly apply here. There is some debate as to whether this refers solely to the gospel, or whether it also denotes the opposite of lying. I take the former view, as presented in §1.3 of chapter one, but refrain from including this reference here even though it would undergird the point being argued with reference to 4:25.

¹⁸ Robinson, *St. Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians*, 192, argues this succinctly with regard to ἀποθέμενοι, where he points out that the clothing metaphor has been dropped. He also states that τὸ ψεύδος, appearing immediately next to λαλεῖτε, is narrowed to the concept of lying.

The catchwords "putting off" and "truth" illustrate in concrete terms the philosophy expounded in the previous verse.¹⁹

Though Eph 4:25 may be re-iterating what has already been expressed in 4:15, especially since both passages advocate truth-speaking and both also utilize the body metaphor,²⁰ this verse does not refer to gospel truths the way 4:15 may be. The exhortations that follow in 4:26-5:2 are comprised of simple, common, tangibly applicable statements. One might ask how else the writer could urge his readers to have honest speech.

In quoting Zech 8:16 the writer of Ephesians urges his readers to speak the truth with their neighbours. This refers most directly to truth-speaking among those in the Christian community, in keeping with the normal Pauline usage of the term τὸ πλησίον.²¹ The writer applies a clear community reference in Zech 8:16 to believers in Christ.²² The assertion that the readers are all members of one another may be reinforcing this community dimension of truth-speaking by limiting such activity to fellow believers. The writer may be referring to the destructive power of lying and the harmonizing power of truth-speaking within the life of the community.²³

However, the statement may possibly reflect the tendency for personality in the world of the writer of Ephesians to be more dyadic than individualistic.²⁴ Since

¹⁹ See Schnackenburg, *Der Brief an die Epheser*, 210; Abbott, *The Epistle to the Ephesians*, 139; Mußner, *Der Brief an die Epheser*, 139; Meyer, *The Epistle to the Ephesians*, 477; Foulkes, *The Epistle of Paul to the Ephesians*, 132; Robinson, *St. Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians*, 111; Barth, *Ephesians 4-6*, 511-12.

²⁰ See H Halter, *Taufe und Ethos*, (Freiburg: Herder, 1977), 259; also Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 301. Schnackenburg, *Der Brief an die Epheser*, 210, remarks that since truth comes from God, it should be extended to other members in the community.

²¹ See Rom 13:9 and Gal 5:14, which both quote Lev 19:18. In Rom 15:2 the term is distinctly limited to Christians.

²² Schnackenburg, *Der Brief an die Epheser*, 211.

²³ This is the view of most commentators, stated more succinctly by Gnllka, *Der Epheserbrief*, 234; Halter, *Taufe und Ethos*, 259; Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 301; and Schnackenburg, *Der Brief an die Epheser*, 211. Robinson, *St. Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians*, 111, says: "The habit of lying was congenial to the Greek, as it was to his Oriental neighbours. St Paul strikes at the root of the sin by shewing its inconsistency with the realisation of the corporate life." Communal destructiveness of lying is elaborated in *Pss Sol* 12.1-3 and *T Reub* 3.5.

²⁴ See B Malina, "The Individual and the Community - Personality in the Social World of Early Christianity" *Biblical Theology Bulletin* 9 (1979): 126-138. In *The New Testament World*, (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1981), 51-60, he reiterates his views expressed in the article, but on p 68 suggests that many of the explanatory γάρ statements in the NT, which sometimes seem cryptic, may actually reflect the tendency for personality to be identified with groups rather than with individuals. Though Eph 4:25

dyadic views tend toward stereotype, the reason for truth-speaking may be related to the overall group personality - i.e. if a member lies, the group is considered to be full of liars, but if truth-telling prevails, then the group is seen to be truthful. Such an outlook certainly fits with the flow of thought found in 4:17-24: gentiles are known for their disgusting behaviour; Christians should be known for their righteousness. This idea has implications for how outsiders might be viewing the group.²⁵

1.2 Anger

Vv 26-27 contain three short prohibitions against anger, the first being a quotation from Ps 4:4. The other two are connected to each other by the negative particle *μηδέ* (nor). Most commentators agree that all three statements are related to each other.²⁶ Some also discuss whether these permit some form of righteous anger.

When the writer quotes Ps 4:4, "Be angry, but do not sin," he may imply that there are some occasions when a person actually could be angry without sinning.²⁷ The paratactic listing of imperatives, whether or not a Semitism, can permit a concession.²⁸ However, both v 27 and v 31 emphasize that anger is sinful and should be avoided. If one has to be angry, which one ought not be, then one ought not to sin thereby.²⁹

uses the term *ὄρα* instead of *γάρ*, the concept may carry over.

²⁵ Bruce, *The Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians*, 360; Mitton, *Ephesians*, 167-68.

²⁶ Mußner, *Der Brief an die Epheser*, 139, regards the warning about the devil as a separate statement, unrelated to the previous two.

²⁷ Abbott, *The Epistle to the Ephesians*, 140; Barth, *Ephesians 4-6*, 513; Bruce, *The Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians*, 361; Foulkes, *The Epistle of Paul to the Ephesians*, 133; Meyer, *The Epistle to the Ephesians*, 478; Mitton, *Ephesians*, 168; Robinson, *St. Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians*, 111; Scott, *The Epistles of Paul to the Colossians, to Philemon and to the Ephesians*, 108; GHP Thompson, *The Letters of Paul to the Ephesians, to the Colossians and to Philemon*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967), 75.

²⁸ F Blass and A DeBrunner, *A Greek Grammar of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, tr by RW Funk, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961), 195, §387. This is Barth's reasoning in *Ephesians 4-6*, 513.

²⁹ Arguing against a wide concession are: Gnllka, *Der Epheserbrief*, 235; Halter, *Taufe und Ethos*, 259; Schnackenburg, *Der Brief an die Epheser*, 211; and Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 301, who paraphrases the statement as follows: "Anger is to be avoided at all costs, but if, for whatever reason, you do get angry, then refuse to indulge such anger so that you do not sin."

Though the terms for anger in the two halves of v 26 are different,³⁰ the second half of the verse further restricts anger. According to the writer, not only should his readers not sin by being angry, when they do sin in this way, they must resolve the matter as quickly as possible. The expression "do not let the sun go down on your anger" (RSV) may be proverbial,³¹ but in any case does not present a literal time-boundary.³² The writer is communicating immediacy.

The third prohibition (v 27) suggests that anger promotes the influence of the devil: "and give no opportunity to the devil" (RSV). The expression "give no opportunity" (μηδὲ δίδοτε τόπον) uses a spatial metaphor to convey that the devil may influence the lives of those estranged or affected by anger.³³ While this may be a motivation curbing angry expression,³⁴ one must not overlook that the writer expresses this as a negative imperative. Being angry is one way according to the writer that the devil may gain influence within the lives of his readers. He urges his readers not to make any room for the devil by resolving whatever anger has been expressed and refraining from sinning with anger altogether (v 26). The writer does not explain how the devil may influence the lives of his readers, only that persistence in the sin of anger allows the devil to make inroads into the life of the community.³⁵

³⁰ Lincoln *Ephesians*, 302, considers this to be a stylistic variation.

³¹ So Gnllka, *Der Epheserbrief*, 235, and Schnackenburg, *Der Brief an die Epheser*, 211, who both refer to the Pythagorean practice of dealing with anger before sundown as mentioned by Plutarch, *Moralia* 488C. Similar terminology referring to sundown in Deut 24:17, LXX, lends support to the proverbial nature of the statement, since the import of that passage is that a hired labourer should be paid as quickly as possible.

³² Barth, *Ephesians 4-6*, 514, seems to equate the Deuteronomic notion, in 21:23, 24:13, 15, of sundown with the Pythagorean. In Deuteronomy 21:23 and 24:15, a hung body and a pledge of surety are actually to be kept in place during the day as a public demonstration being, respectively, taken down or returned at sunset. The sense of immediacy in the expression is present, however, in 24:17, where a hired labourer is to receive payment as quickly as possible.

³³ Barth, *Ephesians 4-6*, 514, cites the uses of τόπος in Rom 12:19, Wis 12:10, Heb 12:17, 1 Clem 7:5, Prayer of Manasseh 8 and Sir 19:17 where the term means "opportunity" or "chance". In similar fashion, Robinson, *St. Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians*, 192-93, translates the expression in Rom 12:19 as "make way for," more accurately analysing both the term τόπος and the expression δίδοτε τόπον. He additionally cites Sir 4:5 and 38:12, along with Plutarch, *Moralia* 462B, which he concedes may be a Latinism.

³⁴ So Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 302, and Schnackenburg, *Der Brief an die Epheser*, 211.

³⁵ Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 302, observes that *T Dan* 4:7-5:1 refers to the influencing role of "Beliar" when anger and falsehood are allowed to "perturb the reason:" the Lord departs from the soul and Beliar rules it. When anger and falsehood are shunned, the Lord dwells with the people and Beliar flees from them. This may reflect a similar operative concept behind the statements of the writer of *Ephesians*. However, it would be inappropriate to see the perspective of *T Dan* regulating the thought

1.3 Stealing/Giving

V 28 states, "Let the thief no longer steal, but rather let him labor, doing honest work with his hands, so that he may be able to give to those in need" (RSV). This appears to be addressed not to all the readers but, more specifically, to thieves. Further, the use of the present participle ὁ κλέπτων, the one who steals, seems to indicate that it is an ongoing activity that the writer must address.³⁶ If so taken, the Christian counterpart - i.e. working with one's own hands so as to have something to give to needy people - pertains primarily to thieves, or former thieves.³⁷

Consistent with the general nature of the paraenesis, however, the use of the participle need not signify anything more than "thief."³⁸ Though the writer addresses "the thief,"³⁹ he contrasts not simply theft and work, but theft and giving to the needy. He uses theft as a foil to what he ultimately wants to promote - giving.

The initial comparison is between theft on the one hand and strenuous, manual labour, a good activity,⁴⁰ on the other. The subsequent purpose statement

in Eph, especially since Beliar and the spirits of Beliar are controlling spirits that cause people to perform specific sins. This is not exactly the same perspective found in Eph 2:1-3, which does not explicitly articulate how the ruler of the authority of the air works in the sons of disobedience.

³⁶ Gnlika, *Der Epheserbrief*, 236, regards this as a possibility, especially since slaves would be among the addressees, and thievery would be an expected problem within that social stratum. Caird, *Paul's Letters from Prison*, 82, thinks somewhat similarly, as does Meyer, *The Epistle to the Ephesians*, 480-81.

³⁷ It is, perhaps, in partial recognition of this kind of narrowing that Barth, *Ephesians 4-6*, 515, broadens the activity of stealing to include any who would obtain wealth without manual labour, the counterpart to stealing. This, then, would include employers and slave owners as thieves, an ingenious suggestion, but probably beyond the scope of the passage.

³⁸ Robinson, *St. Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians*, 193, distinguishes between ὁ κλέπτων, "the man who has been given to stealing," ὁ κλέπτης, "a common thief" and ὁ κλέψας, "one who has stolen on a particular occasion." Scott, *The Epistles of Paul to the Colossians to Philemon and to the Ephesians*, 222, thinks that the use of a participle implies that the community did not contain "thieves," but that by using it the writer appeals to a more general view of what could be called stealing. Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 303, notes the discussion and points out that an arthrous present participle can take on a timeless nuance and thus be indistinguishable from a noun, making dubious any inferences about the situation drawn from ὁ κλέπτων.

³⁹ EA Best, "Ephesians 4.28: Thieves in the Church," *Irish Biblical Studies* 14 (1992): 4-5, discusses various social factors that may have led to theft being endemic in the kind of societies Ephesians may have been addressing originally. Though theft may have been a common sin, the writer, by mentioning it, is not assuming its existence in the believing community that he addresses. Rather, he refers to it as one of several sins that may already have been regarded by the readers as improper for believers.

⁴⁰ Of the eight textual variants to this verse, all but two of them contain τὸ ἀγαθόν as an object of the participle ἐργαζόμενος, and the two primary witnesses in each case are Coptic translations, though one of them is also attested in Tertullian. Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 292, posits that "these shortest

aims this activity at the assistance of a needy person. Though this has a motivating quality,⁴¹ it also clarifies how and why a person actually may accomplish what is good. The readers are being sensitized toward one more way in which they may show concern for others. They are being told concretely how they may live a life of love (5:2).⁴²

1.4 Evil/Edifying Talk

The exhortation in v 29 pertains to speech: "Let no evil talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for edifying, as fits the occasion, that it may impart grace to those who hear" (RSV). The statement picks up catchwords from v 28; not only are the terms for good (ἀγαθός) and need (χρεία) repeated in this verse, but the basic pattern of exhortation is duplicated as well.⁴³ A commonly recognized evil is to be replaced with a contrasting good activity for a strongly positive purpose. In v 28 stealing is replaced with helping the needy; in v 29 "evil talk" is replaced with grace-producing words. Words can benefit others. Proper speech, too, expresses a life of love.⁴⁴

The language of v 29 is metaphoric.⁴⁵ The writer may be drawing on

texts could well have come about as a result of the belief that manual labor and achieving good simply do not belong together." A survey of the use of ἀγαθός in the environment of the verb ἐργάζομαι reveals at least four basic options for the meaning of such a combination: moral deeds (i.e. "good works"); effective operation; beneficial activity; a good product. The combination of doing good and labouring is indeed unusual, but demonstrative of the kind of contrast the writer had in mind. The LXX frequently summarizes the moral quality of people by referring to the "works of their hands," though this expression can refer to the making of idols: Deut 31:29; 3 Kgdms 16:7; 4 Kgdms 19:18; 22:17; 2 Chr 32:19; 34:25; Job 1:10 (particularly instructive, since Job himself was not a labourer); Ps 9:17 ("the sinner is taken in the works of his hands"); Pss 57:3; 89:17; 113:12; 124:5; 134:15; Isa 2:8; 17:8; 37:19; Jer 1:16; 10:3, 9; 25:6; 51:8; Lam 3:64; Hos 14:4; Mic 5:12; Hag 2:15; Jdt 13:4; Wis 1:12; 3:14; 13:10. The translation and explanation of Schlier, *Der Brief an die Epheser*, 222 and 225-26, also followed by Halter, *Taufe und Ethos*, 260, that goods are acquired ("erwerbe sich mit seiner eigenen Hände Arbeit das Gut"), rather than good is accomplished does not pay close enough attention to the ethical nuances of the sentences in 4:25-5:2.

⁴¹ So Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 304, and Schnackenburg, *Der Brief an die Epheser*, 212.

⁴² This is observed by Halter, *Taufe und Ethos*, 261; Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 304; and Schnackenburg *Der Brief an die Epheser*, 212, among others.

⁴³ Schnackenburg, *Der Brief an die Epheser*, 213, describes this close parallel, both in terminology and in pattern of exhortation, as does Gnllka, *Der Epheserbrief*, 237.

⁴⁴ So Schnackenburg, *Der Brief an die Epheser*, 218.

⁴⁵ Though the term σαπρός itself can be metaphoric for moral decay, the writer does not emphasize that connotation. He is not using a common expression for "bad language." A computer search through the *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae* for every place the characters "σαπ" and "λογ" appear together demonstrates that λόγος σαπρός is an expression unique to Ephesians 4:29 and writings subsequent to it, most of which are commenting on Eph 4:29.

construction imagery with the term "edifying" (οικοδομή),⁴⁶ a concept to which he has referred several times previously in the letter.⁴⁷ According to the picture in 4:29, some words make useless building material while others make good.⁴⁸ The readers are urged to make their words useful to others; "edification" or upbuilding is a common need that the readers as believers should be filling in the lives of others.⁴⁹ The purpose in speaking edifying words is to "impart grace to those who hear." These words should provide a special kindness.⁵⁰ The writer urges his

⁴⁶ Though not abundant, there are several interesting appearances of the term σαπρός with οίκ-derivatives describing the condition of buildings. Teles (4th century BCE) 27H: "Would you [continue to live] in the house in which you were bred and born even if it is rotten [σαπρός] and crumbling and falling down?" Tr by E O'Neil, *Teles [the Cynic Teacher]* (Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1977), 29. Athenaeus, (2nd-3rd century CE) *Deipnosophistae* 4.241: "Eucrates, the Lark, while drinking with a certain person whose house was in a tumble-down [σαπρός] state, remarked, 'In this place one has to dine with the Left hand supporting the roof, like the Caryatides'." Tr by CB Gulick, Athenaeus, *The Deipnosophists*, (London: Heinemann, 1929), III: 87. *Herm Sim* 9.5.2: "'Why, Sir,' said I, 'was the building of the tower not completed?' 'The tower,' said he, 'cannot yet be completed unless its lord come and test this building, in order that if some stones prove to be rotten [λίθοι σαπροί], he may change them, for the tower is being built according to his will.'" 9.6.3-4: "And that man examined the building carefully, so that he felt each stone, and he held a staff in his hand and hit each individual stone used in the building. And when he struck, some of them became as black as pitch, and some rotten [ἄσβόλη], and some short, and some neither white nor black, and some rough and not fitting in with the other stones, and some with many stains. These were the varieties of the rotten stones [τῶν λίθων τῶν σαπρῶν] which were found in the building." Tr by K Lake in *The Apostolic Fathers*, (London: William Heinemann, 1913), II: 229-31, 233. These uses undergird the possibility of a construction metaphor being used in Eph 4:29. Equally relevant are uses of σαπρός in reference to items that serve as building materials or parts such as leather, wood, rope, and even foundations. Such uses are widely attested, as acknowledged by C Lindhagen, "Die Wurzel ΣΑΠ- im NT und AT," *Uppsala Universitets Arskrift* 1950, 40: 33-36.

⁴⁷ Eph 2:21; 4:12, 16. In each of these statements, the general argumentation centres around the formation, nurturing or growth of the community. In 2:21 Jew and gentile are built together in the same building that is indwelt by the Spirit. In 4:12 believers are built up by gift-individuals given by Christ. In 4:16 the community builds itself up in love. Thus the building metaphor refers distinctly to the Christian community. The same, however, cannot be said to exist here. The term is not technical enough, nor the context clear enough, to warrant a restriction of "edification" just to believers (contrary to Schnackenburg, *Der Brief an die Epheser*, 213, and others). The writer emphasizes in this passage the overall quality of his readers' lives, not their functioning in community. The quality of their lives affects the community. But the writer seems to resort to vague terminology when referring to those who should receive the benefits of exemplary conduct - e.g. "neighbour" in v 25; do not be angry (at whom?), v 26; give to the one having a need v 28.

⁴⁸ Lindhagen, "Die Wurzel ΣΑΠ- im NT und AT," 26-69, throughout his study notes repeated contrasts between that which is σαπρός and that which is καλός or ἀγαθός.

⁴⁹ Abbott, *The Epistle to the Ephesians*, 143, takes the genitive in the expression πρὸς οἰκοδομὴν τῆς χρείας as objective: a need is being built-up. Others - e.g. Barth, *Ephesians 4-6*, 519; Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 306; and Schnackenburg, *Der Brief an die Epheser*, 213; - argue for a genitive of quality: edification or upbuilding is a needed activity. The former sense seems to be too restrictive. The writer is not saying that good words should only be used when some sort of need must be met. Rather, his thrust is that all words should be edifying; σαπροί words should be replaced by good ones.

⁵⁰ Barth, *Ephesians 4-6*, 520; Schlier, *Der Brief an Die Epheser*, 226; and Scott, *The Epistles of Paul to the Colossians, to Philemon and to the Ephesians*, 223, are all intrigued with the idea that grace may refer to the special acts of God. The writer may be advocating that his readers' words present

readers to have the welfare of others in mind when they speak to them.

The construction metaphor appears for moral purposes. The writer does not indicate that bad words mean those that do not work well rhetorically and good ones mean polished speech. He has already issued instruction about such topics as lying, anger and stealing. "Useless word" is too weak a translation of λόγος σαπρός.⁵¹

One must also not restrict the moral nuance implied by the term σαπρός⁵² to a prohibition of foul language.⁵³ Eph 4:29 refers to all speech that is denigrating both to morals and to morale. This would include lies and angry words mentioned in the passage, as well as other denigrating types of speech such as gossiping, cursing, shouting, malicious criticism and foul language.⁵⁴ By way of contrast, the good word might include what is truthful, soothing, morally pure, encouraging, instructive and perhaps even constructively critical.⁵⁵

something of the divine to its human listeners, even as they also impart kindness. The context does not really promote such depth of meaning. Unlike 1:2, 6, 7, 13; 2:5, 7, 8; 3:2, 7, 8; 4:7 and 6:24, which all refer to God's grace, the writer seems to use the term grace (χάρις) in a non-technical sense. Given the shortness of the statement and lack of explanation, any spiritual or theological sense to this grace is doubtful.

⁵¹ See Robinson, *St. Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians*, 193, though he seems to restrict the term too much in his exposition, p 112.

⁵² Lindhagen, "Die Wurzel ΣΑΠ- im NT und AT," 29-33, intimates that the term conveys ethical-religious contrast. The term may appear in the environment where ethical-religious contrast is taking place, but that does not mean that the term itself had ethical significance for Christians. Thus, in Matt 13:48 σαπρός describes some of the fish caught by fishermen in a parable, not as evil, nor as rotten, but as unsuitable. They were rejected in favor of the "good" (κάλος) fish that were kept in the boat. Though this contrast is applied morally in the very next verse, it is done so metaphorically - i.e. just as unsuitable fish were thrown away, so wicked people will be cast into hell.

⁵³ Barth, *Ephesians 4-6*, 518; Meyer, *The Epistle to the Ephesians*, 481; Mitton, *Ephesians*, 170; Robinson, *St. Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians*, 112. Abbott, *The Epistle to the Ephesians*, 142-43, notes the contrast between τὰ σαπρὰ and τὰ κομψὰ (elegant, pretty, clever, witty) in Epictetus III.xvi.7, but for some reason thinks that this refers to foul talk. In the context, Epictetus discusses skill in communication.

⁵⁴ Other suggestions include: "worthless [words] and leading others to think on the worthless," Foulkes, *The Epistle of Paul to the Ephesians*, 135; "any kind of speech that may work mischief," Scott, *The Epistles of Paul to the Colossians, to Philemon and to the Ephesians*, 223; "language that 'cuts' or hurts other people, and causes mischief," Thompson, *The Letters of Paul to the Ephesians, to the Colossians and to Philemon*, 75. Though Foulkes does not state his sources for this, it appears similar to Chrysostom's view, cited by Meyer, *The Epistle to the Ephesians*, 481.

⁵⁵ Halter, *Taufe und Ethos*, 261, suggests comfort, encouragement, exhortation, rebuke and criticism, all given for support with consideration to time and circumstance: ". . . ein ermunterndes, tröstendes, mahnendes, tadelndes, kritisches Wort, das jedenfalls ein förderndes Wort sein muss, ein Wort zur rechten Zeit und am rechten Ort. . ." Mitton, *Ephesians*, 171, describes a good word as "that which raises morale, creates a spirit of goodwill, builds up confidence and courage among all concerned."

1.5 Grieving the Holy Spirit

V 30, "And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, in whom you were sealed for the day of redemption" (RSV), has an uncertain relationship to the other exhortations in this passage. It is unclear whether it is to enhance the admonition about unsuitable words,⁵⁶ to summarize the import of all of the preceding prohibitions,⁵⁷ to stand alone as an individual, general prohibition,⁵⁸ or to appear as a prelude to the sin-list of v 31.⁵⁹ Given the direct connection with the previous statement indicated by the term "and" (καί), as well as other associations of the Spirit with speech (5:18; 6:17), the first view is probably more appropriate.⁶⁰

It is striking that the "Holy Spirit of God" can be grieved.⁶¹ This statement again expresses the writer's viewpoint that spiritual realities affect the moral conduct of his readers. Just as unbridled anger can give opportunity to the antagonising devil (4:26), so improper behaviour, or at least improper speech, can grieve God's Spirit.⁶²

Many writers relate this verse to earlier statements in the epistle concerning the role of the Holy Spirit within the community.⁶³ Most pertinent in this regard

⁵⁶ Bruce, *The Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians*, 363; Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 307-08; Meyer, *The Epistle to the Ephesians*, 482; Robinson, *St. Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians*, 113.

⁵⁷ Barth, *Ephesians 4-6*, 549; Halter, *Taufe und Ethos*, 261; Mußner, *Der Brief an die Epheser*, 140; Schnackenburg, *Der Brief an die Epheser*, 214.

⁵⁸ JA Allan, *The Epistle to the Ephesians*, (London: SCM Press, 1959), 117; Scott, *The Epistles of Paul to the Colossians, to Philemon and to the Ephesians*, 223.

⁵⁹ Mitton *Ephesians*, 172; Schlier, *Der Brief an die Epheser*, 227-28.

⁶⁰ So Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 307, and Robinson, *St. Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians*, 113.

⁶¹ Many commentators have observed that Eph 4:30 resembles Isa 63:10, particularly as both refer to the Holy Spirit of God being grieved by disobedience. Though the LXX uses a different term for grieve, *παροξύνω* instead of *λυπέω*, Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 306, points out that the Hebrew term used in the MT refers to an emotional grief. Schnackenburg, *Der Brief an die Epheser*, 213-14, thinks it significant that a statement directed to the old covenant people of God has been redirected to the new. Such significance is not really built on by the writer of Ephesians, however.

⁶² Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 308: "Using hateful words against one's sisters and brothers in the community of faith distresses the Spirit who binds that community together. In this way, v 30 can be seen to stand in the same reinforcing relationship to v 29 as the motivation about giving no opportunity to the devil in v 27 stands in to the prohibition against anger of v 26." Schnackenburg, *Der Brief an die Epheser*, 218: "Eingebettet sind die wohl aus der Taufparaklese stammenden Motive von der Absage an den Teufel (V 27) und der Versiegelung durch den heiligen Geist, den man nicht kränken darf (V 30)."

⁶³ Bruce, *The Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians*, 363; Gnika, *Der Epheserbrief*, 238-39; Halter, *Taufe und Ethos*, 261; Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 306-08; Meyer, *The Epistle to the Ephesians*, 482-83; Mitton, *Ephesians*, 172; Robinson, *St. Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians*, 113; Scott,

would be 2:18, 22 and 4:3, where the Spirit is seen as the creator of unity as well as the one who dwells within the community. Further, the Spirit is said to be so closely associated with the community that he actually can be grieved by sin. But the writer adds that his readers have been "sealed for the day of redemption."⁶⁴ Were community issues the sole concern, one would expect the statement to highlight the Spirit's presence.⁶⁵

The remarks, rather, recall those of 1:13-14, where the writer says his readers have been "sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, which is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it" (RSV). This statement emphasizes the readers' conversion;⁶⁶ they were sealed after they had "heard the word of truth, the gospel of [their] salvation," and had "believed in [Christ]." The appeal in 4:30 to the same act of sealing by the Holy Spirit probably refers to this same moment of conversion. The writer has not drifted from the concerns of 4:17-24. The morality espoused in 4:25-5:2 may have benefits for a Christian community, but the writer is equally concerned for his readers to demonstrate their new life in Christ.

1.6 Anger and Forgiveness

In 4:31-32 the writer alters the loose pattern of exhortation found in 4:25-30. Rather than prohibiting one sinful deed and encouraging a corresponding righteous one, he juxtaposes an exhortation that lists a collection of evils against an exhortation that lists positive activities: "Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, with all malice, and be kind to one

The Epistles of Paul to the Colossians, to Philemon and to the Ephesians, 223; Schnackenburg, *Der Brief an die Epheser*, 213-14.

⁶⁴ Mitton, *Ephesians*, 172, links this future day "to the fullness of life which awaits the Christian in heaven beyond this present life," rather than to the consummation of history. Schnackenburg, *Der Brief an die Epheser*, 214, points out that though the writer of Ephesians does not develop his eschatology, he has not abandoned the Pauline outlook of a yet-to-happen termination of the age. Gnllka, *Der Epheserbrief*, 239, and Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 307, both point out that the writer joins the concept of the current presence of the Spirit for the readers with a future guarantee of their salvation.

⁶⁵ Both Meyer, *The Epistle to the Ephesians*, 482-83, and Schnackenburg, *Der Brief an die Epheser*, 214, indicate that Eph 4:30 and *Herm Man* 10.2.2, 4, 5 may reflect similar traditions since the latter passage also refers to the grieving of the Spirit, though in terms of the one who indwells believers. The passages are similar in their mentioning of the Spirit being grieved, but dissimilar in that the latter emphasizes the Spirit's presence while the former emphasizes his work.

⁶⁶ Again, the concept of conversion, which is referred to directly by such ideas as hearing and believing the gospel of truth, is to be preferred over the concept of baptism, which is not mentioned explicitly either in 4:30 or in 1:13-14. Though baptism is associated with conversion, the writer emphasizes, not a rite, but a change in his readers' lives based on their faith (2:8-9). See the arguments of Caird, *Paul's Letters from Prison*, 41-42, and Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 39-40.

another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you" (RSV).

The list in verse 31 may display a progression from inward attitudes to outward activity,⁶⁷ with "bitterness" referring to a festering, internal discontent that, when left unchecked, eventually gives way to slander. Such a planned logical development seems unlikely for at least two reasons.

First, "bitterness" (πικρία) does not have a universally attested technical meaning in relation to other terms for anger. Some writers have appealed to Aristotle's discussion on anger, inferring a definition of "bitterness" from his description of bitter people (οἱ πικροί).⁶⁸ But this definition does not seem to have been normative. *Herm Man* 5.2.4, often appealed to in support of a delineation of various anger terms,⁶⁹ seems to depict a different form of bitterness from that which Aristotle describes.⁷⁰ Where Aristotle referred to festering, unresolved resentment, Hermas seems to imply a harsh and hasty outburst in response to a triviality. In the context Hermas clearly describes a progression that begins with

⁶⁷ Barth, *Ephesians 4-6*, 521; C Masson, *L'Épître de Saint Paul aux Éphésiens*, (Neuchâtel: Delachaux & Niestlé SA, 1953), 204; Robinson, *The Letter of St. Paul to the Ephesians*, 114; Schlier, *Der Brief an die Epheser*, 228; Schnackenburg, *Der Brief an die Epheser*, 215; Thompson, *The Letters of Paul to the Ephesians, to the Colossians and to Philemon*, 76; BF Westcott, *St. Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians*, (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1979 reprint of 1906 edition), 74.

⁶⁸ This appears in *Nicomachean Ethics* IV.v.1-15, 1125b-1126b, sandwiched between a discussion of the "Irascible [ὀργίλοι], who get angry quickly and with the wrong people and for the wrong things and too violently, but whose anger is soon over" and the "Harsh-tempered" (χαλεποί), "who lose their temper at the wrong things, and more and longer than they ought, and who refuse to be reconciled without obtaining redress or retaliating.": "The Bitter-tempered [οἱ πικροί] on the other hand are implacable, and remain angry a long time, because they keep their wrath in; whereas when a man retaliates there is an end of the matter: the pain of resentment is replaced by the pleasure of obtaining redress, and so his anger ceases. But if they do not retaliate, men continue to labour under a sense of resentment--for as their anger is concealed no one else tries to placate them either, and it takes a long time to digest one's wrath within one. Bitterness [οἱ τοιοῦτοι - i.e. those who behave this way] is the most troublesome form of bad temper both to a man himself and his nearest friends." Aristotle, *The Nicomachean Ethics*, tr by H Rackham, (London: William Heinemann, 1926), 231-33. See, e.g., Barth, *Ephesians 4-6*, 521; Robinson, *St. Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians*, 194.

⁶⁹ E.g. Gnllka, *Der Epheserbrief*, 239-40; Schnackenburg, *Der Brief an die Epheser*, 215. This passage also contains three of the terms found in Eph 4:31, in the same order of appearance.

⁷⁰ "But ill temper [ὄξυχολία] is first foolish, frivolous and silly; then from silliness comes bitterness [πικρία], from bitterness wrath [θυμός], from wrath rage [ὀργή], and from rage fury [μῆνις]; then fury, being compounded of such great evils [κακῶν], becomes great and inexpiable sin," tr by K Lake, in *The Apostolic Fathers*, II: 93. A few statements earlier (5.2.2, II: 91), the visionary has said "And when [ill temper] sees such men in tranquillity, it forces its way into the heart of that man, and the man or woman is made bitter out of nothing, because of daily business or of food or some trifle, or about some friend, or about giving or receiving, or about some such foolish matters."

an impatient response to a minor irritation and ends with an explosive outcry.⁷¹ Similar contextual markers that might indicate a progression are lacking in Eph 4:31, as are marks of gradations of meaning between the various anger terms.⁷²

A second point against a developed progression is found in the list itself. Logically and semantically the difference between wrathful expression (ὄργή) on the one hand and shouting (κραυγή) on the other is between something more general and something else more specific; one can be wrathful non-verbally as well as verbally.⁷³ Rather than evincing a progression from internal attitude to outward manifestation, it shows different forms of irascibility. The same can be said about any distinction between shouting and slander⁷⁴ (βλασφημία). Angry slander can certainly be shouted,⁷⁵ but not necessarily. The difference between these two terms again is primarily between the more general and the more specific; slander can be considered a more specific kind of shouting. But this does not indicate a logical

⁷¹ Bruce, *The Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians*, 364, translates *πικρία* as "harshness," a different quality altogether from resentment. Linguistic support for such a translation may be found in: Ps 9:28 (LXX), where cursing and verbally expressed bitterness are parallel to verbal production of trouble and pain; Ps 13:3 (LXX) where cursing and verbal bitterness are associated with the production of destruction and misery, being antithetical to the way of peace; Sir 34:29 where bitterness of the mind caused by drunkenness produces brawling and quarrelling; *T Abr* 1.16.4 and 1.17.8, 17, 18 where "Death" is said to possess bitterness and is described as "ferocious." It is the attribute of bitterness which itself kills and which is also contrasted with "softness of speech." Col 3:19 uses the verb *πικραίνω* to describe behaviour that husbands are to avoid toward their wives: ". . . do not be harsh with them" (RSV).

⁷² Gnilka, *Der Epheserbrief*, 240, notes that the list in Eph 4:31 does not delineate between the different evils the way a more typical list from the Stoic philosophers would. He considers this to be a result of Jewish synagogue influence, remarking how the writer of Ephesians is more concerned with stopping evil than with philosophizing on its origins.

⁷³ Two examples from LXX usage illustrate the point: Gen 39:19, in which Potiphar, in his anger, has Joseph thrown in prison; Isa 58:13, which refers to speaking words of anger.

⁷⁴ Though it is possible to translate this term as "blasphemy," the context favours the more general "slander" since each of the exhortations in 4:25 have focussed on interpersonal harmfulness and supportiveness.

⁷⁵ An interesting example of this appears in *Asen* 4:9-12, words summarized later by Aseneth herself as being slanderous (βλασφημία, 13.13): "And when Aseneth heard these words from her father, plenty of red sweat poured over her face, and she became furious with great anger, and looked askance at her father with her eyes, and said 'Why does my lord and my father speak words such as these, to hand me over, like a captive, to a man (who is) an alien, and a fugitive, and (was) sold (as a slave)? Is he not the shepherd's son from the land of Canaan, and he himself was caught in the act (when he was) sleeping with his mistress, and his master threw him into the prison of darkness. . .'" Tr by C Burchard in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, II: 207. It would be difficult to envisage Aseneth saying this calmly.

progression between the two concepts of shouting and anger.⁷⁶ Though a movement from the more general to the more specific may be seen when in the pairs wrath/shouting and shouting/slander, this is by no means the case for bitterness/anger and anger/wrath.

The list presents terms that have overlapping semantic ranges. It outlines a prohibitive boundary against any form or expression of anger.⁷⁷ These various forms of anger have a definite moral tone; they are to be removed⁷⁸ along with every other sort of evil.⁷⁹ The writer is not listing particular sins to be avoided as much as he is describing a basic kind of evil behaviour, anger, that is to be renounced in every possible form.

In contradistinction to any expression of anger, the writer (v 32) enjoins his readers to be kind, tenderhearted and forgiving to one another. His antithesis is between that which is evil and that which is God-like;⁸⁰ his readers are to forgive one another in the same way that God has forgiven them.

As with the sins to be removed, the writer does not try to exhaust all possible valued behaviours. The overall orientation is more important than the specific, individual characteristics. Each attribute listed may by itself be antithetical to certain kinds of angry responses. But the list conveys more than simple antitheses. The readers are to have a concern for one another transcending any expression of hostility, whether petty or deep-seated.

⁷⁶ While not fully embracing the notion of a progression or "intensification" within this list, Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 308-09, suggests that if there is a progression from κραυγή to βλασφημία it may indicate a movement from general "external expression" of anger to that which is "damaging of others." Yet even this distinction is difficult to uphold, since angry shouting is both personally damaging to those who must hear it and, in some situations, aimed at specific individuals.

⁷⁷ This is the import of the term "all" or "every" (πάσα), which directly modifies πικρία but is to be extended to the rest of the list, especially as indicated by the re-use of the term in the summarizing phrase at the end of the verse: "with all evil" (σὺν πάσῃ κακίᾳ).

⁷⁸ Schnackenburg, *Der Brief an die Epheser*, 214, regards the concept of removing as a recollection of the clothing imagery of 4:22, 24 and 25. However, vv 31-32 seem no different in this regard from any of the other exhortations in this passage where bad activities are to be replaced with good.

⁷⁹ E Schweizer, "Traditional Ethical Patterns in the Pauline and Post-Pauline Letters and Their Development," in *Text and Interpretation* ed by E Best and R McL Wilson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 199-200, describes the adaptation by the writer of Colossians of the traditional pattern of ethical lists where sins of all types are considered uniformly evil, rather than some being more evil than others. This may be what is happening here in Eph 4:31, with certain character weaknesses being equated with "all evil." The summarizing quality of the phrase "with all evil" is noted by a number of commentators, including Barth, *Ephesians 4-6*, 522-23; Caird, *Paul's Letters from Prison*, 83; Gnlika, *Der Epheserbrief*, 239; Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 308; Mitton, *Ephesians*, 173.

⁸⁰ "with all malice" (σὺν πάσῃ κακίᾳ) versus "as God" (καθὼς καὶ ὁ θεός).

Kindness and tenderheartedness appear together not merely as qualities to describe properly behaving believers but as epitomizing the deeds they must render to one another.⁸¹ Mutual forgiveness is uniquely highlighted.⁸² Though the writer has mentioned God's compassion and kindness earlier in the epistle,⁸³ as well as his forgiveness,⁸⁴ it is specifically this latter aspect of God's actions that he urges his readers to emulate here.⁸⁵ This also reflects the importance of conversion for the moral teaching. Only by being forgiven by God do the readers have new life. This new orientation to living principally directs the readers' behaviour.

1.7 Emulating Christ's love

The statements in 5:1-2 connect directly with the preceding exhortation (4:32):⁸⁶ "Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children. And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God" (RSV). These appear as concluding remarks not only to 4:31-32, but to the entire section that began with 4:25. The charge to "walk in love" aptly summarizes the concern for others expressed overtly in 4:25, 28, 29 and 32.

The import of the expression "be imitators of God" has been widely

⁸¹ The prepositional phrase εἰς ἀλλήλους is adverbial, modifying the imperative γίνεσθε. The adjectives χρηστοί and εὐσπλαγχνοί both modify the subject of the imperative. Everything that the readers are enjoined to be, they are enjoined to be to one another.

⁸² χαριζόμενοι may possibly be adjectival, so that the construction is periphrastic with γίνεσθε. However, the appearance of the object ἑαυτοῖς with this participle, a stylistic variant of ἀλλήλους (so Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 309, and Robinson, *St. Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians*, 195) produces a useless redundancy if the participle is adjectival. Rather, it is to be taken as adverbial, picking up an imperatival sense from γίνεσθε, though this is more from being a participle of attendant circumstance as a feature in a list than as a pure imperatival participle.

⁸³ ἔλεος, 2:4 and χρηστότης, 2:7. It may be more than a coincidence that in 2:3, just prior to the mention of God's outpouring of his mercy and kindness, the writer has referred to unredeemed humanity as "sons of wrath" (τέκνα . . . ὀργῆς). Given the likelihood that this latter expression is a Hebraism meaning "those deserving of God's wrath" (see Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 98-99), the writer's "even as" (καθὼς καὶ) in 4:32 may be recalling that God's alternative response to the unleashing of his wrath was his own acts of mercy and kindness displayed in Christ.

⁸⁴ 1:7: ἐν ᾧ ἔχομεν . . . τὴν ἀφεσιν τῶν παραπτωμάτων.

⁸⁵ Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 310: "Here, as in later instances in 5:2, 25, 29, καθὼς has both comparative and causal force. What God has done in Christ for believers, which has been the theme of the first half of the letter, now provides both the norm and the grounds for believers' own behavior."

⁸⁶ Schnackenburg, *Der Brief an die Epheser*, 208, notes the correspondence between γίνεσθε δέ in 4:32 and γίνεσθε οὖν in 5:2 as well as the thematic continuity between being loved by God in 5:1 and being forgiven by God in 4:32. Barth, *Ephesians 4-6*, 555, acknowledges that οὖν often introduces climaxing remarks, supporting the view that 5:1-2 complete the thoughts of 4:25-32. But he opts for a rather unconvincing view that οὖν here resumes the writer's own thoughts just after a quotation or a formulaic reference, which he thinks is found in the latter half of 4:32 introduced by καθὼς καὶ.

discussed.⁸⁷ In the context the writer refers both to what he has just said and what he is about to say. By using the identical imperative "be" both in 4:32 and 5:1, he links the practice of kindness and tenderheartedness to the imitation of God in a way that he did not in 4:32. Likewise, he includes in this the act of forgiving, having just presented God as a model of forgiveness. But in 5:1-2 he tells the readers that both God⁸⁸ and Christ⁸⁹ have loved them, urging them to emulate this pattern by walking in love.⁹⁰ The imitation of God in this context refers to acts of kindness and tenderheartedness, to the act of forgiving offenses against one's person, but ultimately to acts of loving self-offering for the benefit of others.⁹¹

⁸⁷ Barth, *Ephesians 4-6*, 825-26, provides a basic bibliography on the issue and summarizes his own findings within Hellenism, 588-92, concluding that the writer refers to "following" God rather than imitating God's acts. Schnackenburg, *Der Brief an die Epheser*, 215-17, simplifies the discussion, seeing the imitation restricted automatically by the ethical concepts of kindness, tenderheartedness, forgiveness and love mentioned directly in the context. The specific deeds are not to be reduplicated, only those deeds that bring about the same attributions. RA Wild, "Be Imitators of God': Discipleship in the Letter to the Ephesians," in *Discipleship in the New Testament*, ed by FF Segovia, (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985), 136-38, concludes that imitation, though expressed overtly in 5:1, is an underlying motif throughout the epistle, being similar to the Platonic conception of archetypes, but that through God-like behaviour in concrete forms, people can be seen to be like God. He sees similarities between Eph and the Platonic view of "assimilation to" or becoming like God found in Philo (pp 128-131). Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 310-311, summarizes these and other materials, combining the notion of following God with that of becoming like God, seeing these two aspects being demonstrated in kindness and forgiveness. He concludes: "The tradition of the imitation of God has been made to serve the writer's perspective, in which a new relationship with God is needed for this imitation to be accomplished, and that relationship is based on God's saving activity in Christ" (p 311). A useful and convincing discussion on the notion of how God or Christ could be imitated is found in S Fowl, *The Story of Christ in the Ethics of Paul*, (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1990), 79-95. He appeals to the scientific notion of "exemplar" that he defines as "a concrete experiment or formulation which is normative for scientists and which can be extended by analogy to offer solutions to particular problems" (p 93). Applied to the realm of religious ethics, it refers to a model that, in spite of its unapproachability in some respects still exhibits basic patterns that can be emulated.

⁸⁸ ὡς τέκνα ἀγαπητά. Bruce, *The Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians*, 368, highlights the sonship motif for understanding the significance of the imitation of God: ". . . the imitation of God is the children's imitation of their Father." Gnlika, *Der Epheserbrief*, 244, and Schlier, *Der Brief an die Epheser*, 230, have similar views.

⁸⁹ καθὼς καὶ ὁ Χριστὸς ἠγάπησεν.

⁹⁰ Gnlika, *Der Epheserbrief*, 244, eloquently states that the significant change from the imitatio Dei to imitatio Christi would primarily be brought about by the author's viewing in the Christ-event the most prominent and most compelling example for the love he teaches about: "Dieser damit angedeutete Wechsel von der imitatio Dei zur imitatio Christi mag primär dadurch veranlaßt sein, daß der Verf. im Christusereignis das hervorragendste und zwingendste Beispiel für die geforderte Agape erblickt." Likewise, Mitton, *Ephesians*, 175, explains how the writer's relating the imitation of God to the example of Christ makes the concept of the imitation of God easier to understand because "in Jesus we can see what God is like."

⁹¹ Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 311-12, notes that the offering of Christ for (ὑπερ) others within Pauline writings can refer to his acts both as a representative/substitute and as a benefactor. This latter aspect is probably most pertinent in this case, both because of the interpersonal nature of the ethics in 4:25-5:2 and because, as an exemplar, the imitation motif excludes non-reproducible facets of Christ's death.

Eph 5:1-2 contains two exhortations: be imitators of God; and walk in love. The first of these directly recalls certain specifics of 4:32, which themselves stand in antithesis to expressions of anger. But it also points beyond itself to the second; the readers are, as beloved children, to imitate God and so live a life of love. The offering of Christ on their behalf becomes the prime example of this kind of love. Concern for others has been a prominent feature of most of the exhortations in 4:25-5:2. By appealing to the quintessential act of selfless concern for the Christian,⁹² the statement in 5:2 summarizes the regard for others found in previous moral directives. For the writer, archetypal Christian behaviour must, ultimately, be a demonstration of love, taking the needs of others into consideration.

Eph 5:2 offers a summary in another fashion. Not only does it highlight the beneficial aspects of Christ's death, it underscores the pleasing acceptability of this death to God as well.⁹³ Christ both gave himself on behalf of others and offered himself to God.⁹⁴ Each of the exhortations in 4:25-5:2 is important not simply because of its community emphasis but because to the writer, his readers' practice of them demonstrates the God-ward orientation of their lives. God is concerned for humanity. The readers should be also. By performing acts of love, they not only demonstrate their new life in Christ, they please God, who does the same kinds of things.

1.8 Conclusions

It is appropriate to summarize the import of these verses by referring once more to the overall structure of the passage. As observed at the beginning of this chapter,⁹⁵ Eph 4:25-5:2 does not exhibit a consciously thought-out rhetorical plan. Yet, the exhortations seem to fall into three sections.

The first, 4:25-27, is linked in catchword fashion to 4:22-24 and involves two Scripture citations. People who believe the truth of the gospel should speak

⁹² The statement of Christ giving himself on behalf of others is widely recognized as a traditional formulation common in early Christian teaching. See Barth, *Ephesians 4-6*, 556-57 (though his treatment of the expression as a quotation is extreme), and Gnllka, *Der Epheserbrief*, 244-45.

⁹³ ὁσμή εὐωδίας is a frequently used expression throughout the LXX, appearing no less than 41 times, while the phrase εἰς ὁσμήν εὐωδίας itself appears 21 times out of those 41. It is widely recognized as referring to the acceptability to God of a sacrifice. See, e.g. Bruce, *The Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians*, 369 and Robinson, *St. Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians*, 196.

⁹⁴ Halter, *Taufe und Ethos*, 267-68, is helpfully clear on this point.

⁹⁵ See above, p 138.

truthfully. They should also avoid anger, since anger ultimately leaves working room for the devil. The second, 4:28-30, generalizes about the overall personal involvement of individuals. Both with their hands and with their mouths, in deed and word, the readers should serve others' needs. In regard to the mouth especially, the readers are made aware that the Spirit can be grieved. The third, 4:31-5:2, involves further statements about anger, but these lead the writer to mention first God's act of forgiveness and then Christ's offering of his life both for the benefit of others and the pleasure of God. When others are harmed, the devil is allowed to work and the Spirit is grieved. When God's love is emulated, he himself is well-pleased. Overall, the exhortations have emphasized that the readers' behaviour should demonstrate their new lives as Christians by their actively living for the benefit of others.

The exhortation to walk in love becomes a fitting antithesis to the exhortation in 4:17 to walk no longer as gentiles. Rhetorically, the writer has progressed from excoriating the values of his readers' pre-conversion life to characterizing the overall tenor of their new life in Christ, from gentile sinfulness to Christ-like love, from godlessness to God-emulation. In this way, they also walk worthily of the calling to which they have been called (4:1).

2 Eph 4:25-5:2 - Affinities with Eph 1-3

The exhortations found in this section mostly stand alone. They involve short statements that do not offer extensive development of antecedent themes in the epistle. It would be misleading, however, to consider them in total isolation from earlier statements.

Though chapters 1-3 will receive the main focus of discussion, one must notice in passing that certain statements found earlier in chapter 4 resemble certain aspects of these exhortations, particularly as they bear on the love that the readers are enjoined to have⁹⁶ as well as the concern for the community expressed with body and building metaphors.⁹⁷ The writer, in 4:25-5:2, directly works from his

⁹⁶ 4:2 - forbearing one another in love; 4:15 - speaking the truth in love; 4:16 - the body building itself up in love. The exhortation to walk in love (5:2), is a more explicit ethical statement of the responsibility the readers are to undertake for one another.

⁹⁷ 4:12 - gifts given for the edifying of the body; 4:16 - the body is dependent on its connecting parts, and edifies itself. The exhortation in 4:25 refers to the community relationship between believers with the clause "we are members of one another" - a further extension of the body metaphor. The exhortation in 4:29 urges the use of words that are good for upbuilding or edifying.

previously stated concerns for his readers to behave as converted people.⁹⁸ He does not, however, directly link his exhortations to his previous statements of love and to body/building metaphors in the same way. The appearance of love exhortations and body/building metaphors in both places is due most likely to the community concern that the writer maintains in his desire for his readers to interact properly with one another. The conversion motif is the most important for all of the moral teaching examined thus far. Community concern is merely one way according to the writer in which conversion is to be expressed behaviourally.

The existence of direct allusions to earlier statements in the epistle is difficult to support. Yet it is also difficult to deny that certain themes are repeated and altered. The topics most important to discuss in this regard will be Eph 2:1-10 and its relationship to 4:25-5:2, the roles of the devil and the Spirit, God's deeds of kindness and love, and the readers' own love for one another.

2.1 Eph 2:1-10 and "Once-now" in Eph 4:25-5:2

The importance of the once-now schema has already been examined in relation to 4:17-24. The schema, especially as it appears in chapter 2, leads the readers to consider how their circumstances are different now that God has saved them (2:1-10) and given them new status (2:17-22). While this schema is basic to an understanding of 4:17-24, it also has a partial bearing on 4:25-5:2.

In Eph 2:1-10 the writer describes how he and his readers had been changed from being "dead through trespasses and sins" (2:1, 5) to being "made . . . alive together with Christ" (2:5). This movement from death to life, from being controlled by evil powers (2:1-3) to being seated "in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus" (2:7) happens through God's "great love with which he loved us" (2:4). The end result of God's saving activity, which is seen as God's alone (2:8-9), is that he has "created" his own people to perform good works that he has "prepared beforehand that [they] should walk in them" (2:10, RSV).⁹⁹

⁹⁸ This is stated briefly in 4:1 - "lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called" - and developed extensively in 4:17-24 under the rubric "no longer live as the Gentiles do" (4:17, RSV).

⁹⁹ Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 115: "Not just their initial reception of salvation, but the whole of believers' lives, including their practical ethical activity, is to be seen as part of God's purpose. The thought of 2:10 is that the good works were already there, and when, through his grace, God made believers alive, raised them up, and seated them with Christ, he created them for these works." While this explanation of the good works that have been prepared in advance is better than others offered, it conveys a mechanical notion on the part of the writer of Ephesians that works existed and people simply walked into them. In keeping with Paul's only use of the term προετοιμάζειν however, the notion is best expressed as one of divine intentionality. In Rom 9:23, Paul does not say that the "vessels of mercy" themselves existed beforehand but that their eventual existence was a part of God's preconceived plan.

Eph 4:17-19 recalls, in moral terminology, the condition described in 2:1-3, while Eph 4:22 offers another summary of this condition in even more general terms. Eph 4:24 evokes the concluding statement of 2:10 by referring to the readers' new orientation to living as that which has been "created" in accordance with God in holiness and righteousness of truth. In 4:25-5:2 the writer elaborates what this new person can look like in concrete terms.¹⁰⁰

These, in one sense, represent "good works . . . prepared beforehand that we should walk in them."¹⁰¹ The works are summarized in 5:1-2 by an appeal to God's love, the same love, according to the writer, that he showed in giving them salvation. The readers are enjoined to "walk" in this love. Eph 2:1-10 begins with a reference to the sins in which the readers once "walked" and ends with a reference to the good works in which they are now to walk; Eph 4:17 characterizes the lifestyle in which the readers are no longer to "walk" as futility, while Eph 5:1-2 characterizes the lifestyle they are to embrace as a "walk" that emulates God's love for them.

2.2 The Roles of the Devil and the Spirit

Ephesians displays an unusual concern with spiritual powers.¹⁰² Prior to 4:25-5:2 the writer has referred to spiritual powers four times.¹⁰³ Christ is said to have been raised high above all powers (1:21). Wicked powers, including "the prince of the power of the air," bear some responsibility in the sinfulness of humanity (2:-

This is different from what is expressed in Wis 9:8, where Solomon is to build a copy of a tabernacle already existing in some form, having been prepared from the beginning, the same terminology as Eph 2:10 and Rom 9:23. Lincoln softens the mechanical notion when he comments further, p 116: "Only in the actual practice of good works is the contrast between then and now, between death and life, completed. Such a thought has implicit paraenetic force, but the writer does not exploit this until the second half of his letter." Believers need to live these works out.

¹⁰⁰ Schnackenburg, *Der Brief an die Epheser*, 210, sees them, in part, as an outworking in historical existence of the schema presented in 4:22-24.

¹⁰¹ Though it would be wrong to treat 4:28 and 29 as direct allusions to 2:10, it is worth noting that 2:10 does refer to good works (ἔργα ἀγαθὰ), while 4:28 and 29 refer to working good (ἐργαζόμενος . . . τὸ ἀγαθόν) and saying what is good. These three verses really only overlap in their concern for propriety. Eph 2:10 is a statement generalizing about one goal of God's work of salvation. Eph 4:28 and 29 are two specific ways that goal can begin to be achieved.

¹⁰² This is developed extensively by C Arnold, *Ephesians: Power and Magic*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), where he compares Greek Magical Papyri from Alexandria with statements found in Ephesians. Though his case on the whole is overstated, his perspective is useful in appreciating the kind of world in which Ephesians was written.

¹⁰³ These powers are generally recognized as evil. See, e.g., Schnackenburg, *Der Brief an die Epheser* 76-78.

3). Spiritual powers are to be made aware of the "manifold wisdom of God" through the church (3:10). Powers are said to have been derived from God (3:15).

In an unexpected statement that almost stands by itself, the writer, in 4:27, urges his readers not to give an opportunity to the devil. Somehow the devil, to be equated with "the prince of the power of the air" in 2:2, is able to have a negative influence in the lives of believers. Earlier on, the writer seems to make a sharp distinction between his readers' present existence in the heavenlies with Christ (2:6) and the present condition of the children of disobedience who are still under the influence of the evil spirit (2:2-3). This may in fact indicate already/not-yet tensions inherent in the writer's thought.¹⁰⁴ However, in a subsequent section (6:10-20) the writer mentions explicitly that believers do struggle against spiritual powers. This struggle intimates an influence of wicked spiritual powers in the lives of believers that differs from that in unbelievers, an influence that can be resisted. In the case of 4:27 it is resisted through resolved anger.

In contrast to these evil powers the Spirit of God actively works for the benefit of believers, sealing them (1:13-14), uniting them (2:18, 22), dwelling among them (2:18-22), revealing mysteries (3:5) and strengthening them (3:16). In Eph 4, the unity achieved by the Spirit is referred to again (4:3), along with the Spirit's oneness (4:4) and perhaps even the Spirit's descent at Pentecost (4:9).¹⁰⁵

The sudden way in which the writer refers to the Spirit who seals believers (4:30) has already been discussed. While one might expect a community emphasis to be repeated from 2:18-22 and 4:1-16, other references to the Spirit indicate that the writer attributes a range of functions to the Spirit. Thus one ought cautiously to assert the role of the Spirit in community-building as being the most significant here, when this role is not emphasized in every prior reference to the Spirit and when his association with conversion has also been highlighted previously (1:13).¹⁰⁶

2.3 God's Own Deeds of Kindness and Love

A large number of references to God's loving care for believers precedes the exhortation to emulate God by living a life of love (5:2). The writer says that God

¹⁰⁴ Gnllka, *Der Epheserbrief*, 236; Halter, *Taufe und Ethos*, 259-60; Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 303.

¹⁰⁵ GB Caird, "The Descent of Christ in Ephesians 4,7-11," in *Studia Evangelica* 2, (TU 87 Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1964), 535-45.

¹⁰⁶ Such an assertion appears in a variety of forms: Gnllka, *Der Epheserbrief*, 238-39; Halter, *Taufe und Ethos*, 261-62; Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 307-08; Meyer, *The Epistle to the Ephesians*, 482-83; Robinson, *St. Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians*, 113, 194; Schnackenburg, *Der Brief an die Epheser*, 213-14.

has blessed his readers with every spiritual blessing (1:3). He predestined them to adoption as sons, perhaps in love,¹⁰⁷ according to his kind intentions (1:4c-5).¹⁰⁸ He freely bestowed his grace upon them (1:6).¹⁰⁹ Redemption and forgiveness are part of God's lavished riches of his grace (1:7-8a). Making known his mystery is also part of his kind intentions (1:8b-9).¹¹⁰ God is said to be rich in mercy and lavishing in his love (2:4-7), statements already considered in this section. The love of Christ is said to surpass all knowledge (3:19). God is able to perform more abundantly than anyone can imagine (3:20). When, therefore, the writer urges his readers to imitate God's love as those who are beloved, he has already developed an extensive precedent as to the numerous ways they have experienced that love.

2.4 The Readers' Own Love for One Another

The writer's concern for his readers to be loving toward one another may actually have been stated from the outset of the letter. Some commentators regard the phrase "in love" found in Eph 1:4 as belonging to the statements that precede, so that the readers' holy and blameless lives are to be expressed in love as part of God's preordained purpose.¹¹¹ Such a view is not only consistent with the writer's exhortation in 5:1-2, but also with other comments associated with the two prayers found in chapters 1-3.

While the writer urges his readers to live a life of love (5:1-2), he does not seem unaware of their own propensity in this matter. The prayer he begins in 1:15 is said to have been motivated by what he has already heard about their love. The writer may be using a formulaic Pauline epistolary device to enhance the reception

¹⁰⁷ Though Robinson, *St. Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians*, 143, argues, based on the rhythm of the sentence, that the phrase "in love" belongs with the preceding clause, Schnackenburg, *Der Brief an die Epheser*, 45, appeals to rhythm as well as to an *inclusio* prompted by the term "love" in 1:4 and 1:6 to argue for the phrase modifying what follows. If Robinson is correct, then 1:4 would emphasize Christian love as a purpose for God electing his people.

¹⁰⁸ The phrase *κατὰ τὴν εὐδοκίαν τοῦ θελήματος αὐτοῦ* contains a redundancy. It can be translated "according to the purpose of his will" or "according to the good pleasure of his will." As a representative of the former, see Schnackenburg, *Der Brief an die Epheser*, 53, and for the latter, Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 25-26. The overall context tends to favour the latter, especially since the writer is elaborating God's gracious blessings.

¹⁰⁹ In 5:1 the readers are referred to as beloved children (*τέκνα ἀγαπητά*). Here in 1:6 it is Christ who is "the beloved" (*τῷ ἠγαπημένῳ*). Schnackenburg, *Der Brief an die Epheser*, 45, notes that both the readers and Christ are considered beloved by God.

¹¹⁰ This assumes, of course, that *εὐδοκία* means "good pleasure" rather than "intention."

¹¹¹ Barth, *Ephesians 1-3*, 79-80; Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 11-18, 24; Robinson, *St. Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians*, 143.

of his message rather than indicating his awareness of the readers' actual activities.¹¹² However, in 5:2 he also reflects a Pauline use of a paraenetic device where love is urged even though it is also acknowledged as present within the community.¹¹³

The readers' love for one another also appears as a subject of prayer in the second major set of petitions found in 3:14-19. In 3:17 the writer prays for his readers to be "rooted and grounded in love." Though he principally refers to their own experience of Christ's love, he also implies that love itself should become more and more characteristic in their lives.¹¹⁴ By living the same life of love as Christ showed in dying for them, the readers enact one answer to the writer's prayer. Whether or not the writer actually knows about his readers' love, his ultimate concern is that their own love be superabundant in the same way that Christ's is toward them.

3 Eph 4:25-5:2 and Pauline Moral Traditions

In some ways these verses fall directly in line with moral thought found in Paul's undisputed writings. In others, their messages differ. Three similarities demonstrate the point: 1) Paul's exhortations to his readers to love one another; 2) Paul's use of "sentences" to convey moral teaching; and 3) the overlap between Paul's teaching and Ephesians' concrete moral precepts. Affinities with Col 3:1-17 are more relevant to the verses at hand and will be addressed afterwards.

3.1 Paul and Christian Love

Paul frequently exhorted the recipients of his letters to love one another. All of his undisputed writings urge this. Twice Paul quotes Lev 19:18 to refer to love as a summary or fulfillment of the law (Rom 13:8-9; Gal 5:13-14). He has one lengthy discourse on the importance and significance of love (1 Cor 13:1-13). And, he often tells his readers to abound in love, or to demonstrate their love more

¹¹² Schnackenburg, *Der Brief an die Epheser*, 72: "Die übernommenen Formulierungen sprechen gegen konkrete Informationen über die Adressaten (durch »Hören«); vielmehr will sie der Verf. geneigt machen, auf sein Wort zu hören."

¹¹³ See, principally, 1 Thess 4:1 and 4:9-12, along with the comments of Malherbe, "Exhortation in 1 Thessalonians," in *Paul and the Popular Philosophers*, (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1989), 60, 63-64.

¹¹⁴ Abbott, *The Epistle to the Ephesians*, 98; Barth, *Ephesians 1-3*, 371; Gnllka, *Der Epheserbrief*, 185; though Schnackenburg, *Der Brief an die Epheser*, 152, rejects any notion of brotherly love in this.

sincerely (2 Cor 8:7-8, 24; Phil 1:9, 2:1-2; 1 Thess 3:12, 4:9; Phlm 5, 9).¹¹⁵ Love is a major distinctive attribute in Paul's conception of Christian moral behaviour.¹¹⁶ One should expect nothing else from the epistle referred to as "the crown of Paulinism."

The writer of Ephesians urges his readers to love by imitating God and emulating Christ. The *imitatio* motif in Pauline writings has itself generated much discussion.¹¹⁷ Phil 2:2 and 2 Cor 8:8-9 explicitly refer both to the love Christians

¹¹⁵ Other relevant passages not listed above include: Rom 12:9: a short exhortation to sincere love; Rom 14:15: love should ensure peace in food controversies (also uses the expression of "walk" (*περιπατεῖς*) in relation to love); 1 Cor 4:21: contrasts Paul's coming with a rod with his coming in love and gentleness; 1 Cor 8:1: contrasts love with knowledge; 1 Cor 16:14: a short exhortation to do everything in love; 2 Cor 2:4, 11:11 and 12:15: Paul proclaims his love for the Corinthians, in the last case urging them to return it; 2 Cor 6:6: a declaration that apostles have sincere love; Gal 5:22: love is a fruit of the Spirit; Phil 1:16: contrasting motives for preaching Christ, some out of love, others out of rivalry; 1 Thess 1:3 and 3:6: praising of the Thessalonians' love; 1 Thess 5:8: love is a "breastplate" to be "put on;" 1 Thess 5:13: leaders are to be esteemed in love; Phlm 7: Philemon's love has encouraged Paul. In addition to these statements, the adjective *ἀγαπητός* often appears as a term of endearment expressing Paul's own relationship to Christian brothers and sisters: Rom 16:5, 8, 9, 12; 1 Cor 4:14, 17; 10:14; 15:58; 2 Cor 7:1; 12:19; Phil 2:12; 4:1; 1 Thess 2:8; Phlm 1, 16.

¹¹⁶ VP Furnish, *Theology and Ethics in Paul*, (Nashville: Abingdon, 1968), 199-203: ". . . for Paul love is not just an aspect of the Christian's new life, but its whole content and mode. The believer *is* love;" (199). JL Houlden, *Ethics and the New Testament*, (Oxford: Mowbrays, 1975): "When it comes to specific moral qualities, love (*agapē*) is pre-eminent (1 Cor. xiii,13; Rom. xiii,9; Gal. v,22)." LH Marshall, *The Challenge of New Testament Ethics*, (London: MacMillan, 1946), 274-77, makes love the single most important distinctive of Paul's ethical instruction. "He is not rightly thought of as the mere Apostle of Faith, for he was even more the Apostle of Love. According to Paul when a man has faith, he commits himself to the love of God in Christ, and the love which he has thus experienced flows out through him towards his fellow-men" (p 274). W Schrage, *The Ethics of the New Testament*, tr by DE Green (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1988), 211-17: "Paul states as a fundamental principle that love is the greatest good in the Christian life. . . Paul frequently introduces love into his parenthesis as a normative entity, making it the decisive criterion of Christian conduct" (213). A Verhey, *The Great Reversal*, (Grand Rapids: William B Eerdmans, 1984), 107-09: ". . . love is a *sine qua non* of the new discernment" (p 108).

¹¹⁷ Based on the appearance of the term *μιμητής*, the passages most identified with this motif are: 1 Cor 4:16, where the Corinthians are urged to follow Paul's way of living; 1 Cor 11:1, where Paul's self-sacrifice on behalf of others is equated with his own imitation of Christ; 1 Thess 1:6, where the Thessalonians' endurance of suffering and affliction is seen as imitation both of Paul and Christ; 1 Thess 2:14, where the Thessalonians' suffering is compared with the suffering of the churches in Judea, both of which suffered as Christ did from injustice at the hands of their fellow citizens; and Phil 3:17 (*συμμιμητής*), where Paul's own perseverance in Christian living and partnership in Christ's sufferings are held as an example. Additionally relevant are certain "conformity schema" (a concept from NA Dahl, "Formgeschichtliche Beobachtungen zur Christusverkündigung in der Gemeindepredigt," in *Neutestamentliche Studien für Rudolf Bultmann*, ed W Eltester, (Berlin: Töpelmann, 1954), 3-9) passages where Christ is held as a model for emulation: Rom 15:1-7, where Christ's denial of self-interest and acceptance of other people should guide the readers' own conduct; 2 Cor 8:8-9, where Christ's giving of self for others' gain shows the measure of his love; and Phil 2:1-11, where Christ's self-humiliation in obedience to God and in service of others is presented both as an attitude to be copied and an ultimate vindication of the consequences of their activity. For a summary of various aspects of the discussion involved with these passages, see Schrage, *The Ethics of the New Testament*, 208-09; Furnish, *Theology and Ethics in Paul*, 218-223; Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 310-11; and Fowl, *The Story of Christ in the Ethics of Paul*, 76-101.

should have for one another and to the example of Christ in related matters. In Phil 2:1-11 the recipients are told to have the same attitude as Christ in his self-denying humility, but this humility is said to grow out of, among other things, Christ's love for them (2:1), and is expressed, in part, by the love that Christians are to have for one another (2:2). In 2 Cor 8:8 the Corinthians' willingness to contribute to the needs of poor Christians is Paul's test of the genuineness of their Christian love. In the same instance he also appeals to the example of Christ's own gift of himself as an indicator of his sincere love for them.¹¹⁸ These statements are not explicit exhortations to love as Eph 5:2 is, but they do set a precedent of looking to Christ as the one who served others, an important emphasis in Eph 5:2.

Additionally, for Paul, love can be a summarizing quality. Both Rom 13:8-9 and Gal 5:13-14 mention love in terms of how the "law" and the "commandments" are "summarized" or "fulfilled".¹¹⁹ Gal 5:22 also lists "love" with other qualities as the "fruit" (singular) of the Spirit. This is partly inherent in the term itself, since a number of specific, different actions could be regarded as expressions of love.¹²⁰ The writer of Ephesians similarly does not have a vague notion of love, but relates the characteristic both to Christ's own self offering for the benefit of others, and to the concrete acts that he has enumerated in 4:25-32.

3.2 Paul's Use of "Sentences"

Ephesians 4:25-5:2 is not unusual within the Pauline corpus for its prolonged listing of short, general exhortations. Rom 12:9-21, 1 Cor 16:13-14, 2 Cor 13:11, Gal 6:1-10¹²¹ and 1 Thess 5:12-22 all share the same property with Eph 4:25-5:2. Each of these passages consist of concrete, loosely related exhortations. They are

¹¹⁸ Furnish, *Theology and Ethics in Paul*, 223: ". . . it seems always to be the humble, giving, obedient love of the crucified and resurrected Lord to which the final appeal is made. Paul sees the meaning of love (both what God gives and asks) revealed first of all in the grand humiliation of Christ's incarnation and death (Rom. 5:6ff; II Cor. 8:9; Phil. 2:6ff.), not primarily in his earthly deeds of compassion and humility (which are nowhere mentioned in Paul)."

¹¹⁹ Furnish, *Theology and Ethics in Paul*, 200, sees summarizing and fulfilling as functional equivalents.

¹²⁰ Different activities suggested in Paul's writings include: concern with offending a fellow Christian with food (Rom 14:15); a display of gentleness in contrast to a reprimand (1 Cor 4:21); making financial contributions to needy people (2 Cor 8:7, 8); and acceptance and forgiveness of a runaway slave (Phlm 9). Schrage, *The Ethics of the New Testament*, 211: "It has often been emphasized that love cannot be subsumed in ethics; it refers in the first instance to what we are, not what we do. But it is surely of equal importance for Paul that love finds expression in specific types of conduct and ways of life. . ."

¹²¹ HD Betz, *Galatians*, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979), 291, identifies the statements in these verses as "sententiae" but begins the list at 5:25.

less easily connected to circumstances alluded to within the epistle,¹²² though attempts at this are not necessarily futile.¹²³ This use of *sententiae*, or "sentences," is a common feature in a variety of paraenetic material found throughout the Graeco-Roman world.¹²⁴ Through this type of structure certain generic topics would be addressed in a short, direct style. In using this medium, the writer of Ephesians remains consistent with a Pauline practice that itself resembled a common literary form.

3.3 Paul and the Concrete Precepts of Eph 4:25-5:2

The topic of love in Eph 5:1-2 has already been discussed. Though the writer of Ephesians addresses common topics within the Graeco-Roman world - truthful speech, anger, theft and appropriate speech - some commentators have observed that Eph 4:25-32 includes exhortations not found in Paul's undisputed writings.¹²⁵ This is not significant. Those passages in the undisputed Pauline epistles that use the "sentence" structure or that contain short, undeveloped exhortations often address issues not found elsewhere in Paul's writings.¹²⁶ Only in Rom 12:13 does Paul urge Christians to be hospitable; two of the four imperatives found in 1 Cor

¹²² G Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987), 826, remarks that 1 Cor 16:13-14 "is a series of five seriatim imperatives that appear to be a kind of generalized parenthesis that could fit any of Paul's letters; at the same time, however, some of them in particular seem to reflect the Corinthian situation." The exhortations are undoubtedly related to concerns addressed earlier in the epistle but are so general that such a connection is unnecessary. Their appearance in 1 Cor 16 is almost superfluous. It is also noteworthy that Fee (n 6, p 827) also includes 1 Thess 5:12-14 in the same category. JDG Dunn, *Romans 9-16*, (Dallas, TX: Word Books, 1988), 738-39, regards Rom 12:9-21 as a series of loosely connected exhortations with resemblances to traditional Jewish paraenesis.

¹²³ Most notable is the work, in relation to Galatians, of JMG Barclay, *Obedying the Truth: A Study of Paul's Ethics in Galatians*, (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1988). His analysis in relation to 5:13-26 is convincing in that Paul seems to be addressing his attention to a situation of discord, perhaps also related to his earlier discussion of the law (pp 152-53), but his "mirror-reading" criteria do not clearly and convincingly relate to the exhortations in chapter 6. Even if, as he argues (p 71), Paul is trying to provide specific criteria for his readers to obey as an alternative to the Law, it is not entirely clear why he chooses the particular exhortations that he does in 6:1-10.

¹²⁴ "Sententia," in *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*, 977-78; Clark, *Rhetoric in Greco-Roman Education*, 188-90.

¹²⁵ This is particularly the case with the exhortations against lying, unresolved anger and debilitating words. Gnllka, *Der Epheserbrief*, 234, considers the exhortation to truthful speech as evidence of a post-Pauline setting for Ephesians, since Paul never urged his readers to speak the truth, while such exhortations abounded in the "paraenetic tradition."

¹²⁶ GE Cannon, *The Use of Traditional Materials in Colossians*, (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1983), observes, with regard to Colossians, that those sections considered least Pauline seem to be those sections that contain many "traditional" elements. Unfortunately, he does not adequately compare the formal elements he identifies in Colossians with Paul's undisputed writings.

16:13-14 are found nowhere else in Paul; and exhortations to encourage those who are weak and timid and to avoid quenching the Spirit are found only in 1 Thess 5:14 and 21.

Though some of the exhortations in Eph 4:25-5:2 lack exact matches with exhortations in Paul's undisputed writings, none are without some sort of parallel.¹²⁷ Some parallels modify earlier Pauline thoughts,¹²⁸ but the differences between such statements are no more significant than other variations found in Paul's undisputed writings themselves.¹²⁹ Other exhortations in Eph 4:25-5:2 correspond with statements about Paul's own conduct as an apostle, not a rare phenomenon with Pauline directives.¹³⁰

Though Paul never urges any of his readers in the undisputed epistles to speak the truth or to refrain from lying, he is frequently concerned with truth and falsehood in his own life.¹³¹ Anger is included in lists of bad behaviour,¹³² while

¹²⁷ If there is an exception, it is to be found in Eph 4:30, where the Spirit is not to be grieved. Commentators often note the statement in 1 Thess 5:19 where the Spirit is not to be quenched. Gnllka, *Der Epheserbrief*, 238, sees these two passages in a similar light. Bruce, *The Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians*, 363, Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 306, and Schnackenburg, *Der Brief an die Epheser*, 213-14, all see Eph 4:30 as a unique expression appearing to take up the language from the Hebrew text of Isa 63:10.

¹²⁸ E.g. 1 Thess 4:11-12 urges manual labour (*ἐγάξεσθα ταῖς ἰδίαις χερσὶν ὑμῶν*) so that the Thessalonians would behave decently (*ἵνα περιπατῆτε εὐχημόνως*) toward outsiders and not have any need; Eph 4:28 urges manual labour (*ἐγαζόμενος ταῖς ἰδίαις χερσὶν τὸ ἀγαθόν*) so that its readers would have something to give to another's need.

¹²⁹ E.g. 1 Thess 5:15 says to "seek [*τὸ ἀγαθὸν διώκετε*] to do good to one another and to all" (RSV); Gal 6:10, perhaps written later, says "Let us do good [*ἐργαζόμεθα τὸ ἀγαθόν*] to all [people], and especially to those who are of the household of faith" (RSV); Rom 12:17, written later than the previous two and expressing the same concern as 1 Thess 5:15 against returning evil for evil, urges its readers to "take thought for what is noble [*προνοοῦμενοι καλὰ*] in the sight of all" (RSV). In all of these cases, the same basic thought, doing good, takes on slightly different nuances that depend on the entire statement in which it appears.

¹³⁰ E.g., only in Rom 12:14 does Paul urge his readers to bless those who persecute them. In 1 Cor 4:12, however, he says that this is a facet of his own conduct.

¹³¹ In Rom 9:1, 2 Cor 11:31 and Gal 1:20 Paul states forcefully that he is not lying in what he says; In Rom 9:1 he also affirms that he speaks the truth in what he is about to say; in 2 Cor 6:7 he claims truthful speech (*ἐν λόγῳ ἀληθείας*) to be a commendable aspect of his life; in 2 Cor 1:12-22 he has an extended discussion on the reliability of his own word.

¹³² See 2 Cor 12:20, where *θυμοί* are listed with strife (*ἔρις*), jealousy (*ζήλος*), factions (*ἐριθείαι*), slander (*καταλαλιαί*), gossip (*ψιθυρισμοί*), arrogance (*φυσιώσεις*) and disorder (*ἀκαταστασίαι*); and Gal 5:20, where it is listed among the works of the flesh. The term *δργη* is never used in the undisputed letters to refer to human anger.

vengeance, a near relative to anger, is also censured.¹³³ Paul indicates that various spiritual powers can adversely affect a Christian's life¹³⁴ and that Satan's schemes (νοήματα) can even harm Christian community-life when people fail to act appropriately to one another (2 Cor 2:5-11).¹³⁵ Theft is addressed in short exhortations,¹³⁶ work is encouraged as appropriate Christian behaviour¹³⁷ and contributing financially to people in need is urged.¹³⁸ Paul often refers to the sinful aspects of improper speech,¹³⁹ but also addresses certain aspects of speech that

¹³³ Rom 12:19: "Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God" (RSV). This statement also shares with Eph 4:27 the common idiom "give a place" (Eph 4:27: μηδὲ δίδετε τόπον; Rom 12:19: ἀλλὰ δότε τόπον). Interestingly, these statements convey similar thoughts with converse expressions. In Rom 12:19, God's anger works instead of the believers' vengeance; in Eph 4:27, the believers' unresolved anger gives an opportunity for the devil to work.

¹³⁴ This is an inference from statements such as Rom 8:38-39; 2 Cor 12:7; or 1 Thess 3:5. For a basic discussion of these ideas in Paul's thought, see JC Beker, *Paul the Apostle*, (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1980), 363-66; DEH Whitely, *The Theology of St. Paul*, (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1974), 26-30; J Ziesler, *Pauline Christianity*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), 83.

¹³⁵ Paul's undisputed writings mostly use the term Σατανᾶς, never the term διάβολος as Eph 4:27 does, but this may be no more significant than the appearance of "tempter" (ὁ πειράζων, 1 Thess 3:5) and "Beliar" (Βελιάρ, 2 Cor 6:15). "Tempter" never appears as a formal name in any Greek versions of OT Pseudepigrapha (See A-M Denis, *Concordance Grecque des Pseudépigraphe d'Ancien Testament*, (Louvain-la-Neuve: Université Catholique de Louvain, 1987), 620), nor does it appear in the LXX. "Beliar" is common in a variety of Jewish writings, though its appearance in 2 Cor 6:15 is often explained by attributing this passage to an interpolation of Jewish thought. For a defense of Pauline origins of this passage, see M Newton, *The Concept of Purity at Qumran and in the Letters of Paul*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985).

¹³⁶ Rom 13:9 quotes the seventh commandment and 1 Cor 6:10 includes thieves in a list of evil people who have no inheritance in the kingdom of God in an effort to discourage Christian defrauding fellow Christian.

¹³⁷ See, principally, 1 Thess 4:11, where manual labour is enjoined as one facet of living the quietist life and so gaining the respect of outsiders. Manual labour is also an important facet of the apostolic example as exhibited by 1 Cor 4:12; 9:6; and 1 Thess 2:9. Hock, *The Social Context of Paul's Ministry*, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1980), 31-37, probably overstates his case for the hardships of manual labour, especially since 1 Thess 4:11 is a positive exhortation.

¹³⁸ See Rom 12:13 and 2 Cor 8-9 for concrete paraenesis on giving. Additionally, Phil 2:25 and 4:16 positively describe the Philippians' own contributions to Paul's need, while 1 Cor 16:1-4 discusses the "collection for the saints," a collection that probably is the same as that to which Paul refers in Rom 15:26-7, a collection certainly for poor Christians (εἰς τοὺς πτωχοὺς τῶν ἁγίων). Gal 6:6 refers to providing financial remuneration to those who teach.

¹³⁹ He uses a varied vocabulary to express this. He prohibits vengeful cursing (καταρτάομαι, Rom 12:14). He censures activities accompanied by dissatisfied grumbling (γογγυσμός) and questioning (διαλογισμός, Phil 2:14; also see 1 Cor 10:10). He lists slander (κατάλαλος, Rom 1:30; καταλαλιά, 2 Cor 12:20), boasting (ἀλαζών, Rom 1:30), reviling (λοιδορός, 1 Cor 5:11; 6:10; also see 1 Cor 4:12) and gossip (ψιθυρισμός, 2 Cor 12:20; ψιθυριστής Rom 1:30) as sins either to be avoided or that are under God's judgment. He warns against flattery and smooth talk (χρηστολογίας καὶ εὐλογίας, Rom 16:18). Paul notes how he avoided flattering words (κολακία, 1 Thess 2:5) when introducing the gospel to the Thessalonians (also note 2 Cor 4:2 and the sincerity with which the Gospel ministry is practised). Also note Paul's frequent use of the terms καυχάομαι, καύχημα and καύχησις, both positively (Rom 5:2, 3, 11; 1 Cor 1:31; 2 Cor 5:12; 7:14; 9:2; 10:8, 13, 15, 16, 17; 11:30; 12:1, 5, 6, 9; Gal

should "edify" others.¹⁴⁰ Though Paul nowhere urges his readers not to grieve the Holy Spirit, he is known to refer to the Spirit as a motivator to avoid evil behaviour.¹⁴¹ Bitterness appears in a quotation from Ps 10:7 (LXX) as part of Paul's case for the universal sinfulness of humanity (Rom 3:14). Paul never censures "shouting" though he does denounce "slander" with different vocabulary.¹⁴² He commonly castigates evil.¹⁴³ References to kindness, compassion and forgiveness as human activities do exist, though not abundantly.¹⁴⁴

An attempt to find a typical Pauline exhortation would be pointless. However, based on the variety of exhortations that appear in Paul's undisputed writings, Ephesians does not seem to express anything unusual. On one occasion Ephesians does combine different paraenetic charges made earlier by Paul - theft, work and giving. Ephesians' exhortations about anger are concerned with sin, resolution and the working of the devil, as well as with kindness, compassion and forgiveness, whereas Paul refers to anger either in sin lists or in an exhortation to let God take vengeance. These and other differences are not very great. Each of the exhortations in Eph 4:25-5:2 seems to be subsumed beneath the charge to live a life of love, and that charge certainly belongs to the Pauline tradition.

6:14; Phil 3:3) and negatively (Rom 2:17, 23; 1 Cor 1:29; 3:21; 2 Cor 11:12, 16, 18; Gal 6:13).

¹⁴⁰ This is a major theme in 1 Cor 14, though it is so principally in reference to prophesying. In 2 Cor 12:19, Paul says that in his letter he speaks for their edification. In 1 Thess 4:18 he speaks about using words for comfort, though this refers principally to the teaching about the *parousia* that he has just communicated to them. Also, see Rom 12:19, where blessing is to replace cursing. Though not restricted to speech activities, Rom 15:2 urges the reader to "please his neighbor for his good, to edify him" (RSV), using the same terminology as Eph 4:29: εἰς τὸ ἀγαθὸν πρὸς οἰκοδομήν.

¹⁴¹ Frequently, Eph 4:30 is compared with 1 Thess 5:19 and the warning against quenching the Spirit. Perhaps a more apt comparison would be with 1 Thess 4:7, where the fact that God has given his Spirit is mentioned to motivate the readers toward proper conduct.

¹⁴² Paul does use the verb βλασφημέω to refer to a bad report from others (Rom 3:8) or to what is wrongly said about other Christians' activities (Rom 14:16; 1 Cor 10:30). When listing sins to be condemned or avoided, Paul uses καταλαλιά (2 Cor 12:20) and κατάλαλος (Rom 1:30). In 1 Cor 4:13, Paul states that when he himself is slandered (δυσφημούμενοι, the only NT appearance of this verb) he "humbly makes [his] appeal" (NEB, παρακαλοῦμεν), while in 2 Cor 6:8, slander (δυσφήμια, the only NT appearance of this noun) is listed as part of his normal experience as an apostle.

¹⁴³ He uses both πονηρός/πονεῖα and κακός/κακία. See general exhortations in Rom 12:9 and 1 Thess 5:22, as well as condemnations of evil activity in Rom 1:29 and 1 Cor 5:8, 13.

¹⁴⁴ Kindness (χρηστότης) appears most notably among the "fruit of the Spirit" (Gal 5:22). It is also part of typical apostolic activity (2 Cor 6:6). Love is also said to be kind (1 Cor 13:4). Compassion (σπλάγγνα) and kindness (οἰκτιρμός) are to be part of the Christian experience (Phil 2:1). In Rom 12:8 mercy (ἐλεός and ἰλαπότης) is a spiritual gift. The only place where Paul refers to forgiving a fellow-Christian is found in 2 Cor 2:5-11, though Paul also begs his own forgiveness from the Corinthians in a tongue-in-cheek manner (2 Cor 12:13).

3.4 Eph 4:25-5:2 and Col 3:1-17

These two passages are remarkably similar. Not only do they touch upon common topics, they use common vocabulary. Both (Eph 4:25; Col 3:9) address lying. Both (Eph 4:31; Col 3:8) list as evils to be renounced: anger, malice and slander. Both (Eph 4:32; Col 3:12-13) list as good qualities to be adopted: compassion, kindness and forgiveness based on the forgiveness of the Lord (Col 3:13) or Christ (Eph 4:32). In both passages love is a chief or summarizing quality (Eph 5:2; Col 3:14). In both passages, there is a concern for appropriate words and deeds (Eph 4:28-9; Col 3:17).¹⁴⁵

In spite of these similarities, each passage has its own distinctives. Eph 4:25 introduces the positive notion of speaking the truth, an element lacking from Col 3:1-17. Eph 4:26-27 addresses anger with three exhortations, none of which have any counterpart to statements in Col 3:1-17. Though Col 3:17 speaks of words and thoughts in general terms, Eph 4:28-29 is much more expansive, combining theft, manual labour and giving, three topics found nowhere in Colossians, to express proper deeds, and opposing debilitating talk with useful, needed, edifying speech to express proper words. The warning against grieving the Spirit is peculiar to Ephesians. Even the statements in Eph 4:31-32 uniquely contrast angry expressions with compassionate demeanour and forgiveness, in spite of the fact that they have a closer resemblance to elements of Col 3:1-17 than anything else in this passage.

Perhaps the most significant difference is the point to which each passage builds. Eph 4:25-5:2 points to Christ's God-pleasing self-sacrifice as the ultimate example of the sort of love that should be characteristic of the readers' lives. Col 3:1-17 is summarized by the exhortation to do all things in the name of Christ. This latter passage begins and ends by exhorting its readers to associate themselves as much as possible with the lordly Christ. Eph 4:25-5:2 presents loving deeds as a distinctive counterpart to futile gentile activity. Both passages may use similar building blocks, but the final structure for each is appropriately unique.

¹⁴⁵ Bruce, *The Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians*, 362-63, and Mitton, *Ephesians*, 170, both define the *λόγος σαπρὸς* of Eph 4:29 based on the term *αἰσχρολογία* in Col 3:8. While this is certainly possible, it is probably too restrictive, and perhaps assumes too much of a slavish copying on the part of the writer of Ephesians. Barth, *Ephesians 4-6*, 518, and Robinson, *St. Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians*, 112, see a counterpart to Eph 4:29 in Col 4:6, where speech is to be "seasoned with salt." This too is possible but unlikely, given that Col 4:5-6 has wise dialogue with "outsiders" (*οἱ ἕξω*) principally in view whereas Eph 4:29 is addressing the issue of general conversation as an exhibit of love.

3.5 Conclusions

Not surprisingly, Eph 4:25-5:2 has both substantial similarities and differences with material found in the undisputed Pauline epistles and in Colossians. Any focus on Ephesians' special emphasis of deeds that exemplify Christ's love must be tempered by the correspondences found in other material in the Pauline corpus. In his exhortations in 4:25-5:2 the writer of Ephesians certainly coheres with Pauline tradition. He deviates from this freely but insignificantly to express a distinctive outlook.

4 Eph 4:25-5:2 and Non-Christian Moral Traditions

The commonness of the moral exhortations in this passage is a widely recognized phenomenon. Notwithstanding, various schemas have been proposed to explain how these traditions are mediated to Ephesians itself. One suggestion is that the teaching in these verses is heavily influenced by the Decalogue or perhaps by an adaptation of a Levitical Holiness Code.¹⁴⁶ Another sees a parallel to the ethical presentation found in Zech 8.¹⁴⁷ Another regards Hellenism as conveyed through various strands of Second Temple Judaism as a significant influence on ethical traditions.¹⁴⁸ While some of these raise interesting points, they tend to assume the direct absorption of a particular written tradition as a more likely influence than enculturation within a broad world view. No single tradition has a monopoly on the external forms of behaviours advocated in Eph 4:25-5:2

Though the exhortations are presented in as few as seven concrete

¹⁴⁶ JC Kirby, *Ephesians: Baptism and Pentecost*, (London: SPCK, 1968), 148, sees a connection between Eph 4:25-32 and the ten commandments, regarding the exhortations about anger and bad speech as based on the commands on murder and bearing false-witness respectively. A similar suggestion appears in JL Houlden, *Paul's Letters from Prison*, (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1977), 320. This same line of reasoning is applied also to Col 3:6-4:1 by L Hartman, "Code and Context: A Few Reflections on the Parenthesis of Col 3:6-4:1," in *Tradition and Interpretation in the New Testament*, (Grand Rapids: William B Eerdmans, 1987), 237-247. P Carrington, *Primitive Christian Catechism*, (Cambridge: University Press, 1940), 76, does not specifically include Eph 4:25-5:2 in his discussion about a Neo-levitical holiness code, but he does see some affinities between certain aspects of Ephesians and Leviticus 19. Similar suggestions are made with regard both to *Pseudo-Phocylides* by PW van der Horst, *The Sentences of Pseudo-Phocylides* (Leiden: EJ Brill, 1978), 66-67, and to James by LT Johnson, "The Use of Leviticus 19 in the Letter of James," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 101 (1982): 391-401.

¹⁴⁷ JP Sampley, "Scripture and Tradition in the Community as Seen in Ephesians 4:25ff," *Studia Theologica* 2 (1979): 101-09.

¹⁴⁸ J Gnllka, "Paränetische Traditionen im Epheserbrief," in *Mélanges Bibliques*, ed by A Descamps and A de Halleux, (Gembloux: Duculot, 1970), 401-03; KG Kuhn "The Epistle to the Ephesians in the light of the Qumran texts," in *Paul and Qumran*, ed by J Murphy-O'Connor and JH Charlesworth, (New York: Crossroad, 1990), 115-131; F Mußner, "Contributions made by Qumran to the understanding of the Epistle to the Ephesians," in the same volume, 159-178.

statements,¹⁴⁹ there are at least nineteen different topics that are addressed: lying, truth-speaking, anger, the devil, theft, work, giving, bad speech, good speech, grieving the Spirit, bitterness, slander, shouting, evil, kindness, compassion, forgiveness, *imitatio* and love. With the exception of references to the devil and to the Holy Spirit, none of these topics would be lacking in Graeco-Roman moral writings, though some schools of thought would purposely exclude some of these.¹⁵⁰ An exhaustive examination of each of these topics would not be possible, nor especially productive with regard to Ephesians.¹⁵¹ Instead, similarities with selected bodies of writings will be examined to show how Ephesians fits into a common mould. Jewish writings, both from the LXX and from Greek OT Pseudepigrapha will be explored,¹⁵² along with selected Graeco-Roman writings.

4.1 Affinities with Jewish Writings

Lying, or deceitfulness, is an issue frequently addressed throughout the LXX.

¹⁴⁹ So Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 295, who identifies these as *sententiae*: 4:25; 4:26-27; 4:28; 4:29; 4:30; 4:31-32; 5:1-2.

¹⁵⁰ Some Cynic philosophers, e.g., would not promote working and giving as valued activities, but would address the pointlessness of working and the advantages of being materially unencumbered. These philosophers tend to be in the awkward situation of railing against wealth yet being dependent to a certain extent on the beneficence of wealthy people. The thirty-third letter attributed to Diogenes, written to Phanomachus, captures some of this sentiment as Diogenes responds to the young Alexander (soon to become "the Great"): "Poverty,' I replied, 'does not consist in not having money, nor is begging a bad thing, but poverty consists in desiring everything, and that is in your power to do, and to do so with vigor. Therefore, springs and earth are allies to my poverty, yes even caves and goat skins are. And no one fights me because of it, neither on land nor sea, But as I was born, mark well, so also do I live. . . ." tr by B Fiore in *The Cynic Epistles*, ed by AJ Malherbe, (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1977), 141-43. An obvious exception to this perspective is found by R Hock, "Simon the Shoemaker as an Ideal Cynic," *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies* 17 (1976): 41-53.

¹⁵¹ Such a study has already been performed exhaustively with regard to teachings on conversation in the Epistle of James by WR Baker, "Personal Speech-ethics: A Study of the Epistle of James against its Background, (Unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Aberdeen, 1986). Throughout the 628 pages he demonstrates that speech is a widespread moral issue, listing many useful references to primary sources, but has not even begun to show how common concern for appropriate speech would have been compared with other moral teachings. Speech, in reality, was one among many other topics addressed in all sorts of Graeco-Roman, Jewish and Christian writings concerned with appropriate human behaviour. For useful information about Jewish and Hellenistic attitudes to the subject of work, see RF Hock, *The Social Context of Paul's Ministry*.

¹⁵² Gnilka, "Paränetische Traditionen im Epheserbrief," following the lead of Kuhn, points out many affinities between exhortations in Eph 4:25-5:2 and Qumran materials. The fact that these are not explored here is not intended to lessen the value of such study, but finding one more group of writings with material similarities to Ephesians only widens the scope of the commonplaces found in Ephesians. 1QS alone addresses topics such as: lying (4.9, 6.24-25, 7.3-5, 10.22); truthful speech and practice (5.3, 5.25); angry speech (5.25, 10.20); the influences of "Belial" (10.21); both the giving up and the maintenance of common property (6.2-3, 6.19-22, 7.6-8, 9.22); a variety of improper and proper kinds of speech, in addition to lying and anger - wicked speech (5.25-26), insults (6.3-5), disrespectful speech (6.26, 7.2), foolish words (6.9, 10.21), vain words (10.23); and love of community members (1.9, 2.24-25, 4.5, 5.4, 5.25, 8.2).

The principal exhortation against such is found in the Decalogue (Exod 20:16 and Deut 5:20) under the rubric of bearing false witness, but is also restated and embellished in the Levitical Holiness Code.¹⁵³ The concern with lying and deceitfulness appears in a wide variety of LXX traditions. Hymnic writings include this as part of their depiction of sinful people.¹⁵⁴ Wisdom writings are equally prolific on this topic.¹⁵⁵ Though not as frequently, prophetic writings also address this issue.¹⁵⁶ In some of these contexts, truthful speech is also urged, though it sometimes can be a separate issue by itself.¹⁵⁷

Though not with the same frequency as falsehood and deceit, various LXX writings castigate anger.¹⁵⁸ Stealing is commonly censured,¹⁵⁹ work is encouraged¹⁶⁰ and financial contributions to the needy are valued, even serving as a motivation for work.¹⁶¹ Appropriate and inappropriate kinds of speech are mentioned,

¹⁵³ Lev 6:2-4; 19:11: "Ye shall not steal, ye shall not lie, neither shall one bear false witness as an informer against his neighbour." Lev 19:16-18: "Thou shalt not walk deceitfully among thy people; thou shalt not rise up against the blood of thy neighbour: I am the Lord your God. Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thine heart: thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbour, so thou shalt not bear sin on his account. And thy hand shall not avenge thee; and thou shalt not be angry with the children of thy people; and thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself; I am the Lord." Tr by LCL Brenton, *The Septuagint with Apocrypha: Greek and English* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, reprint of 1851 edition). Unless stated otherwise, subsequent LXX quotations will be from this edition.

¹⁵⁴ LXX Pss 5:7, 9; 9:27-29; 11:1-5; 13:4; 14:2-3; 24:4; 31:2; 33:14; 35:2-3; 39:4; 49:16-20; 51:2-4; 57:3; 58:12-13; 108:2-5; 119:2-3.

¹⁵⁵ Prov 6:19; 12:22; 14:5, 25; 19:4, 5, 9; 21:6, 28; 25:18; 26:24, 28; 30:7-9 (though this last reference principally addresses the writers fear of being deceived rather than his fear of lying); Wis 1:11; 14:25; Sir 7:12-13; 20:24-26; 52:2, 5.

¹⁵⁶ LXX Jer 5:27; 9:2-11; 23:14; Ezek 33:31; Hos 4:2; 7:1; Mic 6:12; Zeph 1:9; 3:13; Zech 8:17; Mal 3:5; Isa 53:9; 59:4-18. Isa 59:17 uses imagery also found in Eph 6:14-18.

¹⁵⁷ For pairing with its opposite, see LXX Ps 14:2; Prov 26:28; 28:6; Jer 9:2-11; Zech 8:16. For truth-speaking as an independent topic, see Prov 8:7; 12:17, 19.

¹⁵⁸ Gen 49:7; Lev 19:18; LXX Pss 4:4; 9:35; 34:20; 36:8; 54:3; 57:3; 111:10; Prov 12:16; 15:1, 18; 16:32; 17:25; 21:14; 22:24-25; 27:3-4; 29:8, 22; Eccl 7:10; Isa 58:13; Sir 1:21; 10:6, 18; 20:2; 27:30; 28:1-8, 10; 30:24, 29-30; 4 Macc 2:17.

¹⁵⁹ Exod 20:15; 22:1-3, 7-8, 12; Lev 19:11; Deut 5:19; LXX Ps 50:18; Prov 30:9; Jer 7:9; Hos 4:2; Zech 5:3-4; Wis 14:15; Sir 20:25.

¹⁶⁰ Wisdom literature most explicitly upholds the value of work: Prov 6:6-11; 12:11; 16:26; 18:9; 22:9; 28:19; 65:22; Sir 7:15; 10:27 (though note 38:24-39:11 where manual labour is denigrated over the opportunity to spend life as a wise person.). Generally, work seems to be a fact of life (Gen 3:17, 23; Exod 20:9-10; 23:12; 31:14-15; 34:21; 35:2; Lev 23:3; Deut 5:13-14), particularly for only six days, but which can be prospered when God is obeyed (Deut 2:7; 14:27-29; 15:10-11; 16:15; 24:19; 28:12; 30:9; Job 1:10; LXX Ps 127:2; Prov 3:9; Isa 65:22).

¹⁶¹ See especially Deut 14:27-29; 15:10-11; 24:19; and Prov 3:9.

including slander.¹⁶² Kindness, compassion and forgiveness are rarely enjoined as human responsibilities, though the role of God as kind, compassionate, merciful and forgiving cannot be overlooked in view of the model of God that the readers of Ephesians are told to imitate.¹⁶³

What is also interesting to observe in relation to Ephesians is the intermixing of behavioural topics in the same contexts. Some of this can be related to embellishments on the Decalogue, such as the listing together of cursing, lying, murder, theft and adultery in Hos 4:2.¹⁶⁴ Sometimes these are listed because of the evil circumstances being addressed, such as the combination of lying, mockery, practice of usury, harmful speech and harbouring of enmity behind deceitful,

¹⁶² Evil speech, which often includes lying, is condemned in a number of different ways: Exod 20:7: taking the Lord's name in vain; 20:16: bearing false witness; 22:28: reviling "gods" or speaking ill of a ruler; 23:8: corrupting just words; 23:13: mentioning the name of other gods; Lev 5:1: swearing; 5:4: determining to do evil with lips. Categories of inappropriate speech identified by Baker, "Personal Speech Ethics," 356-369, include: "slander"/"gossip" (Prov 10:18; 24:28-29; 25:18); "mockery" (MT Pss 10:5, 10; 12:2-5; 35:21; 40:14-15; Prov 21:24; 22:10); and "cursing" (MT Pss 10:7; 59:12; 109:17-18; Prov 26:2); along with various forms of false and deceitful speech referred to above. Appropriate speech, though not urged as frequently as evil speech is condemned, nevertheless is promoted in a variety of pictures of righteous people (LXX Ps 14:1-3; 23:4-5), particularly of the wise (e.g. Prov 15:1-4 where gentle, soothing words are importuned, also Job 4:3; Prov 10:11, 31-32; 16:21; 18:20-24).

¹⁶³ The example of key people as compassionate and merciful also cannot be overlooked - e.g. Ruth and Boaz (Ruth 1:8, 2:13) and David (2 Kgdms 9:1-13). Pss 14:5 and 109:6 refer to kindness as a human responsibility, and Hos 4:1, Mic 6:8 and Zech 7:9 all speak of the need for people to practise mercy and kindness, though this may also be related to the concept of God's covenant mercy. Most statements about kindness and compassion are found in Wisdom writings, often related to providing for the poor: Job 6:14; Prov 11:17; 14:21 (to the poor), 31 (to the poor); 19:17 (to the poor); 21:21; 31:6; Wis 12:19 (which urges its readers to heed God's example of being kind: "Through such works thou has taught thy people that the righteous man must be kind, and thou has filled thy sons with good hope, because thou givest repentance for sins." (RSV)); Sir 17:22; 29:1, 15; 40:17, which all relate kindness to giving, though Sir 12:1 and 35:2 present an unusual perspective that kindness should be repaid. God's quality of mercy is heralded, but by no means exhausted, in the following passages, often in opposition to the display of his wrath, and sometimes even connected with his forgiveness: Exod 33:19; 34:6; Deut 4:31; 13:7 (opposite to wrath); 30:3 (opposite to wrath); Neh 9:17 (opposite to wrath, also related to forgiveness); LXX Pss 23:6; 25:6; 30:5 (opposite to wrath); 77:9 (opposite to wrath); 86:15 (opposite to wrath); 103:8 (opposite to wrath); 111:4; 112:4; 116:5; 145:8, 17; Isa 49:13, 15; 54:8 (opposite to wrath); 55:7 (related to forgiveness); Jer 3:13 (opposite to wrath); Lam 3:22; Hos 2:19; 11:4, 8; Joel 2:13 (opposite to wrath); Jonah 4:2 (opposite to wrath); Mic 7:19 (related to forgiveness); Hab 3:2 (opposite to wrath); Wis 11:23 (related to forgiveness); Wis 12:19 (related to repentance); 15:1; 16:2 (instead of punishment, showed kindness); Sir 2:11 (related to forgiveness); 5:6 (related to forgiveness and wrath); 16:11 (opposite to wrath, also related to forgiveness); 17:29 (related to forgiveness); 47:22; 48:20; 1 Macc 4:24; 2 Macc 1:24; 7:6; 3 Macc 6:2.

¹⁶⁴ Note a similar indictment found in Jer 7:8-10, where, because people heeded false prophets, they fell prey to murder, adultery, theft, false-swearing and idolatry. The same perhaps can be said about the stringing together, in Lev 19:1-18, of the topics as diverse as reverence for parents, sabbath-keeping, abhorrence of idols, proper sacrificing procedures, leaving some of the harvest for the poor, stealing, lying, bearing false witness, profaning God's name, injuring neighbours, robbing them, withholding wages, reviling the deaf, harming the blind, judging unjustly, walking deceitfully, vengeance, hatred, improper rebuke and anger. Some of these topics are addressed directly by the Decalogue, but others are at best only derived from this, and relate more directly to other laws found elsewhere.

peaceful sounding words found in Jer 9:2-10. Frequently several sins are combined in the Psalms, mostly in reference to wicked people.¹⁶⁵ The combination of the evils addressed in Eph 4:25-5:2 is not unusual for a writer familiar enough with Jewish traditions to base two of his exhortations on direct quotations from the LXX.

Nevertheless, it would be wrong to see the LXX as the sole influence behind the material ethics found in this passage. At least one feature missing from Ephesians is a sense of justice, such as care for the oppressed, a theme often found in many passages referred to above. The writer of Ephesians does refer to the act of giving, not with the OT terminology of the poor, the widow, the orphan and the alien, but in terms of "those who have need."

Concern for these same moral commonplaces is also widely attested in certain OT Pseudepigrapha, only not as frequently as in the LXX. Lying is clearly rejected in many of these writings,¹⁶⁶ though many times translators of these works use the terms lie/lying to represent both mistaken notions of reality and purposeful distortions of reality,¹⁶⁷ giving the appearance that the immorality of lying is

¹⁶⁵ The following references are not atypical: LXX Ps 9:21-31 combines oppression of the poor, pride, improper speech comprised of "cursing, bitterness, . . . fraud, . . . trouble and pain," and theft of the poor. LXX Ps 13:3: ". . . Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips: whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness; their feet are swift to shed blood: destruction and misery are in their ways; and the way of peace they have not known: there is no fear of God before their eyes." LXX Ps 49:16-20 combines theft, adultery, wicked speech, deceit and slander; LXX Ps 57:3-5 combines lying and anger (v 4, translated "venom," is interpreted by the LXX as anger by use of the term θυμός to render the Hebrew חמה).

¹⁶⁶ Though lying is rejected, only six clear exhortations against lying can be found in those writings having Greek manuscripts: *Pseudo-Phoc* 7: "Do not tell lies, but always speak the truth;" 12: "Flee false witness; award what is just;" - these two statements are found in a context that clearly rehearses the issues found in the Decalogue; *I Enoch* 104.9: "Do not become wicked in your hearts, or lie, or alter the words of a just verdict, or utter falsehood against the words of the Great, the Holy One, or give praise to your idols; for all your lies and all your wickedness are not for righteousness but for great sin;" *T Iss* 7.4(-7): "There was no deceit in my heart; no lie passed through my lips. . . You do these as well, my children, and every spirit of Beliar will flee from you. . .;" *T Ben* 6.4-5: "The good set of mind does not receive glory or dishonor from men, nor does it know deceit, or lying, or conflict or abuse. For the Lord dwells in him, illumines his life, and he rejoices in everything at every appropriate time. The good set of mind does not talk from both sides of its mouth; praises and curses, abuse and honor, calm and strife, hypocrisy and truth, . . .;" *Ep Arist* 206: ". . . 'How can one maintain the truth?' The answer to this was, 'By realizing that the lie brings terrible disgrace upon every man, and much more so upon kings. For if they have the power to do what they wish, what reason would they have for telling lies?'" Other statements that condemn the lying behaviour of others include: *Pss Sol* 4.4; 12.1-3; *Sib Or* 3.36-7; 3.495-500; *T Reub* 3.5; *Ep Arist* 297. The translations found above, as well as in subsequent citations are all taken from *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, both volumes.

¹⁶⁷ In this regard, the orientation of *T Dan* has already been mentioned (see above, note 10). Other cases include *T Gad* 5.1: "Hatred is evil, since it continually consorts with lying [i.e. falsehood], speaking against the truth; it makes small things big, turns light into darkness, says that the sweet is bitter, teaches slander, conflict, violence, and all manner of greed; it fills the heart with diabolical

addressed more often than may be the case. The topic of truthful speech is not addressed as frequently as lying.¹⁶⁸ This, too, can be confused with proclamations of philosophical truth, as opposed to less thought-out, accurate representations of daily reality; the former is more related to personal acumen, the latter to personal honesty.¹⁶⁹

Anger is sometimes disapproved of.¹⁷⁰ Often, the evil influence of the devil or spirits is recognized, sometimes even held responsible for the committing of certain sins.¹⁷¹ As would be expected, theft is generally condemned,¹⁷² though not

venom." *T Ash* 5.3: "One cannot say truth is a lie, nor a righteous act is unjust, because all truth is subject ultimately to the light, just as all things are subject ultimately to God." Also note *I Enoch* 98.15, 99.1, 99.9 and 107.2. A person who has a mistaken perception of reality is not in the same moral category as someone who purposefully misrepresents the truth in order to deceive. Though rhetorically both can be regarded as "liars," those in the latter category have a different degree of moral culpability.

¹⁶⁸ Only five clear statements can be found that specifically single out the value of truth telling: *Pss Sol* 16.10: "Protect my tongue and my lips with words of truth;/ put anger and thoughtless rage far from me;" *T Ben* 6.5 (see above, note 166), contrasting "hypocrisy and truth;" *Pseudo-Phoc* 7 (also cited in note 166); *Ep Arist* 206 (also cited in note 166); and, perhaps the citing of *Zech* 8:16 in *T Dan* 5.3, which may be urging truthful speech, not in opposition to lying but as a habit to be developed so that one can be as far away from all sorts of falsehood as possible.

¹⁶⁹ See, e.g., *I Enoch* 5.8, 10.16, 11.2, 15.1, 21.5, 104.9-13, 106.12; *T Reub* 3.8, 9; *T Gad* 3.1, 3, 5.1; *T Ash* 5.3, 4, 6.1; *Sib Or* 4.23. See, especially: *T Jud* 14.1: "Wine perverts the mind from the truth, arouses the impulses of desire and leads the eyes into the path of error;" *T Dan* 2.2: "There is no angry person who can perceive the face of truth." It is also worth noting, however, that the distinction between error and lying can be blurred, as exemplified by the reference in *Ep Arist* 206, cited above in note 166.

¹⁷⁰ This is especially the case throughout *T Dan*, where anger is one of the principal sins being addressed. Other references are few and far between, however: *Pss Sol* 16.10: ". . . put anger and thoughtless rage far from me;" *Sib Or* 3.35-40: "Alas for a race which rejoices in blood, a crafty and evil race/ of impious and false double-tongued men and immoral/ adulterous idol worshipers who plot deceit. There is wickedness in their breasts, a frenzy raging within;" *Pseudo-Phoc* 57: "Do not be rash with (your) hands, but bridle your wild anger;" 63-64: "Anger that steals over one causes destructive madness. Rage is a desire, but wrath surpasses (it);" *Ep Arist* 253-54: "How can one avoid anger? To this the reply was, 'by realizing that he has absolute power, and that any recourse to anger brings death, which is indeed a useless and painful thing to do if many are deprived of life simply because he is lord. But if all are obedient and there is no opposition, what will be the point of getting angry? You must know that God governs the whole universe with kindness and without any anger, and you, O King,' he said, 'must follow him.;" *T Gad* 5.1: "Hatred is evil, since it continually consorts with lying, speaking against the truth; it makes small things big, turns light into darkness, says that the sweet is bitter teaches slander, conflict [ὀργή], violence, and all manner of greed; it fills the heart with diabolical venom." Both *Pss Sol* 16.10 and *Sib Or* 3.40 also combine the topics of lying or truth-speaking with anger. *T Dan* and *T Gad* 5.1 may also be doing this, but seem more concerned with misconception of reality than with purposeful misrepresentation of reality.

¹⁷¹ This is especially the case in portions of the *T 12 Patr* (e.g. *T Sim* 3.1-6; *T Iss* 4.4-5, 6.1, 7.7; *T Dan* 1.6-8, 2.1, 4, 3.6, 5.5-6, 6.1), which also blend Hellenistic views of "spirits" as impersonal influences (*T Reub* 2.1-3.9; *T Jud* 20.1-4; *T Zeb* 9.8; *T Gad* 3.1, 4.7) with spiritual beings who are associated with or promote certain sins without directly causing them (e.g. *T Lev* 19.1 contrasts works of Beliar with the Law of God; *T Jud* 25.3 refers to Beliar's spirit of error; *T Naph* 2.6 mentions the Law of Beliar, 3.1, the will of Beliar, and 3.4, lives patterned after wandering spirits; *T Dan* 3.6, 4.7, 5.1 all associate specific sins with Beliar without making him their cause; *T Gad* 4.7, 6.1-3 speaks of spirits influencing others to do evil; *T Ash* 1.8 addresses evil used by Beliar, 3.2 Beliar being destroyed

with great frequency. It is sometimes mentioned in lists of other evils.¹⁷³ In one place, it is even paired opposite to hard work.¹⁷⁴ The value of labour or work also tends to be upheld, though this receives scant treatment.¹⁷⁵ Giving to the needy is a common topic, especially in *T 12 Patr*, and is most closely related to the OT concern for people to be compassionate or merciful.¹⁷⁶ Various appropriate and inappropriate forms of speech are occasionally mentioned.¹⁷⁷ Though kindness and

by good deeds, 6.2 spirits of error that can be imitated; *T Jos* 7.1 mentions a spirit of Beliar troubling Potiphar's wife; *T Ben* 6.1 portrays Beliar as a deceitful spirit who controls people, while in 7.1-2 Beliar influences the committing of seven evils). Though the writer of Ephesians nowhere intimates that spirits are either impersonal influences or beings who provoke people to commit specific sins, he does portray the prince of the power of the air as a being who provides standards for non-Christian conduct (Eph 2:1-2) and who antagonizes believers (Eph 4:27; 6:10-12).

¹⁷² *T Abr* 1.10.4-12 mentions robbers with swords, sexually immoral people and house-breakers in the same passage. *T Reub* 3.6 sees theft as the product of injustice. *Pseudo-Phoc* 18 condemns the stealing of seeds, while 136 denounces the reception of stolen goods. *T Ash* 2.5 discusses the thief who has compassion on the poor and judges the overall drift of such activity as evil. This seems to be at odds with *T Zeb* 7.1 where, in order to exercise compassion on a naked man, Zebulon steals a garment from his household. One wonders whether this same Zebulon who had earlier proclaimed that he had never knowingly sinned (1.4-5) is actually to be believed, or whether κλέπτω is wrongly translated as "steal." From the standpoint of the writer of Ephesians, perhaps the former is more to the point, especially since Eph 4:28 proposes toil as the means to obtain the wherewithal to give to the needy, contrary to the advice in *T Zeb* 7.3: "If at any time you do not have anything to give to the one who is in need, be compassionate and merciful in your inner self."

¹⁷³ In *Sib Or* 3.30-34, thieves are listed with murderers, those who "deal in dishonest gain," adulterers and homosexuals. *3 Bar* 4.17 discusses the perils of drunkenness, listing "murder, adultery, fornication, perjury, theft, and similar things;" *3 Bar* 8.5 states how the sun is defiled "By the sight of the lawlessness and unrighteousness of men committing fornication, adultery, theft, robbery, idol-worship, drunkenness, murder, discord, jealousy, slander, murmuring, gossip, divination, and other things which are unacceptable to God."

¹⁷⁴ *Pseudo-Phoc* 153-54: "Work hard so that you can live from your own means; for every idle man lives from what his hands can steal."

¹⁷⁵ *T Iss* 5.3-5 urges agricultural labour as a means to achieving single-minded sincerity before God. The narrator, Issachar, says that such work had prevented him from thinking of women (3.5) and also provided him with the means to give to the Lord, his father, himself, and the poor (3.6-8). The only other significant mention of the value of work can be found in *Pseudo-Phoc* 153-174, where a trade is urged, idleness is likened to theft and hard work is seen to promote virtue.

¹⁷⁶ See *T Jud* 9.8, which applauds Esau giving to Jacob's family during the famine; *T Zeb* 6.4, where Zebulon gives to the needy from his labour, a catch of fish (also 7.1-4); *T Iss* 3.8, where the poor receive from Issachar's labours (also 5.2, 7.5); *T Ash* 2.6, where giving without regard to the Lord is said to be evil; *T Jos* 3.5-6, where Joseph fasted so as to be able to give food to the poor; *T Ben* 4.4, 5.1. *T Job* chapters 9-12, highlights not only Job's philanthropy but his financing of others' ventures that they would undertake so as to earn money for the poor. Also, *Pseudo-Phoc* 22-29 urges compassion and financial assistance to the needy.

¹⁷⁷ *T Gad* 6.1 urges its readers to love one another in deed, word and thought; *Pss Sol* 4.2 describes the profaner as one both excessive and harsh in words, 4.9 mentions "criminal words" that destroy, 4.11-12 speaks of one who deceives with words and who uses destructively "agitating" words; 12.2-4 condemns the destructive, slanderous words of the wicked, comparing them to fire; 16.10 contains a prayer asking God to protect the tongue and lips "with words of truth;" *Pseudo-Phoc* 20 urges care with the use of the tongue, while 122-29 contains statements on the proper use of the

compassion can be urged as motives for giving, they can also be found related to ideas of forgiveness or as opposites to vengeance.¹⁷⁸ Forgiveness as a valued human activity does not receive much overt attention, though it is implied on several occasions in *T 12 Patr* when Joseph's response to his brothers is mentioned.¹⁷⁹

With the exception of Eph 5:2, where Christ is referred to as an ethical model, and the possible exception of 4:30, where the Holy Spirit is presented as a motivator of good behaviour, none of the behaviour advocated in Eph 4:25-5:2 can be said to be unique. Nor can one confidently point to a single source as the primary motivator for the presentation of these ethical statements.¹⁸⁰ One cannot even say that any of these statements are necessarily Jewish. However, nothing in this passage runs counter to basic moral statements found in the LXX or OT Pseudepigrapha.

4.2 Affinities with Graeco-Roman Writings

Often with different terminology, most of these same topics are addressed throughout a wide range of Graeco-Roman writings. Examples appear in writings from thinkers as varied as Plato, Aristotle, Dio Chrysostom and Epictetus.

While theorizing on certain aspects of his ideal state, the Athenian character, in Plato's *Laws*, addresses many of these issues. Wrath and gentleness are to be held together in balance in response to evil committed by others.¹⁸¹ Uncontrolled rage is said to lead to the outbreak of certain violent crimes.¹⁸² He upholds

tongue. *Pseudo-Phoc* 123 is especially worth comparing with Eph 4:29: "Practice speaking the right word which will greatly benefit all."

¹⁷⁸ See *T Sim* 4.4; *T Zeb* 8.1-6; *T Ben* 4.1-4.

¹⁷⁹ The most explicit treatment of this topic seems to be found in *T Gad* 6.3: "Love one another from the heart, therefore, and if anyone sins against you, speak to him in peace. Expel the venom of hatred, and do not harbor deceit in your heart. If anyone confesses and repents, forgive him;" and *T Gad* 6.7: "But even if he is devoid of shame and persists in his wickedness, forgive him from the heart and leave vengeance to God."

¹⁸⁰ Though the LXX is quoted directly both in 4:25 and in 4:26, and perhaps alluded to in 4:30, there is no reason derivable from any portions of the LXX indicating why all the issues in Eph 4:25-5:2 would have been addressed together in that passage.

¹⁸¹ Plato, *Laws* 731B-D, tr by RG Bury, (London: William Heinemann, 1926), I: 337-39.

¹⁸² These would include: murder and wounding, 866E-867B (II: 243-45 in tr); violence against parents, 869A-E (II: 251-53 in tr); the disposal of goods on one's deathbed, 922C, 929B-C (II: 419, II: 441-43 in tr). In general, outbreaks of anger should be evaluated by the State: ". . . in the matter of anger and of fear, and of all the disturbances which befall souls owing to misfortune, and of all the avoidances thereof which occur in good-fortune, and of all the experiences which confront men through disease or war or penury or their opposites, -- in regard to all these definite instruction must be given

truthfulness and denounces falsehood.¹⁸³ He also addresses falsehood both in the swearing of oaths and in the misrepresenting of the value of goods so as to make a sale, also a form of stealing.¹⁸⁴ He advocates a proper distribution of trades and an even distribution of wealth throughout the state.¹⁸⁵ He distinguishes between professional beggars, who have no place in the state and who should be banished, and those who have fallen on hard times, who should be provided for in some way.¹⁸⁶ Theft receives extensive treatment, subjected to a wide range of casuistry.¹⁸⁷ Plato's character considers the effects of improper forms of speech, particularly related to anger and cursing,¹⁸⁸ and censures ridicule even from comic poets.¹⁸⁹

as to what is the right and what the wrong disposition in each case" (632A-B, I: 27 in tr). This is necessary since people do not willingly commit wrongs ". . . every wrongdoer is a wrongdoer involuntarily; for no one anywhere would ever voluntarily acquire any of the greatest evils, least of all in his own most precious possessions. And most precious in very truth to every man is, as we have said, the soul" (731C, I: 337 in tr).

¹⁸³ *Laws* 730C, I: 333-35: "Of all the goods, for gods and men alike, truth stands first. Thereof let every man partake from his earliest days, if he purposes to become blessed and happy, that so he may live his life as a true man so long as possible. He is a trusty man; but untrustworthy is the man who loves the voluntary lie; and senseless is the man who loves the involuntary lie; and neither of these two is to be envied."

¹⁸⁴ *Laws* 916E, II: 401: "No man, calling the gods to witness, shall commit, either by word or deed, any falsehood, fraud or adulteration, if he does not mean to be most hateful to the gods; and such an one is he who without regard of the gods swears oaths falsely, and he also who lies in the presence of his superiors."

¹⁸⁵ *Laws* 846D-847B (II: 183-85 in tr); 918A-920C (II: 405-13 in tr).

¹⁸⁶ *Laws* 936B-C, II: 465: "The man who suffers from hunger or the like is not the man who deserves pity, but he who, while possessing temperance or virtue of some sort, or a share thereof, gains in addition evil fortune; wherefore it would be a strange thing indeed if, in a polity and State that is even moderately well organised, a man of this kind (be he slave or free man) should be so entirely neglected as to come to utter beggary."

¹⁸⁷ *Laws* 933E-934C (II: 457-59 in tr), describes various sorts of punishments commensurate with what is stolen. 941B-942A (II: 475-77 in tr) also outlines other legal responses to theft. "Theft of property is uncivilized, open robbery is shameless: neither of these has any of the sons of Zeus practised, through delight in fraud or force. Let no man, therefore, be deluded concerning this or persuaded either by poets or by any perverse myth-mongers into the belief that, when he thieves or forcibly robs, he is doing nothing shameful, but just what the gods themselves do" (941B, II: 475 in tr).

¹⁸⁸ *Laws* 934D-935A, II: 461: "There are many and various forms of madness: in the cases now mentioned it is caused by disease, but cases also occur where it is due to the natural growth and fostering of an evil temper, by which men in the course of a trifling quarrel abuse one another slanderously with loud cries--a thing which is unseemly and totally out of place in a well-regulated State. Concerning abuse there shall be this one law to cover all cases: --No one shall abuse anyone. If one is disputing with another in argument, he shall either speak or listen, and he shall wholly refrain from abusing either the disputant or the bystanders. For from those light things, words, there spring in deed things most heavy to bear, even hatreds and feuds, when men begin cursing one another and foully abusing one another in the manner of fish-wives; and the man who utters such words is gratifying a thing most ungracious and sating his passion with foul foods, and by thus brutalizing afresh that part of his soul which once was humanized by education, he makes a wild beast of himself through his rancorous life, and wins only gall for gratitude from his passion."

In his *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle refers to truth and falsehood as moral activities that affect different spheres of human activity.¹⁹⁰ He discusses various forms of anger, presenting "gentleness" (πραότης) as the "mean" between angry expression on the one hand and "lack of spirit" on the other.¹⁹¹ He addresses proper attitudes toward the acquisition and dispensing of wealth, in the process touching on issues such as giving, work and thievery.¹⁹² Appropriate boundaries for suitable conversation are addressed in various comments on proper interaction "in word and deed," covering topics such as "truthfulness," "pleasantness in social amusement" and "pleasantness in the general affairs of life," as well as the categories of "boastfulness," "self-depreciation," "wittiness," "buffoonery," "boorishness," "friendliness," the "complaisant" person, the "flatterer" and the "peevish and surly."¹⁹³

Epictetus refers to similar behaviours throughout his recorded discourses. He focusses more on organizing principles, subsuming specific behaviours beneath them. He disparages both anger and its effects because these represent a disavowal

¹⁸⁹ *Laws* 935D-936A (II: 463-65 in tr).

¹⁹⁰ The most notable of these spheres are issues related to human justice and the extremes of "boastfulness" and "self-depreciation." In the latter case, true and accurate self-representation must be a cultivated quality that in itself promotes appropriate moral behaviour. In the former, people must make true and accurate representation of the facts of a situation, whether dealing with business or everyday human intercourse. The two issues merge when Aristotle refers to the "habitual sincerity of disposition" that the moral person should develop: "Such sincerity may be esteemed a moral excellence; for the lover of truth, who is truthful even when nothing depends on it, will *a fortiori* be truthful when some interest is at stake, since having all along avoided falsehood for its own sake, he will assuredly avoid it when it is morally base." Aristotle, *The Nicomachean Ethics* IV.vii.8, 1127b, tr by H Rackham, (London: William Heinemann, 1926), 243.

¹⁹¹ *Nicomachean Ethics* IV.v, 1125b-1126b (pp 231-35 in tr). In discussing "lack of spirit", Aristotle suggests that people can be angry in the right way for the right reason at the right time. In discussing anger, he delineates four types of wrongly angry people: the "irascible" (οἱ οργίλοι), the "passionate" (οἱ ἀκρόχολοι), the "bitter-tempered" (οἱ πικροί) and the "harsh-tempered" (οἱ χολεποί).

¹⁹² *Nicomachean Ethics* IV.i, 1119b-1122a (pp 189-203 in tr). Earlier, he presents an advance summary of his topics, saying: "In regard to giving and getting money, the observance of the mean is Liberality [ἐλευθεριότητος]; the excess and deficiency are Prodigality and Meanness, and these exceed and fall short in opposite ways: the prodigal exceeds in giving and is deficient in getting, whereas the mean man exceeds in getting and is deficient in giving" (II.vii.4, 1107b, p 99 in tr). The topic of work is itself not the subject of lengthy treatment, though he remarks that those who inherit their wealth, unlike those who work for their money, tend to hang on to it longer, give to the right people freely and acquire it in the right way (IV.i.19-21, 1120b, pp 193-95 in tr). He relates thievery to treacherous greed (IV.i.43, 1122a, p 203 in tr).

¹⁹³ *Nicomachean Ethics* II.vii.11-13, 1108a (pp 102-05 in tr); IV.vi.1-viii.12, 1126b-1128b (pp 239-49 in tr).

of one's "moral purpose" (προαίρεσις).¹⁹⁴ The angry person is not under the influence of the moral purpose, while the victim of anger should not allow his or her moral purpose and interior being to be harmed by external factors.¹⁹⁵ Elsewhere he commends refraining from anger as pleasing to the gods, upholding the commonality of all people through considerate treatment. People should act "justly and graciously and fairly and restrainedly and decently."¹⁹⁶ He demeans "righteous anger" as a sign of over-attachment to the external environment. It exhibits an unfair response to wrongdoers who act out of ignorance; one should pity such people, rather than be angry with them. It also denotes an elevation of external attachments above one's "moral purpose."¹⁹⁷

Other topics of moral concern tend to be treated in similar fashion. Theft is wrong, but is also something done in ignorance, a false "sense-impression" or contradiction where the thief, thinking to gain one thing in fact has lost something even more important.¹⁹⁸ The use of appropriate and inappropriate forms of speech are likewise subsumed under the proper exercise of the "moral purpose."¹⁹⁹

Though not addressing giving to the needy, he does speak negatively of its

¹⁹⁴ "Moral purpose" is the translation of WA Oldfather throughout his two volume set, Epictetus, *The Discourses as Reported by Arrian, the Manual, and Fragments*, tr by WA Oldfather, (London: William Heinemann, 1926, 1928).

¹⁹⁵ *The Discourses* IV.v.1, II: 331: "The good and excellent man neither contends with anyone, nor, as far as he has the power, does he allow others to contend."

¹⁹⁶ *The Discourses* I.xiii (I: 99 in tr).

¹⁹⁷ *The Discourses* I.xviii.2-4, 11, 21, I: 121-27: ". . . why are we any longer angry with the multitude?--'They are thieves,' says someone, 'and robbers.'--What do you mean by 'thieves and robbers?' They have simply gone astray in questions of good and evil. Ought we, therefore to be angry with them, or rather pity them? Only show them their error and you will see how quickly they will desist from their mistakes. But if their eyes are not opened, they have nothing superior to their mere opinion. . . how is it that you have so suddenly been converted to wisdom that you are angry at fools? Why, then, are we angry? Because we admire the goods of which these men rob us. . . Who, then, is the invincible man? He whom nothing that is outside the sphere of his moral purpose can dismay."

¹⁹⁸ *The Discourses* I.xxix.21, I: 191-93: ". . . That is why I lost my lamp, because in the matter of keeping awake the thief was better than I was. However, he bought a lamp for a very high price; for a lamp he became a thief, for a lamp he became faithless, for a lamp he became bestial. This is what seemed to him to be profitable!" II.xxvi.2, I: 433: "For what does the thief wish to achieve? His own interest. Therefore, if thievery is against his interest, he is not doing what he wishes."

¹⁹⁹ *The Discourses* II.xxiii.15, I: 409: "But whether it is better to speak than to keep silence, and to do so in this way, or in that, and whether this is appropriate or not appropriate, and the proper occasion and utility of each action--what else tells us all this but the faculty of moral purpose?"

opposite, miserliness, while listing other evils that should be avoided.²⁰⁰ Lying is dealt with even less, though he refers to it negatively in an example of those who pursue philosophy for the development of mere intellectual prowess.²⁰¹

His discussion of friendship partly resembles Ephesians' concern with love. Epictetus comments on imitation of the gods. In the latter case, he considers the character of the gods as worthy of emulation.²⁰² In the former, he subsumes friendship beneath the topic of another improper use of the "moral purpose," self-interest.²⁰³ He also lauds gentleness, kindness and forgiveness in opposition to harshness as appropriate conduct in friendship.²⁰⁴

Dio Chrysostom also addresses many of these commonplaces. He makes a lengthy speech to the people of Alexandria, decrying their lack of decorum in public gatherings, especially in the ways they speak to one another when influenced by the frenzy of the moment.²⁰⁵ In another discourse he recounts the tale of a poor

²⁰⁰ *The Discourses* II.ix.12, I: 271: ". . . acts of the opposite character strengthen men of the opposite character; shamelessness strengthens the shameless man, faithlessness the faithless, abuse the abusive, wrath the wrathful, a disproportion between what he receives and what he pays out the miserly."

²⁰¹ *The Discourses* II.xvii.34 (I: 341 in tr). The example is Chrysippus' syllogism known as "the Liar": if a man known as a liar says that he is a liar, then is he telling the truth? Epictetus denounces those who merely want to understand such philosophy, rather than learn from it.

²⁰² *The Discourses* II.xiv.11-13, I: 309: "Next we must learn what the gods are like; for whatever their character is discovered to be, the man who is going to please and obey them must endeavour as best he can to resemble them. If the deity is faithful, he also must be faithful; if free, he also must be free; if beneficent [*ἐλεούμερον*], he also must be beneficent; if high-minded, he also must be high-minded, and so forth; therefore, in everything he says and does, he must act as an imitator of God."

²⁰³ *The Discourses* II.xii.15, 20, I: 397-99: "It is a general rule--be not deceived--that every living thing is to nothing so devoted as to its own interest. Whatever, then, appears to it to stand in the way of this interest, be it a brother, or father, or child, or loved one, or lover, the being hates, accuses, and curses it. . . If, therefore, I am where my moral purpose is, then, and then only, will I be the friend and son and the father that I should be. For then this will be my interest--to keep my good faith, my self-respect, my forbearance, my abstinence, and my co-operation, and to maintain my relations with other men."

²⁰⁴ *The Discourses* II.xxii.34-6, I: 403-05: "So let every one of you who is eager to be a friend to somebody himself, or to get somebody else for a friend, eradicate these judgements, hate them, banish them from his own soul. When this is done, first of all, he will not be reviling himself, fighting with himself, repenting, tormenting himself; and, in the second place, in relation to his comrade, he will be always straightforward to one who is like him himself, while to one who is unlike he will be tolerant, gentle, kindly, forgiving, as to one who is ignorant or is making a mistake in things of the greatest importance; he will not be harsh with anybody, because he knows well the saying of Plato, that 'every soul is unwillingly deprived of the truth.'"

²⁰⁵ *Dio Chrysostom* Discourse 32, tr by JW Cohoon and HL Crosby, (London: William Heinemann, 1940), IV: 172-271. Among the many interesting statements worth comparing with concerns found in Ephesians are 32.37, IV: 207 in tr: ". . . when we praise human beings, it should be for their good discipline, gentleness, concord, civic order, for heeding those who give good counsel, and for not being always in search of pleasures;" and 32.67, IV: 237-39 in tr: ". . . I want to tell you something that

but industrious country-dweller who assisted any needy person who came his way. He contrasts this with the stinginess of more wealthy people, and then discusses appropriate occupations that would help urban poor people develop good character and promote righteousness within their city.²⁰⁶

The most wide-ranging statements on ideal moral behaviour appear in his discourses on kingship. In his first discourse he follows Homer's model of the ideal king who is to serve for the welfare of his people, listing together a number of negative attributes to be avoided, including anger. He upholds the value of truthfulness, as well as the heinousness of lying. The king must be fond of toil, a conferrer of benefits, "gentle and kindly," an emulator of Zeus and a dispenser of wealth, rather than poverty and want.²⁰⁷ Similar standards are present in his second discourse on kingship, where he recounts a fictitious interaction between Alexander and his father, King Philip. Here he also lists together a number of good and bad attributes, including "insatiate of wealth," "implacable in anger," "keen for slander" and "regarding no man as a friend" as unworthy of a king, and kindness, humaneness and helpfulness to the weak as among the admirable qualities.²⁰⁸ He

happened at Sparta, how the people of that land behaved toward a harpist who was much in vogue among the Greeks in those days. Just because this harpist had the reputation of being very charming and unusual, they did not, by Zeus, honour him, but instead they took his harp from him, cut away the strings, and ordered him to leave their city. Such, you see, were the misgivings the Spartans entertained regarding his calling and such the care they took of their ears, lest their hearing be corrupted or become more fastidious than was fitting; but you have been thus ignominiously enslaved by that kind of pleasure."

²⁰⁶ Discourse 7, the "Euobean," tr by JW Cohoon, (London: William Heinemann: 1932), I: 287-373.

²⁰⁷ Discourse 1.13, I: 9: anger is mentioned with licentiousness, lawlessness and lusts; 1.21, I: 13: the king should be fond of toil; 1.23, I: 15: the king should confer benefits; 1.26, I: 15: "He holds that sincerity and truthfulness are qualities befitting a king and a prudent man, while unscrupulousness and deceit are for the fool and the slave. . . ;" also, on the same subject, see 1.33, I: 19; 1.34, I: 19: "What can give greater pleasure than a gentle and kindly ruler who desires to serve all and has it in his power so to do?"; 1.37-41, I: 21-23: the king should emulate Zeus, dispensing wealth.

²⁰⁸ Discourse 2.75-77, I: 99-101: "If any man proves himself a violent, unjust and lawless ruler, visiting his strength, not upon the enemy, but upon his subjects and friends; if he is insatiate of pleasures, insatiate of wealth, quick to suspect, implacable in anger, keen for slander, deaf to reason, knavish, treacherous, degraded, wilful, exalting the wicked, envious of his superiors, too stupid for education, regarding no man as friend nor having one, as though such a possession were beneath him-- such a one Zeus thrusts aside and deposes as unworthy to be king or to participate in his own honour and titles, putting upon him shame and derision. . . But the brave and humane king, who is kindly towards his subjects and, while honouring virtue and striving that he shall not be esteemed as inferior to any good man therein, yet forces the unrighteous to mend their ways and lends a helping hand to the weak--such a king Zeus admires for his virtue and, as a rule, brings to old age. . ."

comments about inappropriate kinds of speech to which a king should not listen.²⁰⁹ In a third discourse, he remarks briefly on the evils of lying²¹⁰ and the merits of toil.²¹¹

Though cursory, this survey has highlighted the commonness of the kind of behaviour advocated in Ephesians 4:25-5:2. Much of this is organized around philosophical principles, such as Aristotle's concern with "the mean" or Epictetus' with the preservation of the "moral purpose." Also, much of this material contains in-depth discussions of these behavioural issues, in contrast to the sententious presentation of Ephesians. Nevertheless, most of the exhortations found in Eph 4:25-5:2 urge forms of behaviour similar to those also advocated by various Classical and Hellenistic philosophers.

4.3 Conclusions

Affinities between moral behaviour advocated in Hellenism and that advocated in Hellenistic Judaism have long been recognized.²¹² The same is also true of affinities between Pauline literature and the Hellenistic world.²¹³ In Hellenistic Judaism the "common ethic" could often be emphasized so as to make

²⁰⁹ Discourse 2.55-56, I: 85-87: ". . . he should pay no heed to other people either when they play the flute or the harp, or sing wanton and voluptuous songs; nor should he tolerate the mischievous craze for filthy language that has come into vogue for the delight of fools; nay, he should cast out all such things and banish them to the uttermost distance from his own soul, first and foremost, and then from the capital of his kingdom--I mean such things as ribald jests and those who compose them. . ."

²¹⁰ Discourse 3.19, I: 113: ". . . but for downright folly the flatterer outdoes all, since he is the only perverter of the truth who has the hardihood to tell his lies to the very persons who know best that he is lying."

²¹¹ Discourse 3.123-27, I: 159: "His pleasures he increases by toil, and thereby gets more enjoyment out of them, while habit lightens his toil. To him 'useful' and 'pleasurable' are interchangeable terms; for he sees that plain citizens, if they are to keep well and reach old age, never give nourishment to an idle and inactive body, but that a part of them work first at trades. . . But the ruler differs from all these in that his toil is not in vain, and that he is not simply developing his body, but has the accomplishment of things as his end and aim."

²¹² For a useful survey of this, see J Collins, *Between Athens and Jerusalem*, (New York: Crossroad, 1986), 137-174. With regard to the existence of a "common ethic," Collins observes those behavioural points found both in Hellenistic-Jewish writings and Hellenism. Though some of these are not necessarily found in the LXX (e.g. abortion), many Jewish writings of this sort virtually excluded those issues that were uniquely Jewish (e.g. dietary laws, celebrations, sacrifices etc.), while concentrating on those issues clearly prohibited by the Law and at the same time acknowledged to be evil within Hellenism so as to gain a "sympathetic hearing" (p 142) from the gentiles.

²¹³ See, e.g. VP Furnish, *Theology and Ethics in Paul*, (Nashville: Abingdon, 1968), 44-51, 81-92; AJ Malherbe, "Paul: Hellenistic Philosopher or Christian Pastor?" in *Paul and the Popular Philosophers*, (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990), 67-77; AJ Malherbe, *Social Aspects of Early Christianity*, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983); JP Sampley, *Walking Between the Times*, (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991), 93-98.

Judaism more palatable to gentiles. However, there is no evidence of this sort of apologetic mechanism in Ephesians. The writer of Ephesians in fact goes out of his way to urge his gentile readers to shun their former way of life. If Ephesians promotes a kind of behaviour that, though at home within Judaism, upholds certain ideals that can be found in Hellenism, what is so distinctive about the emphasis of Ephesians' moral teaching?

In the last chapter it was pointed out that the fact that the philosophers advocated similar kinds of material behaviours does not necessarily indicate that this reflected the attitudes of the general public, especially since philosophers and their followers probably represented a minority of the overall population. Also, the fact that these same topics needed to be addressed probably indicates that people may not have consistently lived according to the ideal behaviour.

But further, one must note that the advocacy of similar outward behaviour does not necessitate a similar outlook on morality.²¹⁴ What is to go on in the hearts and minds of people is also an important factor regulating morality. Both the arrangement of the material in Eph 4:25-5:2 and the appearance of several characteristically Christian comments indicate how the writer is concerned with much more than conformity to some sort of external behavioural standard. These factors will be analysed in light of the social science model developed in the previous chapter.

5 Eph 4:25-5:2 and World-Accommodation

In the last chapter the exclusivity implied by rejection of aspects of the dominant society was evaluated against the apparent acceptance of standards from that same society. The combination of Roy Wallis' world-orientation scheme with Richard Münch's systems theory provided a useful model to help explain what seemed to be a contradiction: though gentiles were told no longer to live as gentiles the writer appealed to standards with which some gentiles would have agreed. Through the model, the writer of Ephesians was observed adopting a world-accommodation stance that combined selective rejection of the social/cultural system with an adaptation of elements from the community and social systems. What the writer believed to be wrong values, derived in part from a failure to recognize God, were demeaned. Correct values, which enhanced the religious

²¹⁴ W Schrage, *The Ethics of the New Testament*, tr by DE Green, (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1988), 199, notes that the motivations presented for doing a behaviour can make that behaviour distinctive.

performance of the readers, were promoted.

The nature of the connections between Eph 4:25-5:2 and 4:17-24 suggests that the same model would be valuably applied to the verses at hand as well. The two sections are linked in at least two ways. First, the moral exhortations elaborate specific behaviours appropriate to the new humanity that lives in the holiness and truth derived from the gospel (4:24). Second, the exhortation to live a life of love (5:2) stands in antithesis to the exhortation in 4:17 to live no longer as gentiles. The exhortation in 5:2 encapsulates in exalted fashion some of the concrete concerns presented in the preceding exhortations of 4:25-32. Though Eph 4:25-5:2 drops the equation of unrighteousness with conformity to specifically gentile standards, the basic continuity between this passage and 4:17-24 warrants further, but brief, application of the social model to these verses as well.

Eph 4:28 mentions positively the institution of work. Whatever forms this institution took for the writer and his original readers, reference to this in an ethical injunction further illustrates the writer's accommodation stance. Work belongs to the economic system. The writer does not commend it for the accumulation of wealth but as an antithesis to the social evil of theft on the one hand and a promoter of financial care for the needy on the other.

Additionally, it has just been seen in the last section that Eph 4:25-5:2 promotes basic moral commonplaces. The moral teaching found in Eph 4:25-5:2 does not appear to promote anything different from the moral thought of the prevailing culture of that time.²¹⁵

Some have identified in Eph 4:25-5:2 a number of ethical motives:²¹⁶ 4:25 ". . . for we are members one of another;"²¹⁷ 4:27 ". . . give no opportunity to the devil;" 4:28 ". . . so that he may be able to give to those in need;" 4:29 ". . . that it may impart grace to those who hear;" 4:30 ". . . do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God;" 4:32 ". . . as God in Christ forgave you;" 5:1 ". . . as Christ loved us and gave

²¹⁵ See R MacMullen, "What Difference Did Christianity Make?" *Historia* 35 (1986): 322-43. Though referring to a later time-period, he observes that Christian and non-Christian philosophical morals were often parallel, while socially, Christianity seems to have had little wide-spread impact. One must note, however, that many of his examples discuss laws and business practices, which come from the political and economic spheres, aspects of which Ephesians shows at least a partially passive acceptance (4:28; 5:21-6:9) in promoting religious piety among its readers.

²¹⁶ See especially Barth, *Ephesians 4-6*, 525-26, 545-47; Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 293-94; Schnackenburg, *Der Brief an die Epheser*, 207-09.

²¹⁷ This and the remaining quotations in this sentence are from the RSV.

himself up for us." Each of these pertains to a religious outlook.

V 27 refers to a power that formerly had control over the readers' pre-faith lives, a power that should no longer influence them now that they belong to God. V 30 refers to grieving God's Spirit who establishes the readers' conversion. By inference, the readers' lives should please God's Spirit. The motivations in vv 25, 28 and 29 are often referred to as evidence of the writer's community concern.²¹⁸ This concern is expressed in ultimate terms by the exhortation to live a life of love (5:2).²¹⁹

The community concern, however, is also expressive of dedication and devotion to God. Both God (4:32, 5:1) and Christ (5:2) are presented as models for the readers to emulate. Christ is a model, not simply because of his concern for other people, but because his death is ". . . a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God" (5:2, RSV). This is unmistakably the language of religious devotion.²²⁰ Christ's love for people also demonstrated his dedication to God. Likewise, the readers' love expressed through community concern evinces their piety.

In the language of the world-accommodation model, the moral teaching is to be pursued for the sake of religious virtuosity. Certain social institutions such as work are accepted passively, being appealed to as means to enhance religious performance. Moral teaching is not given here for its own sake, but as indication of proper religious behaviour.²²¹ It differs from the commonplaces found especially

²¹⁸ Barth, *Ephesians 4-6*, 546: "According to this passage, all ethics are social;" Caird, *Paul's Letters from Prison*, 81-82; Mußner, *Der Brief an die Epheser*, 138-40; Schlier, *Der Brief an die Epheser*, 224-26; Schnackenburg, *Der Brief an die Epheser*, 208. Masson, *L'Épître de Saint Paul aux Éphésiens*, 206, states that all of the sins denounced in 4:25-5:2 are those that harm one's neighbour or disturb community solidarity.

²¹⁹ Schlier, *Der Brief an die Epheser*, 223, explicitly recognizes the exhortations in 4:25-5:2 as predominantly addressing the issue of Christian love: ". . . Mahnungen, die vorwiegend unter dem Gesichtspunkt der ἀγάπη stehen." Barth, *Ephesians 4-6*, 559-60: "Although large portions of Eph 4:25 ff. were dominated by social motivations, in 4:32, 5:1-2 theological and soteriological arguments express the core of Pauline ethics."

²²⁰ Nearly all commentators recognize the language of the latter part of 5:2 as the language of Jewish liturgical sacrifice. Barth, *Ephesians 4-6*, 558-60; Bruce, *The Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians*, 368-69; Caird, *Paul's Letters from Prison*, 83; Gnilka, *Der Epheserbrief*, 245-46; Houlden, *Paul's Letters from Prison*, 323; Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 312; Mitton, *Ephesians*, 176; Mußner, *Der Brief an die Epheser*, 142; Robinson, *St. Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians*, 196; Schlier, *Der Brief an die Epheser*, 232; Schnackenburg, *Der Brief an die Epheser*, 217.

²²¹ Stark and Bainbridge, *The Future of Religion*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), 3, remark that most sociologists understand religion as "posit[ing] the existence of the supernatural." PL Berger, *The Social Reality of Religion*, (London: Faber and Faber, 1969), 26, expands this to include "objectifications of human culture" that are elevated to the level of the sacred. In either case, religion regarded in this way differs drastically from moralism, which may have connections with a religion (e.g.

in Hellenism precisely at this point.²²² It presents examples of the holiness and righteousness that come from the truth of the gospel, the same truth that is "in Jesus" (4:21).

The passage provides more evidence of accommodation, both in the economic and social/cultural spheres. The writer does not overtly borrow from any extra-biblical sources, let alone from Hellenism. The only direct quotations from any work come from the LXX in Eph 4:25 and 4:26. But in prescribing such moral conduct, the writer does not make strange demands. He applies standards that his readers would have recognized as reasonable to the actual practice of their faith in Christ. The readers, God's "workmanship created in Christ Jesus for good works," are told about some of the good works that "God prepared beforehand" for them to perform (2:10). The quality of their piety as a believing community hinges on their adherence to these kinds of works.

6 Conclusions on Eph 4:25-5:2

The writer gives details of the sort of behaviour that should distinguish his readers from the surrounding world. These details are eventually subsumed beneath the exhortation to live a life of love, patterned after God's own love. They stand as the antithesis to the general godlessness of gentile society (4:17) in much the same way that in 2:10 the righteous activity of God's workmanship contrasts with the unrighteousness of the unconverted (2:1-3). They are generally in line with material found in Paul's undisputed writings, as well as in Colossians, both in moral detail and in the emphasis on love.

They also correspond with material found in a wide range of groups throughout the Graeco-Roman world, both Hellenistic and Jewish. In Eph 4:25-5:2 the writer does not emphasize the uniqueness of his teaching. He primarily wants his readers to serve God righteously. As his readers live a life of love, they demonstrate their devotion to God. They behave like converted people, walking worthily of the calling to which they have been called.

Plutarch was a priest to Apollo at Delphi) but which has a life of its own in its concentration on human effort and reason.

²²² Again, Schrage's point that motives are intimately bound up as a part of ethics must be emphasized here. Schrage, *The Ethics of the New Testament*, 199.

Chapter 4

1 Eph 5:3-14 - Exegetical and Behavioural Issues

Eph 5:3 begins a new rhetorical presentation.¹ Both 4:25-5:2 and 5:3-14 display a community concern. Both also employ moral dualism. But 4:25-5:2 contrasts destructiveness with helpfulness toward others in the community, while 5:3-14 opposes impropriety with propriety. The moral teaching in 4:25-5:2 relates to the concept of living a life of love (5:2). The teaching in 5:3-14 relates to living in moral light rather than darkness (5:8).

While it is sometimes thought that this section at its heart is concerned with church discipline,² it will be seen that the thrust of the argumentation is instructive, not corrective. The writer is concerned that his readers' behaviour exhibit the orientation to Christ demanded by their conversion. He neither censures his readers for engaging in moral improprieties themselves, nor suggests how wayward fellow-believers should be corrected. Instead, he urges them to stay as far away as possible from such activity.

The argument in 5:3-14 falls into two groups: vv 3-5 and vv 6-14. The first is primarily negative, referring to sinfulness to be avoided. The second is primarily positive, building to principles that enable the readers to know what is proper behaviour.

1.1 5:3-5 - Sinfulness to Be Avoided

In 4:19 the writer had listed three spheres of sinfulness that for him typified gentile sinfulness: "licentiousness," "every kind of uncleanness," and greed.³ From the negative view of what his readers should not be, he progressed to a positive picture of what they should be. In 5:3 he returns to the same negative picture,

¹ Some commentators think otherwise. See M Barth, *Ephesians 4-6*, (New York: Doubleday, 1974), 585; Gnilka, *Der Epheserbrief*, (Freiburg: Herder, 1971), 242-43; also F Mußner, *Der Brief an die Epheser*, (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus Mohn, 1982), 142.

² See Barth, *Ephesians 4-6*, 492-598; R Alan Culpepper, "Ethical Dualism and Church Discipline. Ephesians 4:25-5:20," *Review and Expositor* 76 (1979): 533-39; NA Dahl, "Der Epheserbrief und der verlorene erste Brief des Paulus and [sic] die Korinther," in *Abraham unser Vater*, ed by O Betz, M Hengel, P Schmidt, (Leiden: EJ Brill, 1963), 68-70 (though not stated overtly, Dahl's assertion works only if the Pauline teaching can be construed to refer to sinning brothers); Gnilka, *Der Epheserbrief*, 256-263; KG Kuhn, "The Epistle to the Ephesians in the Light of the Qumran Texts," in *Paul and the Dead Sea Scrolls*, ed by J Murphy O'Connor and JH Charlesworth, (New York: Crossroad, 1990), 129-131. These all generally regard the writer of Ephesians' comments about improper activities as indicating that some people in the community were actually committing these deeds, requiring both the writer and the innocent among his readers to rescue them to preserve their inheritance in the kingdom.

³ ἀσελγεία, ἀκαθαρσία πᾶσα and πλεονεξία.

listing the same three spheres of sinfulness: "fornication," "all impurity" and "covetousness."⁴ These three kinds of behaviour contrast starkly with the Christ-like life of love that is pleasing to God (5:2).⁵ As archetypal gentile sins they are so terrible that they do not even merit mention in conversation.

When listing these, plus "filthiness," "silly talk" and "levity" in v 4, the writer goes beyond proscribing them.⁶ His primary exhortation is that these activities should not even be talked about.⁷ In some literary contexts, this sort of prohibition indicates a fear that discussion of a sin can eventually lead to its practice.⁸ Eph 5:3-14 lacks statements indicating the presence of this sort of logic.⁹ The writer's assumption is that talking about the practice¹⁰ of these kinds of evil deeds is itself

⁴ πορνεία, ἀκαθαρσία πᾶσα and πλεονεξία.

⁵ In this regard, the particle δέ is probably adversative. A Lincoln, *Ephesians*, (Dallas, TX: Word Books, 1990), 321; H Schlier, *Der Brief an die Epheser*, (Düsseldorf: Patmos-Verlag, 1957), 233; R Schnackenburg, *Der Brief an die Epheser*, (Zürich: Benziger Verlag, 1982), 222.

⁶ Contra Schlier, *Der Brief an die Epheser*, 233, who interprets the expression "not even be named" as a figure of speech used to underscore the prohibition of the actual behaviours.

⁷ . . . μηδὲ ὀνομαζέσθω ἐν ὑμῖν (" . . . must not even be named among you," RSV). Various writers suggest that the verb only governs the nouns mentioned in v 3; the nouns in v 4 appear as a brachyl_ogy that implies the predicate "there should be." TK Abbott, *The Epistle to the Ephesians and to the Colossians*, (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1897), 148; Gnlika, *Der Epheserbrief*, 246-47; HAW Meyer, *Critical and Exegetical Handbook to the Epistle to the Ephesians*, tr by MJ Evans, rev and ed by WP Dickson, (Winona Lake, IN: Alpha Publications, 1979 repr of 1884 ed), 496; Schnackenburg, *Der Brief an die Epheser*, 223. Barth, *Ephesians 4-6*, 561-62, and JA Robinson, *St. Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians*, (London: MacMillan, 1928), 116, consider the verb from v 3 to have a bearing on at least some of the nouns in v 4. Both Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 322, and Schlier, *Der Brief an die Epheser*, 233, argue for overt connections. The brachyl_ogy seems unlikely in an epistle loaded with pleonastic tendencies. Brachyl_ogies also tend to be drawn upon to supply apodoses and main clauses to conditions or purposes. See F Blass and A DeBrunner, *A Greek Grammar of the New Testament*, tr and ed by RW Funk, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961), 255-56, §483. Finally, the context indicates that the writer principally proscribes, not the committing of specific sins, but the association of believers with an unconverted life.

⁸ Most notable in this regard is the oft referred to statement of Herodotus that the Persians did not permit people to speak of prohibited activities (*Herod* I.138). See Abbott, *The Epistle to the Ephesians*, 148-49; Barth, *Ephesians 4-6*, 561; Meyer, *The Epistle to the Ephesians*, 491-92. Barth is extreme in suggesting a magical power to words so that even saying them would invoke the doing of the deeds indicated by them. He may be reflecting the influence of the same illegitimate totality transfer found in the article on "ὄνομα" in the *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, where power associated with a name is assumed to be present every time ὄνομα and related terms are used.

⁹ Several commentators do presume this to be present in Eph 5:3-14. Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 322; CL Mitton, *Ephesians*, (London: Marshall, Morgan & Scott, 1973), 178; Schnackenburg, *Der Brief an die Epheser*, 222-23; GHP Thompson, *The Letters of Paul to the Ephesians, to the Colossians and to Philemon*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967), 78.

¹⁰ The writer does not list fornication, impurity and covetousness as abstract concepts but as activities in which people actually engage. This becomes clear in v 5 when he shifts his list from activity to actor, listing the fornicator, the impure person and the one who is covetous. This observation clarifies his proscription. He is most concerned with people talking about the committing

a form of participation in them (5:7, 11).¹¹ Such talk is an indication of an orientation away from God and toward the godless world. Evil-doers belong to another realm, not to "the kingdom of Christ and of God" (5:5, RSV). They are subject to God's wrath (5:6). Believers must not let evil practices form the basis of their mutual interaction. Instead, they must be oriented to the sphere of God's activities where people respond to God's deeds by thanking him (5:4).

Also indicative of the writer's focus on the overall orientation of his readers' lives is his adaptation of the language of social convention to suit his moral purposes. Expressions such as "fitting" (πρέπει, v 3; ἀνῆκεν, v 4) and "shame" (αἰσχρὸς, v 12) are used not only to demark appropriateness from inappropriateness but to demark unrighteous from righteous behaviour; certain topics do not merit discussion among "saints." The verbal expressions "not even be named" (RSV, μηδὲ ὀνομαζέσθω, v 3) and "even to speak" (RSV, καὶ λέγειν, v 12), resemble conventions of politeness in conversation.¹² The writer of Ephesians uses them for moral prohibition.

The evil deeds that make unfit subjects of conversation deal primarily,¹³ but not exclusively, with sexual issues. The term "fornication" clearly refers to sexual

of these deeds, not with their mere mention in the way that he does in v 3.

¹¹ V 3 seems to contain a logical inconsistency: if the sins are not to be mentioned, the writer has violated his own exhortation by mentioning the unmentionable; Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 322. The prepositional phrase ἐν ὑμῖν ("among you"), however, seems to resolve the inconsistency. The writer is referring to conversation within the group about other people's sinful deeds, not to teaching about the sinfulness of certain activities. See FF Bruce, *The Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians*, (Grand Rapids: William B Eerdmans, 1984), 370, and GB Caird, *Paul's Letters from Prison*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976), 84.

¹² Note, e.g., Athenaeus, *The Deipnosophists* VI.240B, tr by CB Gulick, (London: William Heinemann, 1929), III: 81: "Antidotus, in the play entitled *Premier Danseur*, brings on the stage a character resembling the modern professors in the Claudian Institute, whom it is a disgrace even to mention [ὄν οὐδὲ μὲμνῆσθαι καλόν];" VI.256E, III: 155-57 in tr: ". . . and it is not even decent to say [οὐδὲ λέγειν καλόν] how they affected by their intercourse the princesses and other women of rank in Macedonia. . ."

¹³ Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 321-24.

immorality.¹⁴ As has already been seen in relation to 4:19, "all impurity" most likely has sexual impurity principally in view, but the adjective "all" indicates that impurities need not be restricted to sexual immorality alone. Likewise, though the term "covetousness" or greed often can have sexual implications, the writer's linking of covetousness with idolatry (v 5) indicates more breadth than restrictiveness in the kinds of sinful activities that should not be talked about.¹⁵

The three terms that appear in v 4 are all unusual. Not only are they hapax legomena, the first two are generally rare in the wider Greek corpus. The term αἰσχροτής (RSV, "filthiness") can have moral implications associated with it,¹⁶ the term μωρολογία (RSV, "silly talk") has none outside of Christian literature postdating Ephesians,¹⁷ while the term εὐτραπελία (RSV, "levity") sometimes, but not always, does.¹⁸

Some have argued that αἰσχροτής ("filthiness") in 5:4 and αἰσχρολογία

¹⁴ B Malina, "Does *Porneia* Mean Fornication?" *Novum Testamentum* 14 (1972): 10-17, argues that the term denotes "unlawful sexual conduct, or unlawful conduct in general," not "fornication" as sexual intercourse between unmarrieds. J Jensen, "Does *Porneia* Mean Fornication? A Critique of Bruce Malina," *Novum Testamentum* 20 (1978): 161-84, strongly refutes this, depicting "fornication" as part of the semantic range of πορνεία. This supports the overview of F Hauck and S Schulz, "πόρνη κτλ.," in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed by G Friedrich, tr by GW Bromiley, (Grand Rapids: William B Eerdmans, 1968), 6: 579-595. H Reisser, "πορνέω," in *New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*, tr and ed by C Brown, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1975), 1: 500: in Pauline writings, the term "denotes any kind of illegitimate sexual intercourse."

¹⁵ Robinson, *St. Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians*, 197: "It is clear that πλεονεξία has in the Apostle's mind some connexion with the class of sins which he twice sums up under the term ἀκαθαρσία πάσα: yet it is not included, as some have supposed, in this class."

¹⁶ According to a computer search in the *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae* for every occurrence of the characters " αἰσχροτ," there are only eight appearances of the noun αἰσχροτής in non-Christian literature prior to the fifth century CE, and only one of these, Plato, *Gorgias* 525A, clearly has moral nuances. The others all refer to physical ugliness: Aristotle *Divisiones Aristoteleae* 55, Athenaeus *Deipnophistae* 14.7 (617A) and fragment 3.2, 2.126, Herodianus Grammaticus et Rhetoricus 36.37 and 36.268, Plotinus 4.4.38 and Themistius Philosophus et Rhetoricus 39.5, 2.33.

¹⁷ A computer search in the *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae* for the characters " μωρολογ" yielded eight non-Christian uses of the noun μωρολογία and its adjective μωρολόγος prior to the third century CE: Antigonus Paradoxus, *Historiarum mirabilium collectio* 114C.1; Aristotle, *Historia Animalium* 492B, *Physiognomonica* 810B, *Fragmenta varia* 51.1.16.102; Josephus, *Against Apion* 2.115; Galen, *Quod animi mores corporis temperamenta sequantur* 27.4.797; Plutarch, *Moralia* 504B; Sextus Empiricus, *Adversus mathematicus* 1.174. Additionally, a further four uses of the verb μωρολογέω and the noun μωρολογία were also found: Athenaeus, *Deipnosophistae* 163D, 270E; Plutarch, *Moralia* 175C, 1037A, 1087A. None of these uses have moral nuances, concentrating instead on the relative intellectual validity of the spoken word.

¹⁸ PW van der Horst, "Is Wittiness Unchristian?" in *Miscellanea Neotestamentica*, ed by T Baard, AFJ Klijn, and WC van Unnik, (Leiden: EJ Brill, 1978), II: 163-77. Though he finds a number of uses of this term having negative connotations, only once (p 176) does he determine the possibility of a sexually moral nuance, where Aristotle (*Nicomachean Ethics* IV.8, 1128a) likens the difference between buffoonery and "wittiness" to that between obscenity and innuendo.

("obscenity") in Col 3:8 are equivalent, based on the appearance of other similarities between the two epistles.¹⁹ This is doubtful not only because the two terms are different but also because Eph 5:3-4 has adapted a number of terms from the language of politeness and social convention for moral purposes. Many NT uses of other αἰσχ- derivatives refer to issues of cultural honour or embarrassment.²⁰ When morality is clearly discussed, illicit financial gain,²¹ deception²² and perhaps general immorality²³ also come into view.²⁴ The term αἰσχρότης may have had the same plasticity as the English term "disgracefulness," which itself can refer to anything from physical appearance to embarrassing deeds to a euphemism for that which is morally outrageous. This may refer here to sexual deviance, given the appearance of πορνεία in the previous verse, but not necessarily. The writer is prohibiting conversation about anything that is morally disgraceful.

Though appearing relatively infrequently, "silly talk" is never a complimentary

¹⁹ E.g. Barth, *Ephesians 4-6*, 561; Schnackenburg, *Der Brief an die Epheser*, 223.

²⁰ The issue of cultural honour and embarrassment is discussed in the last section of this chapter. According to B Malina, *The New Testament World. Insights from Cultural Anthropology*, (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1981), 25-50, and B Malina and J Neyrey, "Honor and Shame in Luke-Acts: Pivotal Values of the Mediterranean World," in *The Social World of Luke-Acts*, ed by J Neyrey, (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1991), 25-65, people in a "shame culture" avoid at all costs public exposure for not living up to any cultural standard, whether moral or amoral. As the final section of this chapter will attempt to show, the import of "shamefulness" in Eph 5:4 is more concerned with God's approval rather than that of other human beings (Eph 5:5, 6, 8, 10).

²¹ This appears with the term αἰσχροκερδής ("fond of dishonest gain" or "greedy for money") in 1 Tim 3:8, Titus 1:7 and 1 Pet 5:2. See W Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, tr by WF Arndt and FW Gingrich, rev by FW Gingrich and FW Danker, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979), 25. Titus 1:11 uses αἰσχροῦ κέρδους the same way.

²² 2 Cor 4:2 - "disgraceful, underhanded ways" (RSV, τὰ κροπὰ τῆς αἰσχύνης).

²³ In Phil 3:19 Paul refers to those who "glory in shame" as those who are also doomed to destruction and "whose god is their belly." This may refer to libertines, but it may also be a hyperbole to say that those who are not pursuing God's way of righteousness are, in effect, glorying in shameful things - i.e. worldly attachments that do not necessarily have moral implications. See the discussion in JL Houlden, *Paul's Letter from Prison*, (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1977), 103-05.

²⁴ The LXX uses the αἰσχ- family to refer to deeds that produce shame, or embarrassment, rather than deeds that themselves are morally shameful. In addition to this, Greek versions of OT Pseudepigrapha refer not only to sexual immorality (*Pseudo-Phoc* 189 - "shameful ways of intercourse [αἰχοντοῖς λεχέσιν];" *Sib Or* 3.186 - "Male will have intercourse with male and they will set up boys in houses of ill-fame [αἰσχροῖς];" *Sib Or* 4.33 - "disgraceful desire [πόθον αἰσχροῦ] for another's spouse") but also to general sinfulness (*Pseudo-Phoc* 76 "Practice self-restraint, and abstain from shameful deeds [αἰσχροῦν δ' ἔργων]."). The term αἰσχροκερδία ("sordid gain") also appears once (*T Jud* 16.1). Translations come from *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, ed by JH Charlesworth. Also see the useful discussion by H-G Link, "αἰσχύνη," in *New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*, 1: 562-564.

attribution. The term always refers to words that are uninformed, unintelligent or purposeless. Which of the three nuances prevails depends on the context. Sextus Empiricus, for example, labels grammatical explanations as *μωρολογία* because they are purposeless, being too well informed.²⁵ Josephus demeaningly accuses Apion of writing *μωρολογία* that are harmfully false statements.²⁶ In attributing this characteristic to animals, Aristotle refers to dull, repetitive, contentless noise.²⁷ Plutarch considers foolish talk to be an insulting attribution, the hallmark of drunkenness as well as of illogical chatter.²⁸ Athenaeus refers to idle, uninformed discourse.²⁹ The writer of Ephesians, in urging his readers not to mention "silly talk," probably refers to purposeless conversation. He passes judgement on its usefulness by calling it foolish. Placing the term in a list of immoral activities, the writer probably implies discourse about any sort of sinful activity.

A similar conclusion can be inferred from the appearance of the word *εὐτραπέλεια* ("levity," RSV). The term itself is morally neutral, sometimes used positively and sometimes negatively.³⁰ "Levity" or "wittiness" is a good translation.

²⁵ "Against the Professors" I.174, in *Sextus Empiricus*, tr by RG Bury, (London: William Heinemann, 1949), IV: 105: ". . . what is the use of the long, vain and stupid disputation about these points which is carried on by the Grammarians?"

²⁶ Josephus, *Against Apion* II.115, tr by H SJ Thackeray, (London: William Heinemann, 1924), II: 339: "May we not, on our side, suggest that Apion is overloading the pack-ass, that is to say himself, with a crushing pack of nonsense [*μωρολογία*] and lies? He writes of places which do not exist, and shifts the position on the map of cities of which he knows nothing. . ."

²⁷ Aristotle, "Historia Animalium" 429b, tr by AL Peck, (London: William Heinemann, 1965), I: 45: "large, projecting ears are a sign of senseless talk and chatter." This seems to have been quoted by Antigonus Paradoxus, 114C. Aristotle, "Physiognomics" 810B, tr by WS Hett, (London: William Heinemann, 1936), 117: "Those who have a swollen appearance in the flanks, as though they were blown out, are talkative and babblers; witness the frogs."

²⁸ Plutarch, "Concerning Talkativeness" 504B, in *Plutarch's Moralia*, tr by WC Helmbold, (London: William Heinemann, 1939), VI: 407: ". . . thus drinking is not blamed if silence attends the drinking, but it is foolish talk which converts the influence of wine into drunkenness;" 175D, III (1931): 29-31 in tr: "Muddlehead you are, Dionysius," he replied, 'No! Monarch I am to be,' and after he had addressed the people he was at once chosen general by the Syracusans;" 1087A, tr by B Einarson and PH De Lacy, 1937, XIV: 19: "Homer's idiocies;" 1037A tr by H Chreniss, 1926, XIII: 445: ". . . it talks nonsense and is idle chatter."

²⁹ Athenaeus, *The Deipnosophists* IV.163D, tr by CB Gulick, (London: William Heinemann, 1928), II: 243: ". . . every fish loves human flesh if it can but get it. Wherefore it is the simple duty of all who talk such foolishness to betake themselves to vegetables, . . ." VI.270E-F, III (1929): 217: "With these words he [Cynulcus] made as if to get up and depart; but as he turned he saw a quantity of fish and all sorts of other dressed dainties rolling in, and punching the cushion with his fist he bawled 'Be of good courage, poverty mine, and endure when men talk foolishness; for a multitude of dainties overpowers thee, as well as joyless hunger.'"

³⁰ Van der Horst, "Is Wittiness Unchristian?" 173, identifies the term as a "*vox media*." Among the many texts he cites, examples of positive connotations appear in Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*

It is not a technical term for "dirty joke" and would be inappropriately translated as such.³¹ However, appearing as it does in a list of sinful activities that are not to be talked about, it probably is restricted to quick-witted quips that make light of moral improprieties.³²

As troublesome as it may be to imagine what sort of specific activity the writer asks his original readers not to discuss, the kind of talk he envisages may actually appear in recorded dinner-time conversations found in such writers as Athenaeus, Plato, Plutarch and Xenophon. The second century CE writer Athenaeus, for example, records a lengthy discussion about "parasites" that, in its course, covers a whole range of anecdotes about questionable characters and their sayings.³³ Among the many witty comments, he registers the following:

Once, in the presence of Lark, who had the reputation of being a prostitute, the conversation turned on the high price of thrushes, and Philoxenus the Ham-cleaver said, 'Yes, but I can remember when the lark cost only a penny.'³⁴

Is this an example of talking about immoral εὐτραπέλεια? The term is not used

IV.8, 1127B-1128B or Plato, *Resp VIII*, 536A, while negative examples appear in Dio Chrysostom, Discourse 56.19 or Plutarch, *Cic V.4*.

³¹ Van der Horst, "Is Wittiness Unchristian?" 175, concludes that "dirty jokes" is not a necessary translation, especially since "from the twenty jokes of an εὐτράπελος which are told on the ancient book of jests *Philogelos* (with jokes from the second to the fifth century A.D.), not a single one is really obscene." This conclusion is basically corroborated by further references found in a computer search of the characters "εὐτραπέλ" within the *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae*. However, immorality, not obscenity is really the issue in Eph 5:4. In the five samples of jokes he cites from the *Philogelos*, two could be considered offensive to a person with high moral sensitivity, one of which makes a pun about flatulence and the other of which works off a double meaning of the term κόρη, which can mean both "maiden" and "pupil." An additional joke highlights the quick-wittedness of a thief who has been caught with a stolen pig, while the remaining two contain barbs aimed at a sloppy teacher and a garrulous barber. Though amusing examples of quick-wittedness, these quips contain humour directed either at someone else's shortcomings or at moral standards.

³² If Van der Horst, "Is Wittiness Unchristian?" were actually to answer his question, it might be with "maybe." I would answer it, "sometimes." The term εὐτραπέλεια is not the sole criterion for determining this. The term should properly be regarded as an extended subject of μηδὲ ὀνομαζέσθω. His prohibition is against reporting on levity. He leaves the decision up to his readers as to what is funny and what is not. Humour is a notorious socio-cultural phenomenon. What one group considers funny, another may consider abhorrent. See discussions in Jakob Jónsson, *Humour and Irony in the New Testament*, (Leiden: EJ Brill, 1985), 16-34; and YT Radday, "On Missing the Humour in the Bible: An Introduction," in *On Humour and the Comic in the Hebrew Bible*, ed by YT Radday and A Brenner (Sheffield: Almond Press, 1990), 21-38. M Douglas, "Jokes," in *Implicit Meanings*, (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1975), 90-114, remarks how humour can be threatening because it purposely disregards barriers of social convention. It is not the threatening aspect that the writer of Ephesians addresses. He is not a twentieth century socio-ethnographer. However, he is concerned with the actual breaking of moral barriers, which is why he proscribes reporting on any kind of immorality, whether it appears in a foolish statement or a witticism.

³³ Athenaeus, *The Deipnosophists* VI.234-VI.262 (III: 86-179 in tr).

³⁴ Athenaeus, *The Deipnosophists* VI.241E (III: 87 in tr).

to describe this account, but this seems no different in character from other statements that are so described.³⁵ Still further, in this statement it is hard to distinguish between talk about *πορνεία*, about moral impurity or about moral shamefulness.

The same kind of ambiguity can be found in a lengthier passage from the same work:

The following are some of the smart sayings of Lark recorded by Lynceus. Once, when a courtesan whose name was Resolve was at a symposium with Lark, the wine gave out, and he told each guest to contribute twopence, whereas Resolve should transmit whatever was voted by the people. The harp-player Polyctor was once greedily drinking [*ῥοφοῦντος*] some lentil soup, and hit his tooth on a stone. 'You poor fool,' said Lark, 'even the lentil soup throws things at you.' (Perhaps Polyctor is the man referred to by Machon when he says: 'A very bad harp-singer, it appears was about to repair his house, and asked his friend for some stones. "I will pay them back to you in much greater number," he said, "after the performance."') Cum narraret aliquis Corydo uxoris suae non nunquam cervicem et mammas et umbilicum (*omphalon*) se osculari, 'at hoc quidem,' inquit ille, 'iam flagitiosum; nam et Hercules ab Omphale ad Heben transiit.'³⁶ Once a delicious *vol-au-vent* was passed around at Ptolemy's table, but always gave out at his place. He said, 'Ptolemy, am I drunk, or do I imagine that I am seeing things go round me?' And when the parasite Chaerephon said that he could not take wine, he remarked, 'You mean you can't take what is mixed with the wine.' And when Chaerephon arose at a dinner stark naked he said, 'Chaerephon, you are like an oil-jug; I can see how far you are full. . . Of the parasite who was kept by the old woman, Pausimachus used to say that he suffered the opposite of what the old lady did when he was with her; for it was he who always had a bellyful. Concerning him Machon also writes as follows: 'They say, too, that Moschion, who goes by the name of Teetotaler, once saw in the Lyceum in company with certain persons a parasite who was kept by a rich old woman (and he cried out): You there! what's your name, you're carrying on an incredible affair, because the old woman causes *you* always to have a bellyful.' And the same Moschion, hearing of a parasite who was kept by an old woman, that he went to see her every day (said): 'To-day, as the saying is, all kinds of things can happen; for whereas the old woman cannot conceive, this man here gets a bellyful every day.'³⁷

This passage is quoted at length to show the extent to which various topics were

³⁵ Compare Josephus' account of the wit (*εὐτραπείλια*) of Hyrcannus, whose friends played a trick on him by piling their gnawed bones before him at mealtime, leaving their own places empty: ". . . dogs eat the bones together with the meat, as these men do. . . but men eat the meat and throw the bones away, which is just what I, being a man, have now done." Cited in PW van der Horst, "Is Wittiness Unchristian?" 171. Athenaeus, *The Deipnosophists* VIII.350D-352D (IV (1930): 87-97 in tr), lists a number of sayings attributed to Stratonicus, also summarizing them as *εὐτραπέλοι λόγοι* (VIII.352C). They too evince the same character of short, sharp, humorous statements. E.g. "This is no city; it is a pity" (VIII.352A, IV: 93 in tr); "When Telaphanes, who was lying on the couch beside him, began to blow his flute, Stroncius said, 'Get up, as belchers should!'" (VIII.351E, IV: 93). The account on Stratonicus concludes: "In fact they say that his outspoken jesting cost him his life at the hands of Nococles, king of Cyprus; he was compelled to drink poison for poking fun at the king's sons" (VIII.D, IV: 97 in tr).

³⁶ I translate: When someone once told Lark that he himself sometimes kissed his wife starting first with her neck, then her breasts and then her navel, he responded, "This indeed is most disgraceful, for even Hercules moved from Omphale [a queen he served while dressed in women's clothing] to Hebe [his wife]." This vulgar pun draws on double meanings for the Greek terms *ὀμφαλός* ("navel") and *ἦβη* ("the pubes").

³⁷ Athenaeus, *The Deipnosophists* VI.245D-246A (III: 105-07 in tr).

said to have been discussed on at least one occasion in antiquity. A bit of each of the topics of conversation prohibited by Ephesians appears here, though in some statements one could hardly distinguish between silly-talk, witticism, fornication, impurity, greed and shamefulness.

Of the six items enumerated in the lists of Eph 5:3-4, only two refer to specific kinds of moral activities: fornication and greed. The other four, "every uncleanness," "shamefulness," "silly talk" and "levity" are relative terms. To have any common appeal, there must be a general agreement as to what actually is impure, shameful, silly or light. Ultimately, it is unimportant to the writer's outlook whether a specific activity can be narrowed to shamefulness, impurity, foolish talk or levity. He is listing items that indicate a general quality of immorality that the readers must evaluate for themselves, not to see how close they can come without sinning, but with which to avoid association entirely. They should instead champion God-oriented activities such as thanksgiving. The deeds are not to be mentioned because they do not belong to the lifestyle of the converted. Those who do them have no "inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God" (5:5, RSV).³⁸

1.2 Proper Behaviour

V 6 does not offer a sharp break with the writer's negative presentation. He refers back to his list of sinful activities as he shifts his train of thought. He says that on account of "these things. . . the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience" (5:6, RSV).³⁹ As performers of abhorrent deeds, "sons of disobedience" are negative examples for his readers; they ought not to "associate with them" (5:7, RSV). Though as unconverted people they had once been one with them, they now are "light in the Lord" (5:8, RSV). They are to "walk as children of light" (5:8, RSV).

³⁸ The enigmatic, double expression "of Christ and of God" in reference to "the kingdom" is explained in several different ways. Schnackenburg, *Der Brief an die Epheser*, 225, suggests that the kingdom of Christ refers to the present kingdom, while the kingdom of God is yet future, based on 1 Cor 15:25-28. Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 325, refutes this, saying that "there is here an identity of the two kingdoms in terms of their time and their nature." Since Eph 5:5 is a simple, unelaborated statement, one ought to be cautious about deriving any kind of theological or Christological import from it. The dual mention of "Christ" and "God" probably occurs for emphasis, as the writer underscores the despicable nature of the deeds he castigates.

³⁹ The verse actually begins: "Let no one deceive you with empty words." This may indicate that someone may have been trying to dissuade the readers from practising the kind of righteousness advocated by the writer.

Light and darkness commonly depict a variety of dualities.⁴⁰ Ephesians uses the imagery to express a duality already found earlier in the epistle: new versus old orientation to living. The new orientation is directed toward God, living worthily of his salvation;⁴¹ the old orientation is described in various ways: subjection to evil powers (2:1-3), living as gentiles (4:17), conforming to the old humanity (4:22).

Though the writer identifies his converted readership as "light in the Lord" who should live "as children of light" his description of what comprises this light is surprisingly non-specific. He presents what should emerge from this life as "fruit" that is "found in all that is good and right and true" (5:9, RSV), but then only says that his readers should "try to learn what is pleasing to the Lord" (5:10, RSV). This resembles the non-specificity found in 5:3-5. He appears to be appealing to culturally agreed-on notions of rightness and wrongness.⁴²

The triad "good and right and true," or more appropriately goodness, righteousness and truth, is unusual. It may contrast with the list of evils in 5:3,⁴³ but if so, not with a one-to-one correspondence. Rather, archetypal evils and activities even remotely resembling them should be avoided while deeds that denote archetypal positive qualities should be pursued. Why these three positive values appear together is indeterminable. Neither these nor any related adjectival or verbal forms ever appear together in any known writings antecedent to

⁴⁰ The NT alone shows a variety of nuances implied by this imagery: moral vs immoral (Matt 6:23; Luke 11:35; Rom 13:11-12; 1 Thess 5:5; 1 John 1:5-7; also implicit in Phil 2:15); public vs secret (Matt 10:27; Luke 12:3); knowledge vs ignorance (Matt 5:14; Luke 8:16; John 11:9; Rom 2:19; 2 Cor 4:6); the redeemed vs the lost (Luke 16:8; Acts 26:18; 2 Cor 6:14; 11:14; Col 1:12; 1 Pet 2:9; 1 John 2:8-11). The Gospel of John uses this imagery extensively, often with multiplicity of meanings: 1:4-7; 3:19-22; 5:35; 8:12; 9:5; 12:35; 12:36. In the LXX, the following contrasts are made: righteousness vs unrighteousness (Ps 111:4; Prov 4:18; Isa 5:20; 58:8; 60:1; 60:20); morality vs immorality (Wis chapters 11-12); folly vs wisdom (Eccl 2:13); sweetness vs bitterness (Eccl 11:7); deliverance vs disaster (Amos 5:18); God's presence vs his absence (Jer 13:16); deliverance vs oppression (Isa 9:2); guidance vs ignorance (Isa 59:9); the redeemed vs the lost (Isa 42:6, 16; 49:6; 50:10). None of these dualities are mutually exclusive in their contexts, though some passages do emphasize one over others.

⁴¹ KG Kuhn, "The Epistle to the Ephesians in the Light of the Qumran Texts," 123: ". . . it is . . . an antithesis arising from two modes of existence, in, on the one hand, the doing of 'what is pleasing to God' and on the other hand, the anti-Christian existence of the performance of 'the works of darkness' (5:11)."

⁴² W Meeks, "Understanding Early Christian Ethics," *Journal of Biblical Studies* 105 (1986): 4, likens this kind of vagueness to the well-known admonition given by many parents to their children today: "Behave yourself!" Although this phrase seems on its face semantically empty, parents in my neighborhood universally assumed its effectiveness. The use of such a command or plea takes for granted that one knows what behavior is expected."

⁴³ Schnackenburg, *Der Brief an die Epheser*, 228.

Ephesians,⁴⁴ though often in the LXX two of these values are paired.⁴⁵

The term ἀγαθωσύνη (goodness) first appears in Greek literature in the LXX, with later uses restricted almost exclusively to Christian writings.⁴⁶ While most frequently indicating beneficence,⁴⁷ it also denotes basic propriety, often in contrast to wickedness or unrighteousness.⁴⁸ This latter usage is more appropriate to the context of Eph 5:9. In using a term that by all reckoning is exclusively Jewish-Christian, the writer delimits his sense of propriety to a Christian understanding of Jewish morality. Instead of appealing to specific standards of a code that he believes has been abolished (2:14-15), he refers his readers to the "Lord" in whom they are now "light" (5:8) and whom they should find out how to please (5:10).

Accordingly, the righteousness and truth that are also listed as fruit of light should be associated with Jewish-Christian views⁴⁹ rather than with virtues

⁴⁴ The closest to exceptions include: Job 1:1, where Job is described as true, blameless, righteous, godly and an abstainer from evil; Ps 14:2, where the archetypal holy person lives blamelessly, does righteousness, speaks truth and acts neither craftily nor in evil; Ps 51:5, where deceitful speech is mentioned just before goodness and righteousness are paired.

⁴⁵ In the LXX, δικ- and αληθ- terms are paired at least forty-two different times in moral statements: Gen 24:27; 32:11; Deut 25:15; Neh 9:33; Job 1:1; 8:6; 27:17; 36:4; Pss 14:2; 18:10; 39:11; 44:5; 84:11, 12; 88:15; 95:13; 118:75, 86, 138, 142, 160; 142:1; Prov 11:18; 12:19; 20:28; 21:3; Isa 11:5; 16:5; 26:2, 10; 45:19; 48:1; 59:4, 14; Jer 4:2; Zech 8:8; Mal 2:6; Tob 1:3; 3:2; 14:7; Wis 5:6; Song of the Three 1:4. Pairings of δικ- with αγαθ- appear nineteen times: 1 Kgdms 24:18; 3 Kgdms 2:32; 3:9; Pss 37:21; 51:5; Prov 2:9, 20; 11:23; 13:2, 21, 22; 14:19; 16:17; 28:21; Eccl 7:20; 9:2; Tob 12:8; Wis 1:1; 4 Macc 2:23. Pairings of with αγαθ- with αληθ- appear only five times: Judg 9:16; 4 Kgdms 20:3; Neh 9:13; Prov 14:22; 22:21. In Greek versions of OT Pseudepigrapha, similar pairings appear. There also goodness, righteousness and truth are never listed together.

⁴⁶ Schnackenburg, *Der Brief an die Epheser*, 228. This is confirmed by a computer search through the *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae*, looking for the characters "αγαθωσυν." *T Jud* 18.4 is the only other non-Christian use of the specific term outside of the LXX.

⁴⁷ See, especially Neh 9:25, 35; 13:31; Eccl 4:8; 5:10, 17; 6:3, 6; 7:15; 9:18. See, also, Gal 5:22.

⁴⁸ This is clearest in LXX Ps 51:3: "Thou hast loved wickedness more than goodness; unrighteousness better than to speak righteousness." Also see 2 Chr 24:16. One must note, however, that beneficence is often tied to propriety. Judg 9:16, e.g., refers to the failure to perform goodness both as something malevolent and as something unrighteous. The same can be true also in LXX (Symmachus, Aquila, Theodotion) Ps 37:20 where goodness is rewarded with evil. See also LXX (Aquila) Pss 15:2; 34:12. Note, in this regard, Paul's use in Rom 15:14. Also see E Beyreuther, "Good, Beautiful, Kind," in *New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*, 2: 98-102. Most pertinently, Eph 4:28 has already referred to manual labour as doing what is good, indicating both righteous and beneficent activity.

⁴⁹ In this regard, Schnackenburg, *Der Brief an die Epheser*, 229, defines these terms in their Hebrew senses of respectively, uprightness-before-God/right-deeds-before-people and faithfulness. In both of these senses, God is said to be the primary model for righteousness and for loyalty, or covenant faithfulness. Also see Barth, *Ephesians 4-6*, 568, and Gnllka, *Der Epheserbrief*, 353-54. In the absence of textual elaboration, nothing definitive can be concluded beyond the general notion that the writer is probably working more with a Jewish than Hellenistic model. Schnackenburg's definitions are educated guesses at best.

promoted by Classical and Hellenistic moralists.⁵⁰ Righteousness and truth do not refer to the adherence to specific standards. They are, instead, terms of measurement, determining whether a person is living as a child of light. In all likelihood the concepts of goodness, righteousness and truth address for the writer conformity to basic moral standards upheld in the Jewish law.⁵¹ But, by listing these terms with no qualifiers, the writer makes what appears to be a trans-cultural statement, rooted in a Christian understanding of God.

With the statements "now you are light in the Lord" (5:8, RSV) and "try to learn what is pleasing to the Lord" (5:10, RSV),⁵² the writer links his view of morality with his view of Christ. Once more he subsumes his moral teaching beneath the exercise of religious virtuosity; the more his readers seek to please the Lord, he implies, the more they will become aware of what is proper and improper behaviour.

The most concrete positive action that the writer urges upon his readers is for them to exceed the mere avoidance of "the unfruitful deeds of darkness" by "instead expos[ing] them" (5:11, RSV). Vv 12-14a comprise a justification of why such exposure should be a part of their activity: the deeds are shameful even to talk about (v 12); exposure with the light to which the readers now belong displays these deeds as the repugnant sin that they are from the standpoint of the writer and, by extension, from Christ (v 13). The writer further legitimates exposure as a viable activity by declaring, "everything that becomes visible is light" (v 14a, RSV).⁵³

The unclarity of vv 12-14a allows the possibility that the writer may be

⁵⁰ In his *Laws* alone Plato uses the term *δικαιοσύνη* eleven times and the term *ἀλήθεια* twenty-one times. Aristotle, in his *Nicomachean Ethics*, uses *δικαιοσύνη* thirty-two times and *ἀλήθεια* twenty-two. Dio Chrysostom uses *δικαιοσύνη* twenty-eight times and *ἀλήθεια* forty-six times. Epictetus uses *δικαιοσύνη* only six times but *ἀλήθεια* forty-four. Each of these thinkers also speak extensively about τὸ ἀγαθόν.

⁵¹ Though distinctions between moral and cultic types of purity are nearly impossible to discern in Levitical and Deuteronomical passages, such seem to have been attempted by Jewish writers around the turn of the eras. See below, §4.5.

⁵² For a defense of *δοκιμάζω* as "learn" or "discover," see Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 328-29, and JDG Dunn, *Romans 9-16*, (Dallas, TX: Word Books, 1988), 714-15.

⁵³ Often γάρ in this verse is taken to be explanatory. See, e.g. Schnackenburg, *Der Brief an die Epheser*, 231-32. However, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, 152, also lists a continuative force for this term, making it equivalent to δέ, citing the authority of the first century BCE grammarian Trypho. Applying this sense here, the statement in v 14a becomes a conclusion, rather than an explanation, and also becomes much less cryptic.

addressing the transforming role of light and thus the conversion process itself in the lives either of the readers or possibly even of those with whom the readers interact.⁵⁴ But, the overall thrust of the passage has been on believers performing appropriate deeds. The writer has been emphasizing that his readers live as converted people. This involves avoiding what is evil and doing what is good.

As the readers strive to find out what pleases the Lord, they learn the good. But, they must also gain a new sensitivity to what is evil so as to "Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness" (5:11, RSV). Instead, they should expose these works as the shameful deeds that they are said to be by verbal condemnation or even by non-verbal deeds of righteousness that stand out in contrast.⁵⁵ By bringing Christ's light to bear on the deeds of darkness, the readers can see the evil. The recognition of evil as evil also belongs to the realm of light as part of the readers' new orientation to living.

The hymnic fragment⁵⁶ quoted in v 14b shows the typical polyvalence of poetic expression. It uses the imagery of awakening from slumber to the light of day.⁵⁷ As an isolated statement, this fragment could refer to the future resurrection

⁵⁴ T Engberg-Pedersen, "Ephesians 5,12-13: ἐλέγχειν and Conversion in the New Testament," *Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft* 80 (1989): 89-110; Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 330-31; Robinson, *St. Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians*, 201.

⁵⁵ Though admitting the verbal dimensions present in the activity of ἐλέγω, several commentators rule it out in Eph 5:12, due to a variety of contextual concerns, which also include the statement that talking about these deeds is shameful. See Barth, *Ephesians 4-6*, 570-72; Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 329-30; Schnackenburg, *Der Brief an die Epheser*, 231. Engberg-Pedersen, "Ephesians 5,12-13: ἐλέγχειν and Conversion in the New Testament," 93-100, emphasizes verbal confrontation with a wrongdoer. The context of Eph 5:12 assumes a concretely performable act, which can be verbal just as easily as it can be non-verbal. This act is directed not at doers of wrong deeds but the deeds themselves. This helps resolve what seems to be a contradiction, though the discussion in §5 of this chapter on honour and shame will go even further. The writer posits exposure by the light as a different activity to saying what is done in secret. His basic thought is that verbal exposure of evil deeds makes them visible, i.e. displays them for what they are. Talking about them is a form of participation in them; exposing them in the Lord's light is a renunciation of them.

⁵⁶ Though there is some discussion as to whether or not this is a hymn or a scriptural paraphrase, I accept the virtual consensus among modern commentators that Eph 5:14b cites some sort of hymn. I do not see, however, that it must necessarily be baptismal, even though it uses imagery eventually taken over by some Christians for a baptismal context (*Herm Sim* 9.16.3-4).

⁵⁷ This imagery is common enough, as its use with similar Greek terminology in LXX Pss 7:5, 43:23 and 79:2 shows. In each case the subject matter is a slumbering God who must be awakened to rescue his people in distress. In Isa 51:9, 17, and 52:1 the wake-up call goes to Jerusalem to respond to God. See G Schille, *Frühchristliche Hymnen*, (Berlin: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 1965), 94-101 for a basic presentation of diverse calls to wake up appearing in Jewish and Christian literature.

of believers,⁵⁸ to the unconverted who need to believe in Christ, or to believers who need to be reminded about living a new sort of life. Though all three senses could easily have been present simultaneously in the actual hymn,⁵⁹ the second aspect, a reference to the unconverted, is not alien to the context, while the writer of Ephesians overtly draws on the last aspect, a reminder to the converted.

This flows directly from the thoughts of v 14a. The statement that visible things are light demonstrates the same new perspective on living as Christ's shining on believers does. Though the citation flows directly from v 14a, it simultaneously summarizes the thoughts of 5:6-14a. The readers once had been spiritually dead, being a part of the unconverted darkness. They must demonstrate in their own conduct as children of light that Christ himself is shining on them. They must awaken from the slumber of encroaching sin and live righteously.

1.3 Conclusions

The writer has found yet another way to tell his readers to behave in a manner commensurate with their conversion. The previous exhortation, "walk in love" (5:2, RSV), has been succeeded by a different concern, "walk as children of light" (5:8, RSV). The former emphasized concern for others, which pleases God. The latter emphasizes appropriateness of behaviour, which pleases Christ.

The readers are told to shun evil, not by a detailed listing of sins to be avoided but by a presentation of sins that should not even be mentioned. By emphasizing verbal activity, the writer demonstrates his concern for his readers to avoid evil altogether, rather than the mere physical abstention from outward deeds. Positively, he tells his readers both to pursue what pleases the Lord and to see evil as Christ sees it. In this way, he roots his view of rightness and wrongness in religious concerns. The readers are to develop a sense, not of what other people think is right or wrong, but of what the Lord thinks is right or wrong. Christ is the one who shines on them, who controls their new orientation to living.

2 Eph 5:3-14 - Affinities with Eph 1-3

While not as significantly as earlier sections, Eph 5:3-14 does have noteworthy links with antecedent ideas in chapters 1-3. Three basic concepts tie this section

⁵⁸ Sleep was a common metaphor for death used predominantly but not exclusively by Jews and Christians. See R Lattimore, *Themes in Greek and Latin Epitaphs*, (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1942), 164-65.

⁵⁹ See B Noack, "Das Zitat in Ephes. 5,14," *Studia Theologica* 15 (1952): 57-61.

with that ideological presentation: 1) the divine purposefulness of proper behaviour; 2) the contrast of converted and pre-converted states; and 3) the community of the saints. Brief mention must be made, first of all, of three overt bonds with statements found in 4:1-5:2.

2.1 Links with 4:1-5:2

The knowledge motif discussed in 4:17-24 is repeated in 5:5-6. The writer emphasizes how his readers should know⁶⁰ that evildoers do not belong among God's people; accordingly, they ought not to let anyone deceive them with "vain words." This recalls the writer's concern that his readers receive proper information from the appropriate sources.⁶¹ Additionally, the writer, in 5:3, 5, virtually repeats the list of evils he introduced in 4:19. Finally, there is, in 4:17-24 and 5:3-14, an overlap of concern both to reject what is associated with the unconverted life and to develop a sense of God's righteousness.⁶²

2.2 Proper Behaviour and Divine Purposefulness

In two brief, isolated, but significant statements the writer identifies that, from his perspective, proper behaviour is a divine necessity for the converted. In reference both to himself and to his readers he says that God "chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him" (1:4, RSV). Holiness and blamelessness are concepts that underlie the argument found in 5:3-14 where the writer argues for propriety in conduct. In 1:4 he had indicated that such propriety is part of the divine plan.

He makes this concept even more explicit in 2:10 when he concludes his

⁶⁰ Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 316, regards the term *ἵνα* as an imperative, and the double terminology for knowing, *ἵνα γινώσκοντες*, as a Hebraism, indicating emphasis. Meyer, *The Epistle to the Ephesians*, 267, disallows this latter aspect, noting that two distinct verbs for knowing are used. He translates: "This you are aware of from your own knowledge." He also regards *ἵνα* as indicative. SE Porter, "*ἵνα γινώσκοντες* in Ephesians 5,5: Does Chiasm Solve a Problem?" *Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft* 81 (1990): 270-76, surveys the various interpretations of this verse and suggests reviving another option that considers the phrase as the centre point of a chiasm, with *ἵνα* an indicative statement that the readers already knew what the writer just told them, and *γινώσκοντες* referring to knowledge about inheritors of the kingdom. In each case, the statement emphasizes what the writer thinks should be obvious to his readers.

⁶¹ See, especially, 4:14 and 4:20-21. This is contrary to Schnackenburg, *Der Brief an die Epheser*, 225, who says that sinning believers within the community rather than false teachers from without are meant here. The writer is not as specific, leaving open the possibility that "vain words" can come from any source.

⁶² Light and darkness imagery are used in 1:18 and in 4:19 to describe a desired state of mind for the converted and the confused state of mind of the unconverted gentile. The writer does not really build from these earlier statements in 5:8, so neither will be treated. See Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 321.

elaboration on the heavenly consequences of conversion by saying, "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them" (RSV). According to the writer, proper behaviour does not accomplish salvation (2:9) but is closely intertwined with the divine intention of salvation.

These statements make the comment about discovering what pleases the Lord (5:9) more puzzling as well as more urgent. This discovery involves the readers in a divine necessity. Yet as divinely necessary as the writer may imply this to be, he entrusts his readers with the responsibility of learning what specific types of behaviour this may involve. He scarcely advocates a mechanical view of obedience that demands adherence to rules and regulations. Yet he can also see obedience as a form of appropriation of works that God has already prepared.

2.3 Converted and Pre-converted States

The "once-now" schema found in Eph 2 and 3 has already been discussed in chapter 2 of this study and needs no further elaboration here. When the writer, in 5:8, says that his readers "once. . . were darkness, but now. . . are light in the Lord" (RSV), he uses this motif in similar fashion to what is found in 4:17-24. Throughout 5:3-14 the writer recalls various temporal and spatial aspects that he had developed throughout 2:1-22. The strong historical insider-outsider scheme of 2:11-22 gives way, in 5:3-14, to a present temporal one where the converted are light, the unconverted are darkness, the converted are inheritors of the kingdom (5:5), the unconverted are recipients of wrath (5:7, cf 2:3). Additionally, the writer's assertion that Christ has destroyed the law that divided Jew and Gentile (2:14-15) supports his reluctance to elaborate a new code for his gentile audience. Regulations do not distinguish insider from outsider. Orientation to new life in Christ does, implying active, dynamic relationship with a Lord who can be pleased.

The once-now schema of 2:1-10 is relevant to 5:3-14 because it relates sinful activities to the pre-converted state. Talk about fornication, impurity, greed, shamefulness, foolish-talk and levity is associated with participation in the works of the unconverted. It elevates the "trespasses and sins" in which the readers "formerly walked" (2:1), disregarding that the unconverted are "children of wrath" who live in the passion of their flesh (2:3). Further, the association, in 2:1-6, of death with the pre-converted state and life with the converted conforms to the

basic life and death imagery found in the hymnic citation of 5:14b.⁶³

2.4 The Community of the Saints

In Eph 5:3-14, the writer assumes a sharp distinction in the kind of behaviour that should be associated with those inside and those outside the community of believers. The readers are to avoid being practitioners of the evil deeds committed by "the sons of disobedience" (5:6-7). They are to "take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness" (5:12). Surrounding these two overt prohibitions are phrases that draw on assumptions of propriety. Some kinds of behaviour are "fitting for saints" (5:3), or "not fitting" (5:4) or "a shame even to" mention (5:12). A definite category of people are to live according to the writer's conception of righteousness, people referred to both as "saints" (5:3) and as "children of light" (5:8).

Though it would be a literary convention within Pauline circles to refer to addressees of an epistle as "saints" (1:1),⁶⁴ continued usage of the terminology in the early part of the letter suggests that this also is a community attribute.⁶⁵ When the writer refers to the love that his readers have for "all the saints" (1:15) or to "the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints" (1:18, RSV) he is clearly thinking in terms of insiders. He expands this concept of insider in 2:19-22, where he refers to gentiles as "fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God" (2:19, RSV), as part of a common structure comprised of all believers. Any person can now, according to the writer, be included among the insiders, not simply those of a distinct nationality. Thus, when he refers to himself as "the very least" (*ἐλαχιστοτέρος*) among the "saints" (3:8), he is placing himself below his readers. When he prays for his readers "to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth" (3:18, RSV), he is including all who believe in Christ, who comprise this special group of insiders.

⁶³ Noack, "Das Zitat in Ephes. 5,14", 59, discounts any relationship between being made alive and being raised together with Christ in 2:5-6 and the rising from the dead in 5:14b, but does so based on terminology. Eph 2:5-6 emphasizes a co-resurrection of believers with Christ, whereas 5:14b speaks only of resurrection. Eph 2:5-6 takes ideology similar to that of 5:14b as a starting point and derives a further message from it. The fact that the terminology is different is not very significant, especially since the hymn appears in 5:14b based on the motif of light referring to pre- and post- conversion, not to life. The term *ἐπιφάνωσκω* does not appear in 5:3-14a, yet most commentators agree that the light imagery in v 14b is connected with that found in 5:7-14a.

⁶⁴ See Rom 1:7; 1 Cor 1:2; 2 Cor 1:1; Phil 1:1. Among the undisputed letters of Paul written to churches, only Galatians and 1 Thessalonians fail to mention "saints" as recipients of their respective letters.

⁶⁵ Ephesians uses the term saints this way nine different times, more than any other epistle in the Pauline corpus: 1:1, 15, 18; 2:19; 3:8, 18; 4:12; 5:3; 6:18.

Though this brief study focusses on the term "saints," the usage of this term indicates that the writer regards his readers as part of a distinct entity, the converted. In Chapters 1-3, and especially in 2:11-22, he discusses the make-up of this community. In 5:3-14 he refers to standards that should typify it. Conformity to set standards is not presented as the basis for group membership. Rather, the writer contends that proper behaviour should distinguish members from outsiders who are performing morally abhorrent deeds.

3 Eph 5:3-14 and Pauline Moral Traditions

In discussing similarities between Paul's undisputed letters and Eph 5:3-14 numerous points of commonality emerge. This section exhibits more Pauline features more consistently than any of the other sections examined thus far.⁶⁶ How one categorizes these similarities is highly subjective, especially since many overlap, and some are more significant than others.⁶⁷

Eight different kinds of similarities are suggested here, not as an absolute number but as a way to describe the type of overlap that Eph 5:3-14 has with the undisputed Pauline epistles: 1) lists including the same sins; 2) light-darkness imagery; 3) fruit imagery; 4) behavioural righteousness; 5) God's wrath toward sinful behaviour; 6) exposure/disclosure; 7) behaviour and the kingdom; 8) discovering God's will and pleasing him. Some of these similarities are less significant than others and will receive little treatment beyond listing of references. Further, several of these categories overlap with others, resulting in some repetition. This section will conclude with basic observations on Colossians, providing a useful contrast both with Paul's undisputed writings and with Ephesians.

⁶⁶ Lincoln *Ephesians*, 319-20, sees the argument in vv 3-6 mediated more through Colossians material, while vv 7-14, which share nothing in common with Colossians, come more directly from Paul's thought.

⁶⁷ Mitton, *The Epistle to the Ephesians*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1951), 304-07, identifies fourteen different passages in Paul having what he considers to be some sort of linguistic correspondence in Eph 5:3-14. Some of these are purely phenomenological (e.g. 1 Cor 5:11 lists three of the sins found in Eph 5:3, 5, also using the verb *ὀνομάζω*, but in such a different way from Eph 5:3 as to be unimaginable that any Pauline imitator could confuse the two senses). Those worth considering use similar expressions to convey similar thoughts. They include, in Mitton's order of appearance: Rom 1:28; 1 Cor 5:11; Gal 5:19-21; 1 Cor 6:9; Rom 1:18; 2 Cor 6:14; 1 Thess 5:5; Gal 5:22; Phil 1:11; Rom 12:2; Phil 4:18; Rom 8:12; 1 Cor 14:24-5; Rom 13:11. FO Francis and JP Sampley, *Pauline Parallels*, (Philadelphia/Missoula, MT: Fortress Press/Scholars Press, 1975), 280-81, have their own fourteen passages, some of them the same as Mitton's, but gathered under the criteria of thematic, rather than linguistic similarity: Rom 1:29-32; 2:1-5; 1 Cor 5:9-13; 6:9-11; 7:32-35; 2 Cor 12:19-21; 6:14-7:1; Gal 5:16-26; 1 Thess 5:1-11; Rom 8:8; Gal 1:10; 1 Thess 2:4; 4:1; Rom 13:11. These combined provide a good launching point for this section, but will also be supplemented.

3.1 Common Sin-Lists

Eph 5:3-5 has three sin-lists, each enumerating three evils. The first (v 3) and third (v 5) are virtually identical, with the second referring to people who commit the sins presented in v 3. The list in v 5 also adds the phrase "which is idolatry," introducing a fourth element.⁶⁸ The second list, found in v 4, enumerates behaviours found nowhere else in Paul's writings. In Paul's letters, 1 Cor 5:11, 6:9-10, 2 Cor 12:21, Rom 1:28-31 and Gal 5:19-21 each contain at least two of the evils found in Eph 5:3 and 5.⁶⁹ Gal 5:19-21 and 1 Cor 6:9-10 will also be discussed subsequently with their comments about inheriting the kingdom.

The list in 1 Cor 5:11 is interesting because it occurs in a passage that is regulating the association of Christians with errant members. It assumes that such deeds are so evil that Christians should not associate with other Christians who participate in them. But it is also correcting a misapprehension about the sort of immoral people with whom Paul had earlier told the Corinthians not to associate.⁷⁰ As already observed, Eph 5:3-14 contains strong proscriptions against participating in evil deeds (especially 5:7 and 11). An overlap in sin-list terminology may reflect traditional Pauline concerns, though 1 Cor 5:9-11 addresses a genuine case of immorality, whereas Eph 5:3-14 gives no indication of any specific situation.

⁶⁸ Barth, *Ephesians 4-6*, 563-64 and, somewhat hesitantly, Schnackenburg, *Der Brief an die Epheser*, 224-25, consider this clause to modify all three sins previously listed, so that, in the view of the writer, a fornicator and an impure person would also be an idolater in addition to the greedy person. Also see Porter, "ἵνατε γινώσκοντες," 274-75. For a refutation, see Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 317, where he regards dependence on Col 3:5 to be the determining factor.

⁶⁹ As rendered by the RSV: 1 Cor 5:11: ". . . guilty of immorality [πόρνος] or greed, or is an idolater, reviler, drunkard or robber. . .;" 1 Cor 6:9-10: ". . . neither the immoral [πόρνοι], nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor robbers. . .;" 2 Cor 12:21: ". . . impurity, immorality [πορνεία], and licentiousness. . .;" Rom 1:28c-31: ". . . improper conduct [τὰ μὴ καθήκοντα]. They were filled with all manner of wickedness, evil, covetousness, malice. Full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, malignity, they are gossips, slanderers, haters of God, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, foolish, faithless, heartless, ruthless;" Gal 5:19-21: "immorality [πορνεία], impurity, licentiousness, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, anger, selfishness, dissension, party spirit, envy, drunkenness, carousing. . .;"

⁷⁰ NA Dahl, "Der Epheserbrief und der verlorene, erste Brief des Paulus und [sic] die Korinther," in *Abraham unser Vater*, ed by O Betz, M Hengel, P Schmidt, (Leiden: EJ Brill, 1963), 65-77, goes so far as to suggest that Eph 5:3-14 may be repeating so much traditionally Pauline material that it may correspond to what Paul may have written in the lost first letter to the Corinthians. There is no reason to doubt that Eph 5:3-14 and this lost letter may have reflected common traditions, though what we are left with only is Paul's statement, in 1 Cor 5:9, that he had urged his Corinthian readers not to associate with immoral people. However, one must note that the teaching in the lost letter was so badly misapplied that the Corinthians assumed it referred to outsiders, and that insiders would be excluded. The teaching in Eph 5 is much clearer; the proscription is not against association with errant insiders, but participation in the deeds of outsiders.

3.2 Light and Dark Imagery

Paul frequently uses light and darkness as metaphors for, respectively, believers and unbelievers, or belief and unbelief. In Rom 2:19 some Jews are said to call themselves "a light to those who are in darkness" (RSV), illuminating those outside of Judaism in the ways of God. The metaphor as Paul uses it elsewhere resembles what is found in some strands of Judaism.⁷¹ He expresses the dichotomy of believer and unbeliever with reference to the Christian conversion process in 2 Cor 4:4-6, when he compares the moment of belief with God's creation of light in the midst of darkness in Gen 1. In a passage of disputed Pauline origin, 2 Cor 6:14 contrasts believer and unbeliever with light and darkness, along with other images.⁷² Other brief, undeveloped uses of light imagery are found in 2 Cor 11:14, where Satan is said to disguise himself as an "angel of light" in an attempt to make his ways seem like God's, and in 1 Cor 4:5 where light discloses hidden evil deeds, a use of language that resembles the shift in metaphor found in Eph 5:12-14.

Paul uses light imagery to denote moral propriety on several occasions. Phil 2:15 presents the aim that Christians be "blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world" (RSV). Even more significant, however, are the uses of the imagery found both in Rom 13:12 and 1 Thess 5:4-5. As in Eph 5:8-14, both passages associate light with Christ's salvation and darkness with the activities of unbelief. 1 Thess 5:5 contains an expression similar to that in Eph 5:8 - "sons of light" (RSV). Further, though both passages appear in the context of expectation of the *parousia*, they turn this expectation into a realized eschatological view: because the day, i.e. Christ, is coming, the readers should live in the light of

⁷¹ This is even more significant if, as argued by EP Sanders, *Paul, the Law and the Jewish People*, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983), 129, the material in Romans 2 is borrowed by Paul from the Jewish synagogue. If this has any validity, then the categorizing of God's true people as "light" and those outside of the fold as "darkness" may possibly have had a wider representation than Qumran, a topic that will be addressed in relation to Ephesians in the next section.

⁷² M Newton, *The Concept of Purity in Paul and at Qumran*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 110-114, argues for Pauline authenticity of 2 Cor 6:14-7:1 based on the temple imagery as a description of the Christian community and the similarities of this kind of adaptation of temple rites to a temple-less community at Qumran. If he is correct, then the passage can be harmonized both with 1 Cor 5:9-13, which advocates involvement with unbelievers, leaving judgement of them to God, and Eph 5:3-14, which advocates non-participation in evil deeds partly by appealing to the sharp distinctions that exist between light and darkness. The community itself must remain in the world, not yoking itself to unbelievers and not participating in their immorality.

day as though it were already there.⁷³ This, like Eph 5:8-14, is a dualism of association.⁷⁴ Christians are said to be associated with light and must exhibit light-like behaviour.

The following thought is highly speculative, but raises an interesting possibility regarding the hymnic fragment found in Eph 5:14b. The writer of Ephesians discusses past transformations and present associations in terms of light. Paul, in Rom 13:12 and 1 Thess 5:4-5, discusses present associations and future expectations in terms of light.⁷⁵ Might the same hymn stand behind each of these passages?

3.3 Fruit Imagery

Though Gal 5:22 and its reference to "fruit of the Spirit" is one of Paul's better known uses of fruit imagery to express^{the} moral outcome of people's actions, it is not the only one. In Rom 6:20-22, Paul uses this imagery to express both the negative effects of sinful, pre-Christian living, as well as the positive, sanctifying effects of Christian freedom:

. . . what return [καρπὸν] did you get from the things of which you are now ashamed? . . . But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves of God, the return [καρπὸν] you get is sanctification. . . (RSV).

Most discussion on this verse centres on whether or not sanctification is a final or progressively attained ontological state.⁷⁶ This tends to overlook Paul's ethical message.⁷⁷ The fruit imagery is not as theologically suggestive here as it may be

⁷³ Schnackenburg, *Der Brief an die Epheser*, 227, in emphasizing the eschatological element found in 1 Thess 5:5 and Rom 13:12, has overlooked the remarkable similarities between these and Eph 5:8-14.

⁷⁴ Kuhn, "The Epistle to the Ephesians in the Light of the Qumran Texts," 123, uses the expression "dualism of decision." Decision is inherent in moral teaching of this sort. But both Paul and the writer of Ephesians emphasize that the decision is to take place in view of who the readers are - i.e. with whom they are associated.

⁷⁵ Without a copy of the hymn, one can never prove that Paul ever used it. But, the fragment shows three levels of polyvalence that can be associated with past, present and future. Ephesians appeals to the past and present aspects, Romans and 1 Thess to the present and future. Other similarities between all three include sleep metaphors, drunkenness as an archetypal sin of nighttime (note Eph 5:18) and appeals to use of Christian armour (note Eph 6:10-20). NA Dahl, "Der Epheserbrief und der verlorene erste Brief des Paulus and [sic] die Korinther", 74-75, comes close to making such a connection, though correctly cautions about the difficulties of distinguishing between teaching and hymnic elements. B Noack, "Das Zitat in Ephes. 5,14," 57-59, also notes the connections between the hymn fragment in Eph 5:14b and 1 Thess 5:4-5/Rom 13:11-14 but derives no special significance from this.

⁷⁶ See, e.g. JDG Dunn, *Romans 1-8*, (Dallas, TX: Word Books, 1988), 346-49; CEB Cranfield, *Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1975), I: 328-29.

⁷⁷ In criticizing this type of discussion, VP Furnish, *Theology and Ethics in Paul*, (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1968), 156-57, suggests a parallelism between "righteousness" and "sanctification,"

either in Gal 5:22 or Eph 5:9, since both of those passages talk about fruit that comes from the Spirit, or the Lord's light. Here it simply refers to the outcome resulting from slavery to sin and slavery to God.

Similar comments can be made about this imagery as Paul uses it in Phil 1:11, where he speaks of "the fruits [καρπὸν, sg] of righteousness which come through Jesus Christ" (RSV). This concludes the final element of a prayer, an element that also includes a wish for the Philippians to be pure and blameless. The expression "fruits of righteousness" in this context refers to deeds of moral propriety.⁷⁸ This fruit is said to come through the Lord, resembling what Gal 5:22 says about the source of appropriate behaviour. The use of fruit imagery in Eph 5:9 is similar, falling squarely in the Pauline tradition.

3.4 Behavioural Righteousness and Goodness⁷⁹

Paul's depiction of "righteousness" as a forensic state is a widely recognized theological concept. However, it would be fallacious to assume that every occurrence of the term "righteousness" is used with the same theological significance in Paul. As has just been seen, Phil 1:11 is evidence of the term referring to appropriate deeds. Elsewhere in that epistle (Phil 4:8), rightness, along with trueness, appears in a list enumerating the quality of things that the Philippians ought to ponder. 2 Cor 6:14, though disputably Pauline, contrasts righteousness with iniquity as ethical states. 2 Cor 9:10 refers to the spiritual benefits of financial liberality as a "harvest of. . . righteousness" (RSV). 1 Thess 2:10, at the beginning of a statement (1 Thess 2:10-12) that has close resemblance to other remarks found in Ephesians, mentions the apostolic example of holy, righteous and blameless behaviour.⁸⁰

Though Paul uses the term for goodness in his "fruit of the Spirit" list (Gal

finally equating sanctification with "the service of God." The behavioural implications of Rom 6:19-22 are thus more clearly adduced, with the principal contrast being between a life of sin and a life of orientation to God.

⁷⁸ J Gnilka, *Der Philipperbrief*, (Freiburg: Herder, 1968), 53; GF Hawthorne, *Philippians*, (Waco, TX: Word, 1983), 29. Though he recognizes this alternative, JL Houlden, *Paul's Letters from Prison*, 56-57, prefers "righteousness here to refer to a believer's forensic standing before God."

⁷⁹ Truthfulness is not explored here for two reasons: truthful speech as a Pauline ethical category has already been discussed; apart from 1 Cor 5:8, 13:6 and Phil 4:8, truthfulness (or perhaps loyalty) does not really appear in the Pauline picture of appropriate behaviour.

⁸⁰ This by no means exhausts all of the references to righteous behaviour in Paul. Schlier, *Der Brief an die Epheser*, 237, also lists Rom 4:13, 6:13, 16, and 18. To have referred to all of these passages would have involved a more in-depth discussion than is really required here.

5:22), it most likely refers there to kindness, rather than to moral propriety.⁸¹ The fruit listing in Eph 5:9 communicates something different. Elsewhere Paul conveys the concept of goodness as propriety or uprightness. Rom 15:14 is perhaps too vague to permit any narrow conclusions,⁸² but Paul's occasional usage of the adjective "good" to express moral propriety shows that such a meaning for "goodness" in Eph 5:8 is not outside of Paul's recorded semantic range. Thus, Rom 12:9 urges its readers to "hate what is evil, hold fast to what is good" (RSV). Rom 16:19 says "I would have you wise as to what is good and guileless as to what is evil" (RSV). Some other uses of the adjective lie on the border of ambiguity between what is beneficial and what is proper (Rom 12:21; 2 Cor 5:10; 1 Thess 5:15).

3.5 God's Wrath

This topic likewise has a wide theological importance. What is referred to here is the view that throughout Paul's writings, God's general displeasure at sinful behaviour is referred to as his wrath. When Eph 5:6 (cf 2:3) states that "the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience" (RSV),⁸³ it is making a statement about God's displeasure. Likewise, Rom 1:18 speaks of "the wrath of God . . . revealed . . . against all ungodliness and wickedness of men" (RSV). Rom 2:5 speaks of Jews "storing up wrath . . . on the day of wrath" because of disobedience, while Rom 5:9 speaks of the deliverance from God's wrath by Christ's death. 1 Thess 1:10 speaks of Jesus delivering believers from coming wrath. But more pertinent for Eph 5:6, 1 Thess 5:9 refers to God's wrath that is directed toward unbelievers, who are described as those participating in deeds of darkness. The message in Eph 5:6 and 1 Thess 5:9 is quite similar. Because God must show his wrath against human unrighteousness, believers should avoid any behaviour that is associated with God's strong displeasure.

3.6 Exposure/Disclosure

Eph 5:12-14a is notoriously ambiguous. Whether it refers to a process of

⁸¹ Schnackenburg, *Der Brief an die Epheser*, 228-29; Longenecker, *Galatians*, (Dallas, TX: Word, 1990), 262.

⁸² Note Cranfield, *The Epistle to the Romans*, II: 753, who opts for "frank and sincere dealings with others" rather than "moral goodness" or "kindness."

⁸³ The RSV unfortunately obscures the future orientation implied by this statement. Schnackenburg, *Der Brief an die Epheser*, 225-26, sees this verse implying both present and future aspects of the expression of God's wrath.

conversion, or whether it is a more general explanation of the exposing and illuminating property of light, is difficult to determine with certainty.⁸⁴ In 1 Cor 4:5, in language similar to Eph 5:12-14a, Paul speaks of the future judgment of the Lord "who will bring to light [φωτίσει] the things now hidden in darkness and will disclose [φανερώσει] the purposes of the heart" (RSV). "Bring[ing] to light" the hidden and "disclos[ing] the purposes of the heart" seem to be roughly equivalent statements.⁸⁵ As enigmatic as Eph 5:12-14a may be, it is not far outside of the boundaries of Pauline thought in referring to what has become visible as light, especially in a context that also speaks of secret deeds needing to be exposed.

1 Cor 14:24-25 uses the convict-disclose-secrets complex of terminology with indisputable conversion overtones.⁸⁶ Paul's line of thought is that a prophetic ministry convicts (ἐλέγχεται) an unbeliever, call that person to account before God, disclose what is hidden in that person's heart (τὰ κρυπτὰ τῆς καρδίας αὐτοῦ γίνεσθαι) and lead such a person to worship God. The combination of conviction (or exposure) with disclosure leading to conversion presents a temptation for the interpretation of Eph 5:12-14a. One must note, however, that there not unbelievers but "unfruitful works of darkness" are the objects of exposure and disclosure.⁸⁷ Individuals are converted, abstract concepts are not. Thus 1 Cor 14:24-25 only shares with Eph 5:12-14a similar terminology and a similar concept, the disclosure of sin.

3.7 Behaviour and the Kingdom

Eph 5:5 makes a moral point by appealing to the kingdom of God. On at

⁸⁴ Robinson, *St. Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians*, 201, is one representative of the former view: "Thus the Apostle has described a process by which darkness itself is transformed into light." Schnackenburg, *Der Brief an die Epheser*, 231-32, though reluctantly favouring the latter view, aptly points out that to hold to the first view is to demand that εἶναι be rendered "becomes" instead of "is."

⁸⁵ G Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, (Grand Rapids: William B Eerdmans, 1987), 163-64, sees this as "in the form of semitic parallelism."

⁸⁶ Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 687, notes that the conversion is expressed in "language . . . thoroughly steeped in the OT." Note also H Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians*, tr by JW Leitch, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975), 243-44.

⁸⁷ It is this point that supports the argumentation of Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 329-30, that ἐλέγχω means "expose" rather than "convict" in Eph 5:12. T Engberg-Pedersen, "Ephesians 5, 12-13: ἐλέγχειν and Conversion in the New Testament," 93-98 argues for the definition "reprove," but only people, not deeds, can be reproved with the sort of confrontation that he argues is inherent in the term. John 3:19-21 and 1 Cor 14:24-25 notwithstanding, the combination of light/dark imagery with convict/disclose terminology does not in itself necessitate conversion. Engberg-Pedersen is correct methodologically in first attempting to establish conversion as an element in Eph 5:12-14a before drawing conclusions about this terminology complex in the rest of the NT, though his argumentation for conversion being in Eph 5:12-14a is not totally convincing.

least four occasions, Paul also refers to the "kingdom" to establish ethical norms. In Rom 14:17 he says that "the kingdom of God does not mean food and drink but righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit" (RSV). God's rule is expressed on earth by his people's just stance before him, by their harmony with one another and by the joy generated by living under the influence of the Holy Spirit.⁸⁸ The statement summarizes the inappropriateness of the food-related dispute between the "strong" and the "weak." 1 Thess 2:12, though not directed to any special circumstances, summarizes Paul's prior teaching in Thessalonica: "lead a life worthy of God, who calls you into his own kingdom and glory" (RSV). Paul relates the kingdom to the non-worldly orientation the Thessalonians have as believers, motivating them to live distinctively from the world around them. Though the kingdom may be a future entity here, it is to have present effects in the lives of believers.⁸⁹

In two other places, 1 Cor 6:9-10 and Gal 5:19-21, Paul proscribes listed sins by associating them with failure to inherit the kingdom of God. This is significant for Eph 5:5 not only because all three passages have very similar language about inheriting the kingdom but also because all three list some of the same sins. The similarity has caused some to dismiss these merely as traditional statements unworthy of detailed examination.⁹⁰ However, the fact that both Paul and a Paulinist used this expression demonstrates that these were normative concepts for each.⁹¹ Inheritance, as a concept, involves anticipation of what is future. Yet, as it is used in 1 Cor 6:9-10, Gal 5:19-21 and Eph 5:5, it also has present implications. The practice of sin does not belong among God's people.

3.8 Discovering God's Will and Pleasing Him⁹²

Though the writer of Ephesians refers to pleasing Christ, he conveys a similar notion to Paul in his undisputed writings when he speaks of pleasing God and

⁸⁸ See Cranfield, *The Epistle to the Romans*, II: 717-18; Dunn, *Romans 9-16*, 831-32.

⁸⁹ E Best, *A Commentary on the First and Second Epistles to the Thessalonians*, (London: Adam & Charles Black, 1972), 107-08.

⁹⁰ Note PL Hammer, "A Comparison of *KLERONOMIA* in Paul and Ephesians," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 79 (1960): 268.

⁹¹ DR Denton, "Inheritance in Paul and Ephesians," *Evangelical Quarterly* 54 (1982): 158.

⁹² Comparing Pauline statements on pleasing God with Ephesians' pleasing Christ is not a comment on the Christology in Ephesians. Rather, it is an acknowledgement that, from a sociological point of view, God and Christ are functional equivalents in motivating proper behaviour.

discovering his will. Often Paul mentions pleasing God, or sometimes Christ, in a simple statement indicating the basic orientation of a person's life. Jews persecuting Christians in Judea do not please God (1 Thess 2:15). Married people are torn between pleasing their spouses and pleasing the Lord (1 Cor 7:32-34). Paul aims to please God rather than people in giving a full and proper disclosure of the gospel (Gal 1:10; 1 Thess 2:4). People whose lives are oriented to "the flesh" cannot please God (Rom 8:8). People who are living according to righteousness, joy and peace are pleasing to God and approved before other people (Rom 14:18). Financial gifts can be a well-pleasing sacrifice to God (Phil 4:18).

Occasionally Paul presents the concept of pleasing God, or Christ, as an ethical aim. In 2 Cor 5:9 pleasing the Lord is the focal point for a believer's life, especially in view of judgment. In 1 Thess 4:1 Paul says that pleasing God is at the heart of his teaching on Christian living. He then specifies certain moral activities involved in this (1 Thess 4:3-11). Rom 12:1-2 contains one of Paul's more notable statements on this subject: God is well-pleased when believers present their bodies as living sacrifices. Significantly, Paul then refers to God's will both as something that the readers are to be learning and as something that is "good and acceptable and perfect" (RSV). He does elaborate specific standards in the remainder of the epistle that no doubt are a part of this will, but not in a codified way.⁹³

This last statement combines the concept of learning God's will with doing what pleases him.⁹⁴ As does the writer of Ephesians in reference to Christ, Paul also can subsume the knowledge of God's will beneath the life of religious virtuosity or dedication. According to Rom 12:1 when believers present themselves to God as living sacrifices, they indicate their renunciation of the "world," an entity with standards opposed to God's. They also demonstrate their commitment both to having their minds changed from their former orientation to this world and to discovering what God really wants. The thrust of Eph 5:10 is virtually identical, but with reference to Christ rather than God.

One other brief point is necessary before concluding this discussion. In Phil

⁹³ Dunn, *Romans 9-16*, 715, suggests that Rom 12:1-2 is a purposeful contrast with the codified Jewish legal system.

⁹⁴ Dunn, *Romans 9-16*, 714-15, argues that δοκιμάζω here means "learn." Cranfield, *The Epistle to the Romans*, II: 609 renders this as "prove" and Grundmann "δόκιμος, κτλ.," in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, 2: 260, argues for "test" and "prove" simultaneously in Rom 12:2. Notwithstanding, these last two writers explain this verse as though the term meant "learn."

1:10 Paul prays for the Philippians to "approve what is excellent." This is generally recognized as part of Paul's overall desire to see that "knowledge and discernment" permeate the Philippians' love.⁹⁵ Though most commentators translate this as "approve," its appearance in the environment of knowledge terms may indicate the same kind of discovery process as in Rom 12:2.⁹⁶ The notion that God's will needs to be learned as a facet of believers' devotion to him is part of the aspect of Paul's sense of propriety for Christian life and morals, a sense fittingly mirrored in Ephesians in reference to Christ.

3.9 Eph 5:3-14 and Colossians

There is some obvious overlap between Eph 5:3-14 and Col 3:5-6, but this is not profound. Three of the six sins mentioned in Col 3:5 appear in Eph 5:3, and with some variation in 5:5. Eph 5:3-5, however, does not proscribe the sins in the way Col 3:5-6 does. Rather, the concern is with talking about sin as a form of participation in it. Eph 5:4 adds three sins that also should not be talked about. None of these appear in Col 3.⁹⁷ Both passages do use a once-now format, but where Col 3:7 states that those readers used to practise these sins, Eph 5:8 states that the readers used to have a different orientation to life - darkness. Both passages relate greed to idolatry (Eph 5:5; Col 3:5). Both passages also refer to the wrath of God coming on account of sinfulness (Eph 5:6; Col 3:7). In both passages this is a motivating statement explaining why evil deeds should be avoided. Few of these similarities have the same significance as those that have been observed with the undisputed Pauline epistles.

3.10 Conclusions

Notwithstanding the many points of commonality between Eph 5:3-14 and other Pauline writings, this section is distinctive in two ways. First, it is one of the longest sustained appeals for the avoidance of evil behaviour found in the Pauline

⁹⁵ See Gnllka, *Der Philipperbrief*, 52; Hawthorne, *Philippians*, 27-28; RP Martin, *Philippians*, (Grand Rapids: William B Eerdmans, 1976), 68-69.

⁹⁶ Though the commentators mentioned in the previous note all translate the term as "approve," they each explain the verse in terms of what the Philippians would have been learning.

⁹⁷ Barth, *Ephesians 4-6*, 561, argues that *αἰσχροτότης* and *αἰσχρολογία* can be synonymous. Gnllka, *Der Epheserbrief*, 247; Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 319, 323; Mitton, *The Epistle to the Ephesians*, 305; Schlier, *Der Brief an die Epheser*, 233-34; Schnackenburg, *Der Brief an die Epheser*, 223, all regard *αἰσχροτότης* in Eph 5:4 as equivalent to *αἰσχρολογία* in Col 3:8. The appearance in both passages of two different terms beginning with *αἰσχ-* is probably insignificant in view of the fact that Eph 5:4 omits a number of other sins found in Col 3:8.

epistles. Second, it proscribes not simply the avoidance of sin but the avoidance of association with sin. This underscores an important aspect of how the readers of Ephesians are told to behave as converts. They must develop a deepening sensitivity for what is wrong. And, as Paul emphasized to his readers, they must learn what is right.

4 Eph 5:3-14 and Non-Christian Moral Traditions

Many discussions on traditional aspects of this passage refer to the various motifs and expressions appearing both in Eph 5:3-14 and certain Essene writings, particularly 1QS and CD.⁹⁸ Recognizing these and other similarities, some have even proposed that the writer of Ephesians had direct contacts with Essenism.⁹⁹ This need not follow for several reasons. First, similarity in motif does not necessitate dependence.¹⁰⁰ Second, many of the motifs and expressions common to Eph 5:3-14 and to various Essene writings also appear both in Colossians and in the narrower Pauline corpus.¹⁰¹ But finally, many motifs and expressions found in Eph 5:3-14 also appear in other Jewish writings, some of which had limited connections with Qumran and others which, based on current evidence, had none.¹⁰²

⁹⁸ KG Kuhn, "The Epistle to the Ephesians in the Light of the Qumran Texts," 115-131.

⁹⁹ J Murphy-O'Connor, "Truth: Paul and Qumran," in *Paul and the Dead Sea Scrolls*, 204: "The number and character of these contacts can hardly be explained except on the hypothesis that the author of Eph had a rather detailed acquaintance with the Qumran literature. Hence the characterization of the Christian life as 'truth' draws its inspiration from the Essenes."

¹⁰⁰ Note, for example, the discussion by ES Fiorenza, "Cultic Language in Qumran and in the NT," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 38 (1976): 159-164. M Wilcox, "Dualism, Gnosticism, and Other Elements in the Pre-Pauline Tradition," in *The Scrolls and Christianity*, ed by M Black, (London: SPCK, 1969), 87: ". . . parallels of language, and even of underlying thought-forms and 'mythology' do not necessarily prove more than the literature we are considering was a child of its age."

¹⁰¹ J Gnlika, "Paränetische Traditionen im Epheserbrief," in *Mélanges Bibliques*, ed by A Descamps and A de Halleux, (Gembloux: Duculot, 1970), 397, considers the pattern from Colossians to be the most important for Ephesians, but in the rest of the article still suggests that writings both from Qumran and from other strands of Hellenistic Judaism exerted some influence over how these traditions appear in Ephesians.

¹⁰² Kuhn, "The Epistle to the Ephesians in the Light of the Qumran Texts," 115, includes *Jub*, *T 12 Patr*, and "the Enoch literature" as Essene writings. The first and third of these writings probably had an influence at Qumran, as evidenced by the discovery of large portions of these writings in the Qumran caves. Nevertheless, it is difficult to determine the extent to which they were an influence in Qumran, as opposed to a product of Qumran. See the discussions in JH Charlesworth, *The Pseudepigrapha and Modern Research with a Supplement* (Ann Arbor, MI: Edwards Brothers for Scholars Press, 1981), 98-99, 143-44; E Isaac, "1 (Ethiopic Apocalypse of) Enoch," in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, ed by JH Charlesworth (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1983), I: 7-8; and OS Wintermute, "Jubilees," in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, II: 45. As an influence, the views of these writings need not be restricted to promotion within Qumran, but rather could have gained an appreciation from a wider Jewish audience. Since Kuhn published his article, the consensus on the provenance of *T 12 Patr* has shifted away from a decidedly Qumran origin, though allowing for some influence of these writings on the community. See Charlesworth, *The Pseudepigrapha and Modern*

Instead of focussing on the similarities between one single tradition and Ephesians, it is more instructive to note how several overlapping traditions convey similar thoughts. Eph 5:3-14 does not display the same commonplace tendencies as the immediately preceding passage. Nevertheless, it is exceedingly difficult to prove the dependence of Eph 5:3-14 on any single extra-biblical, non-Pauline tradition. In this regard, four separate issues will be explored: 1) the list of evils in 5:3; 2) the light/darkness motif; 3) the list of "virtues" in 5:9; and 4) the concept of pleasing God. Following this will be a brief introduction to the notion of moral purity as it appears in Eph 5:3-14 and in some extra-biblical writings.

4.1 The List of Evils in 5:3

The group of three sins found in 5:3 has already been examined in the discussion about 4:19. Though "licentiousness" has been replaced with "fornication," the overall difference is really one of specificity; the more general sexual sin has given way to the narrower. The writer of Ephesians presents these three as archetypal gentile sins, sins that also resemble aspects of Jewish stereotypes of gentile depravity.

Sometimes scholars cite extra-biblical material such as CD 4.15-19, 1QS 4.9-11, *T Levi* 14.5-8 and *T Jud* 18.2 as writings that resemble the lists found in Eph 4:19, 5:3 and 5:5.¹⁰³ While acknowledging these similarities, ^{one must also note that} such citations can sometimes create the false impression that Eph 5:3 (and 4:19; 5:5) is being influenced by these traditions, when, in fact, sexual sins, impurity and covetousness are themselves basic OT concerns. When each of these citations is examined independently, each reflects its own dependence on general OT traditions that are being applied to a specific problem among Jews.¹⁰⁴ The writer of Ephesians seems

Research, 212-13. HC Kee, "Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs," in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, I: 778, suggests a Syrian provenance, based principally on geographical inaccuracies about the land of Palestine.

¹⁰³ Gnailka, *Der Epheserbrief*, 246, and "Paränetische Traditionen im Epheserbrief," 401-02; Kuhn, "The Epistle to the Ephesians in the Light of the Qumran Texts," 121; Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 322.

¹⁰⁴ This is perhaps most clear with CD 4.15-18, which lists "lust," "riches" and "defilement of the Sanctuary" as "Belial's three nets," a list that outwardly resembles "fornication," "every impurity" and "greed." But this list applies Isa 24:17-18 to the perceived unfaithfulness of fellow Jews: three instances of sinfulness are referred to as a "terror," "a pit" and "a snare." *T Jud* 18.2 is inconsequential, since the entire testament is about "fornication" and "love of money," problems that "Judah" is said to have had in his own life. *T Lev* 14.5-8 seems to refer to a specific problem of immorality among priests, while also echoing Mic 3:11. Only 1QS 4.9-11 is indisputably general, but lists twenty separate items, of which "cupidity," "abominable deeds committed in the spirit of lust, and the ways of defilement in the service of impurity" are simply three (Tr in A Dupont-Sommer, *The Essene Writings from Qumran*, tr by G Vermes, (Gloucester, MA: Peter Smith, 1973), 80).

to do no more than to apply to the unconverted specific notions of Jewish sinfulness.¹⁰⁵ As noticed before in discussing 4:19, these sins were also addressed by some Classical and Hellenistic moral philosophers.

4.2 The Light/Darkness Motif

Though light/darkness dualism is not unknown as a metaphor outside of Jewish and Christian circles,¹⁰⁶ writings representing these two viewpoints use it frequently, giving it a distinctive flavour. The imagery conveys a variety of notions. Pauline usage to communicate, simultaneously, moral propriety and divine association has already been examined. Other Christian writings make a similar contrast.¹⁰⁷ The dualism also appears widely throughout the LXX. Hymnic and wisdom writings associate light with God's righteousness and God's righteous

¹⁰⁵ M Barth, *Ephesians 4-6*, 527.

¹⁰⁶ Plato used the contrast to communicate openness-secrecy, *Laws* 738E, and comprehensibility-incomprehensibility. He also developed an extended illustration using the contrast of light and darkness to describe what education should accomplish, *Republic* 517C-518C. A wider variety of contrasts appears in the writings of the Middle Platonist Plutarch. A saying attributed to Cicero associates darkness with confusion and light with correct apprehension, *Cicero* 25.1. Other contrasts include evil vs good powers (270D), evil vs good gods (369E), unhealthy vs healthy states of mind (515C), ignorance vs knowledge (589B, 1130B), disturbing vs joyful aspects of a life (610E) and illicit vs improper forms of behaviour in love-making (765B, also 654D). Fragment 178 mentions the dead, who are also pure, living in the place of light, and the living, who are impure, living in the dark. Kuhn, "The Epistle to the Ephesians in the Light of the Qumran Texts," 122-23, helpfully differentiates between Gnostic light-darkness dualism and that found in Ephesians and in Essene writings. Though the Plutarch Fragment could hardly be called gnostic, its use of light-darkness imagery does fit the pattern of "the substance of the divine world of light on the one side and the earthly cosmos on the other," p 122. Kuhn calls Ephesians' dualism "an ethical dualism, a dualism of decision," p 123. Works of thinkers such as Aristotle, Crates, Demosthenes, Dio Chrysostom, Diogenes Laertius, Epictetus, Epicurus, Isocrates and Zeno do not seem to use this imagery, at least in a contrasting, dualistic form. This last observation is based on a computer search for the appearance of "φωσ" or "φωτ" within four lines of "σκότ" in the works of these authors found in the *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae*.

¹⁰⁷ Though not intended to be an exhaustive list, the following gives some idea of the range of writings: Luke 16:8 - ". . . for the sons of this world are more shrewd in dealing with their own generation than the sons of light" (RSV); John 3:21 - "And this is the judgment, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one who does evil hates the light, and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed. But he who does what is true comes to the light, that it may be clearly seen that his deeds have been wrought in God" (RSV); Acts 26:18 - ". . . that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me" (RSV); 1 Pet 2:9 - "But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people, that you may declare the wonderful deeds of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light" (RSV); 1 John 1:5-7 - "This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light and in him is no darkness at all. If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not live according to the truth; but if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin" (RSV); 1 John 2:8-9 - "Yet I am writing you a new commandment, which is true in him and in you, because the darkness is passing away and the true light is already shining. He who says he is in the light and hates his brother is in the darkness still" (RSV).

people.¹⁰⁸ Light/darkness imagery in the second part of Isaiah classifies those who have salvation and those who need deliverance - i.e. gentiles.¹⁰⁹ This last use resembles Eph 5:8-14 in its portrayal of insiders/outsideers as light/darkness, though it does not overtly discuss moral behaviour.

Other Jewish writings employ the imagery in similar fashion. Significant references in *T 12 Patr* express an ethical dualism: light can be associated with righteousness, the Lord or the Law; darkness with unrighteousness, Beliar or impiety.¹¹⁰ *Asen* associates light with the godly life, communicating several facets simultaneously,¹¹¹ while using darkness to symbolize disorder and godlessness.¹¹² The dualism here principally contrasts the unconverted with the converted state. Both of these writings display elements that resemble aspects of the writer of Ephesians' concern for his readers to behave as converted people.

These resemblances notwithstanding, it is generally the light/darkness dualism found in various Qumran writings that often receive much focussed attention.¹¹³

¹⁰⁸ LXX Ps 35:9 - "For with thee is the fountain of life: in thy light we shall see light;" LXX Ps 111:4 - "To the upright light has sprung up in darkness: he is pitiful, and merciful, and righteous;" Prov 4:18-19 - "But the ways of the righteous shine like light; they go on and shine, until the day be fully come. But the ways of the ungodly are dark; they know not how they stumble." Tr by LCL Brenton, *The Septuagint with Apocrypha: Greek and English*, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, reprint of 1851 edition).

¹⁰⁹ See, principally, Isa 42:6, where Israel is said to be a light for gentiles to bring them out of darkness; Isa 49:6, where God's servant is a light for gentiles, spreading salvation; and Isa 60:1-3, where Jerusalem is told to be enlightened in the midst of the dark terrors of the nations but that, due to the illumination of God's presence gentiles will be guided. The dualism is also present in 9:6, but is directed to Jews living in the darkness of oppression who are promised the light of future deliverance.

¹¹⁰ See, especially *T Lev* 14.4 - "For what will all the nations do if you become darkened with impiety? You will bring down a curse on our nation, because you want to destroy the light of the Law which was granted to you for the enlightenment of every man, teaching commandments which are opposed to God's just ordinances;" 19.1 "Choose for yourselves light or darkness, the Law of the Lord or the works of Beliar;" *T Naph* 2.10 "If you tell the eye to hear, it cannot; so you are unable to perform the works of light while you are in darkness." Tr by HC Kee in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*.

¹¹¹ In *Asen* 6.2 and 4, light depicts Joseph's splendour, while in 6.6 it portrays his keenness of sight, both of which are designated as most excellent because Joseph himself was a godly man. In 8.9 the calling of light from darkness at creation is associated both with God's giving life and his advancement of truth. Aseneth, in her prayer of repentance (12.2), appeals to this same creation image of calling from darkness to light. Further, when she finishes praying, light appears both in the form of a star, and as an angel who comforts her and welcomes her as one of the converted, 14.1-2. When Aseneth, as a convert, is reconciled to Joseph and marries him, she then is seen by others to be "like the appearance of light."

¹¹² This happens overtly only in two places, 8.9 and 15.12. That the darkness-to-light motif commonly described the process of salvation here, and in Jewish literature in general, is detailed briefly by S Pines, "From Darkness into Great Light," *Immanuel* 4 (1974): 48.

¹¹³ See Kuhn, "The Epistle to the Ephesians in the Light of the Qumran Texts," 123-24; Gnilka, "Paränetische Traditionen im Epheserbrief," 405-07; S Wibbing, *Die Tugend- und Lasterkataloge im*

References often mentioned include: 1QS 1.9-10; 2.7; 2.16; 3.13, 19-21, 25; 1QM 1.1-14; 3.6, 9; 13.16; 15.9.¹¹⁴ The major similarity between these statements and Eph 5:8 is the association of light/darkness with obedient/disobedient people. Whether this indicates direct influence of one community on another or the employment by two different communities of common imagery is indeterminable.¹¹⁵ Certainly, none of these Qumran passages express the same sort of ethics of association found in Eph 5:8-9; those associated with light are not explicitly called on to exhibit light-like behaviour. Further, though both the Qumran writings and Eph 5:8 refer to children of light, one must observe that the child motif appears frequently

Neuen Testament, (Berlin: Alfred Töpelmann, 1959), 111-12.

¹¹⁴ 1QS 1.9-10: ". . . that they may love all the sons of light. . . and that they may hate all the sons of darkness; 1QS 2.7: "Cursed be thou, without mercy, according to the darkness of thy deeds;" 1QS 2.16: ". . . may he be cut off from the midst of the sons of light;" 1QS 3.13: ". . . that he may instruct and teach all the sons of light concerning the nature of all the sons of men;" 1QS 3.19-22a: "The origin of truth is in a fountain of light, and the origin of Perversity is from a fountain of darkness. Dominion over all the sons of righteousness is in the hand of the Prince of light; they walk in the ways of light. All dominion over the sons of perversity is in the hand of the Angel of darkness; they walk in the ways of darkness. And because of the Angel of darkness all the sons of righteousness go astray;" 1QS 3.24-25: "And all the spirits of his lot cause the sons of light to stumble; but the God of Israel and His Angel of truth succour all the sons of light. Truly, the Spirits of light and darkness were made by Him; upon these (Spirits) He has founded every work;" 1QM 1.1: "The conquest of the sons of light shall be undertaken firstly against the lot of the sons of darkness, against the army of Belial, against the band of Edom and Moab. . .;" 1QM 1.8-9: "Then [the sons of righteous]ness shall lighten all the ends of the world progressively, until all the moments of darkness are consumed. Then in the time of God His sublime greatness shall shine for all the times [of the ages] unto gladness and blessing; glory and joy and length of days (shall be given) to all the sons of light;" 1QM 1.10-11: ". . . for this is the day appointed by Him from former times for the war of destruction of the sons of darkness. On this (day) shall approach for tremendous slaughter the congregation of the gods and the assembly of men. On the Day of Misfortune the sons of light and the lot of darkness shall battle together for the Power of God. . ." 1QM 3.6: ". . . Formations of the battalions of God for the vengeance of His Anger upon all the sons of darkness;" 1QM 6.9: ". . . God overthrows all the sons of darkness;" 1QM 13.16: "to wipe out all the sons of darkness; whereas joy (shall be) the [lo]t of the [sons of light. . .];" 1QM 15.9-10a: "For they are a wicked congregation and all their works are in darkness and to darkness turns their desi[re. . .]." Tr in A Dupont-Sommer, *The Essene Writings from Qumran*.

¹¹⁵ The debate as to whether NT writers depended directly on Qumran, or at least Essene teaching, is too involved to enter into here. Wibbing, *Tugend- und Lasterkataloge im NT*," 77-118, suggests strong influence, as do most of the essayists in *Paul and Qumran*, ed by Murphy-O'Connor and Charlesworth. Wilcox, "Dualism, Gnosticism, and Other Elements in the Pre-Pauline Tradition," 83-96, points out a number of similarities, but also a number of sharp disagreements between various Qumran and NT writings, concluding that contact with Essenism is a different issue from dependence. Fiorenza, "Cultic Language in Qumran and in the NT," 164, concludes, "The category of *religionsgeschichtlich* parallels and similarities does not methodologically suffice to understand the theological differences between the two communities. It also does not suffice to define the historical-theological relationship of the two communities." In rejoinder, however, DC Smith, "Cultic Language in Ephesians 2:19-22 a Test Case," *Restoration Quarterly* 31 (1989): 206-217, notes a number of linguistic similarities in the complex of images used both in various Qumran writings and in Eph 2:19-22, concluding that if there were no contact between Qumran and early Christianity, there must at least be some yet-to-be-found common source that employed the same kind of language, influencing both groups.

throughout the letter.¹¹⁶ What can be said, based on Qumran, Pseudepigrapha and LXX evidence, is that Eph 5:8 indicates the writer's familiarity with imagery also popular within Jewish writings.¹¹⁷

4.3 Virtues and Eph 5:9

As already mentioned (§1.2, p 197), the listing together of the Greek terms for goodness, righteousness and truth is unique to Ephesians and subsequent Christian writings that were undoubtedly influenced by it. This is accounted for chiefly by the fact that the term for goodness (ἀγαθωσύνη) appears exclusively in Jewish and Christian writings. This does not mean that the concepts of goodness, righteousness and truth never appear together. Many commentators cite Mic 6:8¹¹⁸ as a statement that communicates similar ideas to the list in Eph 5:9.¹¹⁹ This may be a valid connection, though it is more strongly defensible through the MT than through the LXX. In the LXX, the Greek terms for "good" (καλόν), "justice" (κρίμα) and "kindness" (ἔλεον) do not match what appears in Eph 5:9. Further, in Mic 6:8 goodness summarizes the value of justice, kindness and humble walking with God, while in Eph 5:9 it is an independent virtue.

The same can also be said of another OT passage sometimes cited as a parallel to Eph 5:9, 2 Chr 31:20.¹²⁰ Here, the Hebrew has only one overlapping term with Mic 6:8, "good" (טוב), while the LXX uses only two Greek terms, καλόν and εὐθές, neither of which appear in Eph 5:9, and only one of which appears in Mic 6:8.

Two Qumran passages are often cited as parallels to Eph 5:9, 1QS 1.5 and

¹¹⁶ 1:5 - "He destined us. . . to be his sons;" 2:2 - "the sons of disobedience;" 2:3 - "children of wrath;" 3:5 - "sons of men;" 5:1 - "as beloved children;" 5:6 - "sons of disobedience" (RSV).

¹¹⁷ Wibbing, *Tugend- und Lasterkataloge*, 43-76, attributes Qumran similarities to Iranian influences. Wilcox, "Dualism, Gnosticism, and Other Elements in the Pre-Pauline Tradition," 83-88, mentions how a lack of primary source evidence for such thinking would require one "to look back possibly as far as the Exile or Persian period for the links" (p 87). In his review of Wibbing's book, FF Bruce, *Journal of Theological Studies* 11 (1960): 389-91, observed that Wibbing failed to consider the obvious dualism found in OT passages such as Deut 27:15-26 and 30:15, which compare interestingly with 1QS 2.3-18.

¹¹⁸ "He has showed you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness and to walk humbly with your God?" (RSV).

¹¹⁹ Barth, *Ephesians 4-6*, 568; Gnllka, *Der Epheserbrief*, 253; Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 328; Schnackenburg, *Der Brief an die Epheser*, 229.

¹²⁰ "Thus Hezekiah did throughout all Judah; and he did what was good and right and faithful before the Lord his God" (RSV). This is cited both by Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 328, and Schnackenburg, *Der Brief an die Epheser*, 229.

1QS 8.2.¹²¹ These both have two overlapping Hebrew terms with Mic 6.8, "good," "judgement" (משפּה, 1QS 1.5) and "mercy" (חסר, 1QS 8.2). 1QS 1.5 also refers to what is good, as well as what is righteous and true, though again, unlike Eph 5:9, and like Mic 6:8, goodness summarizes the virtues that follow. The variety of terminology, both in Hebrew and in Greek, indicates that no fixed form of special virtues was in use, also making direct dependence by Eph 5:9 unlikely, and diminishing the value of these as parallels.

When Greek versions of OT Pseudepigrapha are examined, the three concepts of goodness, righteousness and truth are never found together, though often two of these three are paired.¹²² The frequency of pairings matches that found in the LXX (see note 45, p 197); righteousness and truth occur in tandem more than righteousness and goodness, which appear more than goodness and truth. Each of the three terms represent definite Jewish moral values. Though

¹²¹ 1QS 1.5: ". . . to depart from all evil and cling to all good works; and to practise truth and righteousness and justice on earth. . . ;" 1QS 8.1-2: "In the council of the Community (there shall be) twelve men and three priests, perfect in all that is revealed of all the Law, to practise truth, righteousness, justice, loving charity, and modesty one towards the other. . ." Tr in A Dupont-Sommer, *The Essene Writings from Qumran*. In addition to these, Kuhn, "The Epistle to the Ephesians in the Light of the Qumran Texts," 123-24, also cites 1QS 2.24-25, 4.5, 5.3-4, 5.25, admitting the lack of uniformity in the terminology used, saying that "the basic meaning intended is the same" (p 124).

¹²² Righteousness and truth: *1 Enoch* 10.16: "Destroy injustice from the face of the earth. And every iniquitous deed will end, and the plant of righteousness and truth will appear forever and he will plant joy;" *1 Enoch* 104.12-13: "Again know another mystery!: that to the righteous and the wise shall be given the Scriptures of joy, for truth and great wisdom. So to them shall be given the Scriptures; and they shall believe them and be glad in them; and all the righteous ones who learn from the ways of truth shall rejoice;" *Ep Arist* 306: "What is their purpose in washing their hands while saying their prayers? They explained that it is evidence that they have done no evil, for all activity takes place by means of the hands. Thus they nobly and piously refer everything to righteousness and truth;" *Pss Sol* 3.6: "The confidence [ἀληθεία - should read "truthfulness"] of the righteous ones (comes) from God their savior;/ sin after sin does not visit the house of the righteous;" *T Lev* 16.2: "You persecute just men: and you hate the pious; the word of the faithful you regard with revulsion;" *T Ben* 10.3: "Do truth and righteousness each one with his neighbour" (my tr, based on the de Jonge text); *T Job* 4.11 - ". . . the Lord is just, true and strong. . . ;" *T Job* 43.13: "Righteous is the Lord, true are his judgments." Righteousness and goodness: *3 Bar* 11.9: "This is where the virtues of the righteous and the good works which they do are carried, which are brought by him before the heavenly God;" *Ep Arist* 18: "For I had great hope,. . . that God would execute the fulfillment of my requests, inasmuch as whatsoever men think to do in piety in the way of righteousness and attention to good works, God the Lord of all directs their acts and intentions;" *Sib Or* 3.231-34: "And indeed they [the Chaldeans] have taught errors to shameful men/ from which many evils come upon mortals on earth/ so that they are misled as to good ways and righteous deeds./ But they [the Jews] care for righteousness and virtue [ἀρετήν]/ and not love of money, which begets innumerable evils/ for mortal men, war, and limitless famine;" *Sib Or* 3.312: ". . . as you yourself formerly poured out the blood of good men and righteous men;" *T Ben* 4.3: ". . . this one, doing good, overcomes the evil, being preserved by the good; and he loves the righteous person as his own soul" (my tr, based on the De Jonge text); *T Abr* 1.1.5: "But above all others he is righteous in all goodness, (having been) hospitable and loving until the end of his life." Goodness and truth: *T Dan* 1.4: ". . . Joseph, a man who was true and good." Translations are from *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*.

their combinations occur somewhat sporadically, each term depicts a behavioural ideal.

When Hellenistic and Classical writings are consulted, it becomes apparent that once more, the writer of Ephesians employs moral commonplaces. Hardly any philosopher failed to discuss virtues, though, unlike Eph 5:9, this is often summarized as a seeking after "the good," sometimes rendered τὸ ἀγαθόν. Within this good, "justice" (δικαιοσύνη) and "truth" (ἀλήθεια) are frequent topics.¹²³ Each

¹²³ Plato, *Laws*, often mentions individual qualities under the general category of good, or virtue, that good laws should promote. In 631A-B (I: 23-25 in tr) he interchanges the terms ἀγαθὰ and ἀρετή, proceeding to state how wisdom, temperance, courage and justice are divine goods that the lawgiver should keep before himself. Later he remarks, "Of all the goods, for gods and men alike, truth stands first. Thereof let every man partake from his earliest days, if he purposes to become blessed and happy, that so he may live his life as a true man so long as possible. He is a trusty man; but untrustworthy is the man who loves the voluntary lie; and senseless is the man who loves the involuntary lie; and neither of these two is to be envied" (630C, tr by RG Bury, (London: William Heinemann, 1926), I: 333-35). According to Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* I.iv.6, 1095a, the cultivation of the virtues is the aim of the life that seeks the good, a life that is aimed at living properly, doing what is right, or being "a competent student of the Right and Just [τὸν περὶ καλῶν καὶ δικαίων]" (tr by H Rackham, (London: William Heinemann, 1926), 13), also considered several lines later as a pursuit of "truth" (I.vi.1, 1096a, p 17 in tr). In a different sense, Justice and Truth are treated as individual virtues necessary for the pursuit of the good. Dio Chrysostom, 13.31-33 (II: 17-19 in tr), in recounting a statement made to a group of Romans about proper education, refers to truth, the good and righteousness as aspects and products of the teaching process. Elsewhere (69.1), when discussing those who fail to pursue virtue, he notes how they would willingly follow a virtuous leader "whom they suppose to be really prudent and righteous and wise and, in a word, a good man" (tr by HL Crosby, (London: William Heinemann, 1951), V: 139). He concludes: "Therefore in this respect no one could censure them as not perceiving that virtue is something august and precious and all-important; yet they really desire any and every thing in preference to becoming good, and they busy themselves with everything in preference to the problem of becoming self-controlled and wise and righteous and men of merit, competent to govern themselves well, to manage a household well, to rule a city well, to endure well either wealth or poverty, to behave well toward friends and kinsmen, to care for parents with equity, and to serve gods with piety" (69.2, V: 139-41 in tr). Epictetus talks much about these three items separately, though often combining them with other topics: "Isn't there such a thing as reverence, faith, justice? Prove yourself superior in these points, in order to be superior as a human being" (III.iv.13-14, tr by WA Oldfather, (London: William Heinemann, 1926, 1928), II: 99); "But if you hear these men assert that in all sincerity they believe the good to be where the moral purpose lies, and where there is the right [ὀρθῆ] use of external impressions, then you need no longer trouble yourself as to whether they are son and father, or brothers, or have been schoolmates a long time and are comrades; but though this is the only knowledge you have concerning them, you may confidently declare them 'friends,' just as you may declare them 'faithful' and 'upright.' For where else is friendship to be found than where there is fidelity, respect and devotion to things honourable and to naught beside?" (II.xxii.29-30, I: 401-403 in tr); "The subject-matter with which the good and excellent man [τοῦ καὶ ἀγαθοῦ] has to deal is his own governing principle, that of a physician and the masseur is the body, of a farmer is his farm; but the function of the good and excellent man is to deal with his impressions in accordance with nature. Now just as it is the nature of every soul to assent to the true, dissent from the false, and to withhold judgement in a matter of uncertainty, so it is its nature to be moved with desire toward the good, with aversion toward the evil, and feel neutral toward what is neither evil nor good. For just as neither the banker nor the greengrocer may legally refuse the coinage of Caesar, but if you present it, whether he will or no, he must turn over to you what you are purchasing with it, so it is also with the soul. the instant the good appears it attracts the soul to itself, while the evil repels the soul from itself. A soul will never refuse a clear sense-impression of good, any more than a man will refuse the coinage of Caesar. On this concept of the good hangs every impulse to act both of man and of God" (III.iii.1-4, II.29-31).

of these items are often discussed on their own, some with more detail than others, but each are regarded as important aspects for appropriate living. In one respect, Eph 5:9 stands as a genuine virtue-list, where ideal qualities are held forth as measuring sticks for the readers to determine the moral quality of their lives. Though the Greek terminology in Eph 5:9 contains especially Christian elements, both the concept of listing and the general moral thrust of the list would certainly be familiar to any educated gentile among the original readers.

4.4 Pleasing God¹²⁴

As some have noted, terminology similar to the Greek found in 5:10 for pleasing the Lord (εὐάρεστον τῷ κυρίῳ) appears throughout the LXX.¹²⁵ Most often, the expression "please God" or "please the Lord" renders the Hebrew "walk with God" or "walk with the Lord," translating the Hebrew *הלך* with the Greek verb εὐάρεστῶ. This appears in summary statements about the overall character of certain biblical heroes.¹²⁶ None of these uses refer to any specific activity that is said to be pleasing to God; rather, these statements generalize about the spiritual quality of the life of the individual being mentioned. Some LXX appearances of the concept of pleasing God indicate people's adhering to aspects of a legal code,¹²⁷ or engaging in some other activity deemed to be appropriate or inappropriate.¹²⁸

¹²⁴ As in §3.8 above, comparisons are made to observe functional equivalents, not Christology.

¹²⁵ Barth, *Ephesians 4-5*, 569; Gnllka, *Der Epheserbrief*, 254; Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 329.

¹²⁶ Gen 5:22 - Enoch; 5:24 - Enoch; 6:9 - Noah; 17:1 - Abram; 24:40 - Abraham; 48:15 - Abraham and Isaac; LXX Ps 55:14 - the Psalmist, by tradition David; LXX Ps 114:9 - the Psalmist. Additionally, the expression is employed in Wis 4:4, 10 and Sir 44:16, the latter in explicit reference to Enoch, while the two Wisdom references to apply to Enoch by inference. On this last aspect, see D Winston, *The Wisdom of Solomon*, (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1979), 139-40. Additionally, various forms of terms beginning with ἀρεσ- and translating a variety of other Hebrew terms also describe general actions/individuals that/who please God: Ezra 7:18 - whatever certain Israelites choose to do with the gold and silver brought back from Babylon; Isa 38:3 - God's response to Hezekiah's prayer for deliverance; Tob 4:21 - a general exhortation to Tobias to serve God.

¹²⁷ Exod 15:26 - all God's commandments; Deut 6:18 - all God's commandments; Deut 12:25 - laws of unclean food; Deut 12:28 - laws of offerings; Deut 13:19 - all God's commandments; Deut 21:9 - laws concerning people who are killed; Dan 4.37A - food laws; Mal 3:4 - sacrifices; 1 Bar 4:4 - the entire Law.

¹²⁸ The abbreviation (neg) marks deeds deemed inappropriate in the context of that passage: Lev 10:19: Aaron's refusal to eat sin-offerings after his sons had been killed; Num 22:34: (neg) Balaam's traveling to Balak; Num 23:27: (neg) Balak's suggestion of moving to another place from which to curse Israel; 3 Kgdms 3:10: Solomon's asking God for wisdom; Ezra 10:11: men of Judah and Benjamin putting away their pagan wives; LXX Ps 68:32: praising God with a song; Prov 21:3: doing justly and speaking truth (which are said to be more pleasing than sacrifices); Prov 24:18: (neg) rejoicing over the downfall of an ungodly person; Isa 59:15: (neg) not adhering to truth and righteousness; Sir 48:22:

With less frequency than the LXX, Greek versions of OT Pseudepigrapha do appeal to the concept of pleasing God, also using terminology similar to Eph 5:10.¹²⁹ The concept of pleasing god, or pleasing gods, is also present in several different Classical and Hellenistic writings.¹³⁰ Within these latter writings this sometimes refers to cultic activity,¹³¹ but even more frequently to moral activity, often guided by some sort of philosophical premise.¹³² It is instructive in this regard to note that neither 1QS nor CD display any overt concern with the notion of pleasing God, a remarkable silence in view of other connections alleged to exist between Qumran and Ephesians.¹³³

Hezekiah's praying for deliverance.

¹²⁹ There are five known instances. *T Lev* 2.3B009 and *T Abr* 1.15.14 both refer to general activities that please God. Specific acts, either pleasing or displeasing to God are mentioned in: *T Iss* 4.1-6: abstention from avarice, defrauding one's neighbour, gluttony, lust and envy on the one hand, and a person's living "by the integrity of his soul" eventually leading to fulfilling God's commands on the other; *T Dan* 1.3: "truth with honest dealings;" *3 Bar* 8.5: "the lawlessness and unrighteousness of men committing fornication, adultery, theft, robbery, idol-worship, drunkenness, murder, discord, jealousy, slander, murmuring, gossip, divination, and other things which are unacceptable to God." Tr in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*.

¹³⁰ A computer search through the writings attributed to Aristotle, Crates, Demosthenes, Dio Chrysostom, Diogenes Laertius, Epictetus, Epicurus, Isocrates, Plato, Plutarch and Zeno yielded only eleven places where terms beginning with "αρεσ," "ηρεσ," "ευαρεσ" and "ευηρεσ," and appearing within four lines of terms beginning with "θεο," "θεω" and "θεα," referred to the issue of pleasing god or gods: Dio Chrysostom 1.16, 30.44; Epictetus I.xii.8, 21, I.xiii - all; IV.iv.48; IV.xii.11; Plato, "Definitions" 415A; Plutarch, "Pelopidas" 21.5, "Caesar" 69.6, *Moralia* 871C, "De Herodoti malignitate."

¹³¹ Plato, "Definitions" 415A - that holy service of the gods pleases the gods; Plutarch, "Pelopidas" 21.5 - a debate as to whether human sacrifice is acceptable to the gods; Plutarch, *Moralia* "De Herodoti malignitate" 871C - that the gods were satisfied with the thanksgiving offering of first-fruits from the victory of a particular battle.

¹³² This is especially true with the Stoic philosophers Dio Chrysostom and Epictetus. Dio Chrysostom 1.16 (I: 11 in tr) refers both to the good and just king who naturally puts his trust in the gods and to wicked people who cannot please the gods. In an analogy likening human existence to an earthly banquet, 30.44, he states that "sober" people at the banquet of life please the gods and enter into the eternal banquet. Epictetus often refers to the upholding of the "moral purpose" as an interior act that pleases the gods, as opposed to striving for external objects and statuses that amount to nothing - 1.12.8, 1.12.21, 4.4.48, 4.12.11. Most significant in this regard is the thirteenth discourse in Book One (I: 99-101 in tr) that addresses the question, "How may each several thing be done acceptably to the gods?" The short discourse discusses how refraining from anger toward slaves who do not serve properly at meals is one such example, since it considers that all people ultimately come from the gods. Civil treatment acknowledges their mutual heritage. The discourse ends by contrasting human laws, which say that slaves are inferior, to divine laws which say that all people are the offspring of the gods and merit equal treatment. Plutarch has one recorded instance of an immoral aspect being emphasized as being displeasing to the gods - the slaying of Caesar ("Caesar" 69.6).

¹³³ This, unfortunately, is a negative statement, open to disproof by the location of one contradictory statement. Nevertheless, a basic reading of both texts indicates much more of a concern with following specific precepts, to be adhered to not for God's delight but for the maintenance of righteousness or "perfection" as opposed to stubbornness of heart. Thus, there seems to be no echoing even of language about people walking with God. See 1QS 1.6, 15, 2.1-2, 13-14, 25-26, 3.9-10, 4.6-7, 11-12, 15-16, 18, 24, 5.2, 5.10-11, 6.1-2, 7.19, 7.23, 8.18, 20, 21, 9.6, 8-9, 12, 19, 12.10; CD 2.15, 18, 3.2,

This brief survey indicates that pleasing God can be both a Jewish and a Hellenistic concern. The notion can include the adherence to specific laws or cultic practices. Sometimes the concept of pleasing God appeals to an intuitive assumption based on a presupposed spiritual or mental disposition. It is this dimension that also appears in Eph 5:10, though in reference to Christ. The readers are told to find out what pleases the Lord rather than informed of specific precepts that they must obey.

4.5 Moral Purity

Within different strands of Judaism, there is evidence to suggest that issues concerning moral purity can be segregated from issues concerning ritual or cultic purity such as cleanliness of foods or adherence to special feasts.¹³⁴ Paul seems to do this when in Rom 1:24 he deals with divine displeasure over moral impurity, while in Rom 14:20 he proclaims all things as pure when he discusses issues related to food and drink. Within specifically Jewish writings, a glaring example of a distinction between these two kinds of purity is found in *Ep Arist* 128-171, where "legislation concerning meats and drink and beasts considered to be unclean" (128) is explained in moral terms:

As to the birds which are forbidden, you will find wild and carnivorous kinds, and the rest which dominate by their own strength, and who find their food at the expense of the aforementioned domesticated birds--which is an injustice; and not only that, they also seize lambs and kids and outrage human beings dead or alive. By calling them impure, he has thereby indicated that it is the solemn binding duty of those for whom the legislation has been established to practice righteousness and not to lord it over anyone in reliance upon their own strength, nor to deprive him of anything, but to govern their lives righteously, in the manner of the gentle creatures among the aforementioned birds

5, 6.10, 7.4, 7, 8.9, 12.21, 23, 13.22, 14.1. Even when CD 2.17-3.12 recounts the history of faithfulness and unfaithfulness of various historical personages, it emphasizes negative aspects. Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, are referred to as God's friends principally because they kept God's commandments (3.3-4). The emphasis throughout both documents is on the maintenance of a legal standard, an emphasis decidedly absent from Ephesians. RA Culpepper, "Ethical Dualism and Church Discipline. Ephesians 4:25-5:20," *Review and Expositor* 76 (1979): 532, observes: ". . . although both the scrolls and Ephesians ascribe salvation to the grace of God, in the scrolls that grace is conferred through radical obedience to Torah, while in Ephesians it is received through faith in Jesus Christ (cf. 'in the Lord' in 5:8). The absence of other significant elements of Essene theology and ethics in Ephesians militates against the supposition of a direct relationship between the two."

¹³⁴ J Neusner and BD Chilton, "Uncleanness: A Moral or an Ontological Category in the Early Centuries A.D.?" *Bulletin for Biblical Research* 1 (1991): 63-88, introduce the classifications of ontological purity and moral purity. The former is achievable through cultic obedience, the latter, however, is principally metaphoric. They point out that different strands of Judaism emphasized one over the other depending on their viewpoints. However, they also indicate that ontological and moral approaches are strict classifications, rather than predominating tendencies. While such strict classification may be valid for the evidence they cite in Mishnaic sources, it is not necessarily the case always. Paul, for example, saw himself as a Jew who was blameless when considering righteousness according to the law (Phil 3:6) and yet still advocated moral blamelessness in the same piece of writing (Phil 1:10, 2:15). Purity can be both ontological and moral to the same person.

which feed on those plants which grow on the ground and do not exercise a domination leading to the destruction of their fellow creatures. . . (146-48)¹³⁵

A similar moralizing of cultic regulations is found in *T Ash* 2.1-10 where evil people who do good things are likened to unclean animals that look as if they are clean, and 4.1-5 where good people who do what seems to be wrong are likened to clean animals that look as if they are unclean. *Jubilees* is an example of a piece of writing that tends to do the reverse, deriving the concept of purity from points in the ordering of time that establish the cycle of a Jubilee. These points mark the progress of world history that leads to the final vindication of righteousness, sometimes discussing morality as a separate issue and other times as a deviation from the divinely ordered plan.¹³⁶

One could argue that the appearance of cultic purity issues in the same context as moral ones in writings such as Leviticus may represent, not the emic reflection of an ordered world view,¹³⁷ but an etic imposition of standards elevating cultic issues to the same status of righteousness as moral ones, in much the same way as has been suggested with the appearance of certain "non-standard" sins in the presence of traditional ones within NT sin-lists.¹³⁸ One need not assume that the Levitical regulations would have made cultural sense to all ancient Israelites who would have attempted to adhere to them. Though statements such as those found in *Ep Arist* and in *T Ash* are often considered as apologetic attempts to make a foreign Jewish religion appear to be more normal to Hellenistic minds,¹³⁹ they may also represent attempts to solve a problem of relevance among Jews themselves, a problem that may have been much older than the Hellenization of Palestine.

¹³⁵ Tr by RJH Shutt, in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, II: 21-22.

¹³⁶ E.g. *Jub* 5.1-2: "And when the children of men began to multiply on the surface of the earth and daughters were born to them, that [sic] the angels of the Lord say in a certain year of that jubilee that they were good to look at. And they took wives for themselves from all of those whom they chose. And they bore children for them; and they were the giants. And injustice increased upon the earth, and all flesh corrupted its way; man and cattle and beasts and birds and everything which walks on the earth. And they all corrupted their way and their ordinances, and they began to eat one another. And injustice grew upon the earth and every imagination of the thoughts of all mankind was thus continually evil." Tr by OS Wintermute, in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, II: 64.

¹³⁷ This modifies the analysis of M Douglas, *Purity and Danger*, (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1966), 41-57.

¹³⁸ See E Schweizer, "Traditional Ethical Patterns in the Pauline and Post-Pauline Letters and Their Development (Lists of Vices and House-Tables)," in *Text and Interpretation*, ed by E Best and R McL Wilson, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 199-200.

¹³⁹ J Collins, *Between Athens and Jerusalem*, (New York: Crossroad, 1983), 142-43.

Ephesians is decidedly non-legal. The statement, in 2:15, that the law has been abolished is not contradicted by the imposition of another law. In 5:3-14 the writer restricts certain kinds of conversation as not being proper on the one hand, while telling his readers to find out what pleases "the Lord" on the other. This certainly stands in the tradition of Pauline thought.¹⁴⁰ It may also reflect the tendency of various strands of Judaism that explained cultic activities in moral terms. The writer of Ephesians ignores the cultic altogether and promotes, instead, notions of propriety that are more universally recognized through his world.

4.6 Conclusions

Though assorted issues have been discussed here, one basic notion can be inferred from them all. It is both difficult and risky to postulate dependence of Eph 5:3-14 on any one single tradition. Elements from various strands of Judaism are present, but no single viewpoint has exclusive influence. For every similarity found, one can also find significant omissions from that same tradition. The same can be said about similarities with Classical and Hellenistic writings. There are some points of contact, but no overt dependencies. Eph 5:3-14 is definitely a product of its age. From one standpoint, it seems to say very little that can be called new and original. However, the passage contains a fresh presentation of ideas, many of which could have been familiar to the original readers, but which have a new slant because of their association with the Christian God.

Ephesians' moral teaching presents in familiar terms how the readers should behave as converts. The writer addresses his readers as saints (5:4), inheritors of the kingdom of Christ and of God (5:5) and light in the Lord (5:8). Rather than associate in any way with non-Christian practices, they are to learn how to please the Lord (5:10), demonstrating values commensurate with the divine way of life. They have been raised from the dead with the light of Christ shining on them (5:14). They are to live as children of light (5:8).

5 Eph 5:3-14 - Honour and Shame

Eph 5:3, 4 and 12 each contain expressions that convey some concern with social propriety: "as is fitting among saints;" "which are not fitting;" "it is a shame."

¹⁴⁰ J Barclay, *Obeying the Truth*, (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1988), 71: "If his [Paul's] experience at Corinth is anything to go by, it appears that he tended to underestimate the needs of his Gentile converts for basic moral instruction: he is clearly surprised that the Corinthians did not share his moral assumptions. So long as Paul was present, he was at hand to give moral guidance. But in his absence, and without an established tradition of Christian ethics and experience, his advice to 'walk in the Spirit' must have appeared distinctly unsatisfactory."

These phrases all indicate some form of socialization. They denote morality in terms of social etiquette that undergirds the lifestyle of those who have been converted.¹⁴¹ But these expressions need not represent re-socialization alone. They may also reflect a particular way of understanding the world. The interest in propriety, coupled with other features - the concept of inheritance (v 5), a warning about being deceived (v 6), designation of disapproved people as "sons of disobedience" (v 6), concern with participation in impropriety (vv 7, 11), exposing impropriety (vv 12, 13) - these all indicate that the writer tends to view the world in an honour-shame framework.

A culture concerned with honour-shame principles is primarily other-oriented. It gives "attentiveness to appearances" as opposed to the "attentiveness to the inner voice" prominent in guilt-oriented cultures.¹⁴² "Honour is the value of a person in his own eyes, but also in the eyes of his society. It is his estimation of his own worth, his *claim* to pride, but it is also the acknowledgement of that claim, his excellence recognized by society, his *right* to pride."¹⁴³ It works together with shame¹⁴⁴ and sometimes represents more of an ideal rather than an actual state that is consciously earned.

As explained by outside observers, ". . . shame may be defined as an unpleasant emotional reaction by an individual to an actual or presumed negative judgment of himself by others resulting in self-depreciation vis-à-vis the group."¹⁴⁵ As recognized emically, shame would more often refer to specific acts, rather than

¹⁴¹ In the language of P Berger and T Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality*, (London: Penguin, 1966), 177-82, new converts must be "re-socialized" into new "plausibility structures" that are mediated by "significant others" who represent a new sort of authority. In this case, the writer of Ephesians represents that authority, not simply "Paul" but the God empowering "Paul." Berger and Luckmann state: ". . . ideas that are discrepant with the new definitions of reality are systematically avoided" (p 179).

¹⁴² D Daube, "Shame Culture in Luke," in *Paul and Paulinism*, ed by MD Hooker and SG Wilson, (London: SPCK, 1982), 355.

¹⁴³ J Pitt-Rivers, "Honour and Social Status," in *Honour and Shame*, ed by JG Peristiany, (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1965), 21.

¹⁴⁴ It is not necessarily the opposite of shame. See Unni Wikan, "Shame and Honour: Contestable Pair," *Man* (New Series) 19 (1984): 635-52. Wikan maintains (p 637) that honour is "experience-distant" while shame is more "experience-near;" inhabitants of some honour-shame cultures speak of shame, but not of honour: "Shame' accompanies negative sanctions as an exclamation and explicative, it constantly enters both into commentary and transactions. 'Honour' figures mainly in 'theory' discourse--it is not itself part of the give and take of interaction" (p 638).

¹⁴⁵ DP Ausubel, "Relationships between Shame and Guilt in the Socializing Process," *Psychological Review* 62 (1955): 382.

to an experiential state,¹⁴⁶ but remains something that a group acknowledges. This does not mean that people in an honour-shame type of culture cannot experience personal guilt for wrong-doing, nor that a person in a guilt-oriented culture cannot be subject to honour or shame.¹⁴⁷

It does mean that in some societies, what others think about a certain activity is more of a controlling factor than any sense of rightness or wrongness alleged to belong to a certain activity. Though people may acknowledge some misdeeds such as adultery or lying as wrong, perhaps even shameful in and of themselves, the mere commission of these deeds does not evoke guilt for violation of a standard, nor even automatic loss of face. Social censorship arises when, through an often complicated combination of cultural factors, a deed performed by a certain person in a certain way violates certain over-arching community standards.¹⁴⁸

There is a tendency in some circles to see the New Testament portraying an overall "Mediterranean" cultural view.¹⁴⁹ While certain patterns exist that allow for such a designation to hold for that region today, anthropologists also recognize major differences that preclude an oversimplification of phenomena.¹⁵⁰ The fact that honour-shame motivates behaviour in that region today does not necessitate that it would have to the same degree in the first-century world. Evidence from Classical Greek writers indicates a developing sense of individuality and conscience, observable even in Homer. The Pauline world does not automatically fit into strict

¹⁴⁶ This is demonstrated by U Wikan, "Shame and Honour: A Contestable Pair," 638-39.

¹⁴⁷ RF Newbold, "Personality Structure and Response to Adversity in Early Christian Hagiography," *Numen* 31 (1984): 200-201: "Shame and guilt are difficult personality characteristics to discuss and disentangle because they can alternate with, reinforce and conceal one another. Shame is not wholly external in its orientation nor is guilt wholly internal." DP Ausubel, "Relationships between Shame and Guilt in the Socializing Process," 378-79: ". . . although the two kinds of sanctions are distinguishable from one another, they are nevertheless neither dichotomous nor mutually exclusive. . ."

¹⁴⁸ Thus, U Wikan, "Shame and Honour: A Contestable Pair," 639-46, describes the apparent contradiction of a known adulteress, whose act is acknowledged by all in her community as wrong, even in itself a "shame," nevertheless enjoying respect because the material gain received from her adultery makes her more kind and hospitable. Further, her husband is not disgraced, because he does not know about it, and no man in the community thinks it his business to inform him - husbands must find out on their own, and then initiate divorce proceedings, but until then, everyone maintains his or her standing.

¹⁴⁹ This is reflected most prominently in the works of B Malina, *The New Testament World*, (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1981) and *Christian Origins and Cultural Anthropology*, (Atlanta: John Knox, 1986), but also in the collection of essays found in *The Social World of Luke-Acts*, ed by JH Neyrey, (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1991).

¹⁵⁰ JG Peristiany, "Introduction," in *Honour and Shame*, 9.

honour-shame categories.¹⁵¹ One must generalize cautiously.

Ephesians itself clearly evinces concerns that predominate in guilt-oriented societies: some deeds can be inherently right or wrong; people should develop an inner sensitivity to detect what is right and wrong. Regard for the inner person (3:16-17) has an ethical bearing when the readers are reminded to "be renewed in the spirit of [their] minds" (4:23, RSV), ostensibly so that they know what is appropriate behaviour. Sins are depicted as guilt-producing violations that have been forgiven by God as a spiritual benefit (1:7). "Trespases and sins" in 2:1-2 indicate the committing of deeds that have transgressed divine standards.

But these notions also exist alongside of others that denote an honour-shame mentality on the part of the writer. He comments frequently how God has brought people from a low to a high status position. The readers have been delivered from a shameful state to one of honour. In 2:1-10, the readers' condition is described as one beginning with death and association with evil powers and ending with "co-" status with the heavenly, all-powerful Christ. Eph 2:11-22 describes how the readers have moved from alienation and non-status to "co-" status with Jewish Christians among God's new people. In 3:1-13 "Paul," the "very least" of all *saints*, has received the privilege of proclaiming hidden mysteries of the gospel.

The readers are told of their honourable standing, and then told to live worthily of this standing, the calling they have received (4:1).¹⁵² Such an honour-shame pattern would strengthen the guilt-by-association argument in 4:17-24; if the readers are in an honourable position, they ought not to associate themselves with practices that are shameful. To drive home the point, the writer says, "You did not so learn Christ!" (4:20, RSV), a statement that could evoke shame in those who think or do otherwise.

A certain interplay between guilt and shame seems to exist. This appears clearly in 5:3-14. Specific activities are censured, evoking guilt, but this is done in archetypal ways, evoking shame. The readers are informed that people are

¹⁵¹ W Den Boer, *Private Morality in Greece and Rome*, (Leiden: EJ Brill, 1979), 8-12, cites ample evidence to dispute the notion that "shame-culture" precluded a sense of guilt and personal conscience among early Greek writers. RF Newbold, "Personality Structure and Response to Adversity in Early Christian Hagiography," 208-10, refers to the sense of inner development and purity found in Stoic writers, and the value of internal purity before God championed by the OT prophets, by Jesus and by Paul that would eventually give way to a highly guilt-oriented world view existing among fourth-century monastics.

¹⁵² D Daube, "Shame Culture in Luke," 360, notes how a care for worthiness flourishes in an honour-shame setting.

accountable to God for violations of his standards: ". . . it is because of these things that the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience" (5:6, RSV). And yet, "the sons of disobedience" are a class of shameful people. "Fornication, all impurity or covetousness" are, according to the writer, guilt-producing infractions that provoke God's wrath, which also indicates God's disapproval. The mere talk of the committing of these deeds is both proscribed as a standard and reckoned as shameful "co-" participation with the evildoers (5:7, 11).

In place of doing anything that associates them with the darkness of their pre-conversion state of shame, the readers are enjoined to live as children of light. The "fruit" of such light is described with three broad, undefined terms: "goodness" "righteousness" and "truth." In some cultures, such terminology is known to be the genuine emic opposition to acts of shame,¹⁵³ possible to be evaluated, etically, as a state of honour.

However, it is the statement that the readers are to "expose" the deeds of darkness that makes enormously more sense when considered in a shame context. Public exposure is a major facet of shame.¹⁵⁴ As discussed by anthropologists, this usually refers to the open display of an individual's shortcomings. In Eph 5:12-14 exposure refers to the public revelation of the despicableness of a deed. If the fruitless deeds of darkness are to be exposed, they must certainly be shameful. According to the writer of Ephesians, it is a shame even to mention them. The fact that they are done in secret heightens this shame.¹⁵⁵ It is this great shame that seems to motivate his further explanation of the need to expose them - proper exposure belongs to the honourable realm of light. When light exposes such acts, there is no way one can justify participating in them.

Perhaps this is where the guilt perspective re-enters. Honour-shame oriented

¹⁵³ U Wikan, "Shame and Honour: A Contestable Pair," 637, cites one example coming from poor people in the back streets of Cairo: "But the person who behaves properly, according to society's highest standards, is not said to possess honour (*sharaf*), or even to be honourable. He or she is *kwayyis(a)* (good, nice), *'amir(a)*, (kind, generous), *tayyib(a)* (kind-hearted) or, better still, *bithibbini* (She loves me)--the most praiseworthy attribute of all, in this culture where excellence is so often egocentrically judged."

¹⁵⁴ D Daube, "Shame Culture in Luke," 365; G Kaufman, "The Meaning of Shame: Toward a Self-affirming Identity," *Journal of Counseling Psychology* 21 (1974): 568-69. This is also suggested by DP Ausubel, "Relationships between Shame and Guilt in the Socializing Process," 382; RF Newbold, "Personality Structure and Response to Adversity in Early Christian Hagiography," 205; and J Pitt-Rivers, "Honour and Social Status," 42.

¹⁵⁵ D Daube, "Shame Culture in Luke," 363, notes the relationship between hiddenness and the fear of shame.

cultures are notorious for perceived inconsistencies in which morally proscribed activities are legitimized in some circumstances for the sake of honour.¹⁵⁶ When living in the honourable world of the converted, any shameful activity is unjustifiable. The readers have already been designated as light in the Lord (5:8). Vv 12-14 describe how the power of light enables them to see evil deeds as genuinely wrong from God's standpoint. When accepting this new perspective the readers can more clearly perceive why they should avoid them wholeheartedly.

This honour-shame outlook may help explain the generally non-specific rendering of the behavioural responsibilities incumbent on the readers as converts. The author promotes a definite sense of rightness and wrongness of certain activities, yet specifies no more than the archetypal guidelines of 4:25-5:2, the general statements on categories of evil kinds of behaviour in 5:3-5, or the basic listing of the overall tenor of ideal behaviour in 5:9. Beyond this, he urges his readers to discover what pleases the Lord. This sort of vagueness fits an honour-shame mentality because it emphasizes approval of persons more than transgression of a code.

This opens up an area of ambiguity. If people in honour-shame situations depend on others for approval or disapproval, who are the onlookers filling that role for the writer of Ephesians? From whom do the readers receive shame for disobedience? Is it the writer himself? Is it the individual group or groups being addressed? Is it God? None of these three are necessarily mutually exclusive. However, approval both from other readers and from the writer is ultimately meaningless if the readers' behaviour is not approved of by God, or by Christ who is the controlling head of all things (1:22-23) and the one out of whom the whole body comprised of writer, readers and all believers, grows (4:16). "Christ" shines on them (5:14); "the Lord" is to be pleased (5:11); God receives sacrifices of love (5:2); Christ is to be emulated and God imitated (4:32, 5:1-2); the Spirit can be grieved (4:30).

What is "fitting for saints" may initially connote a form of spiritual peer-pressure, but ultimately indicates God's own approval or disapproval. The shame of disobedience comes, not from anything as theological as loss of salvation, but rather from some sense of divine disapproval that can only be inferred. "The Lord"

¹⁵⁶ Examples in J Pitt-Rivers, "Honour and Social Status," 32-33, are most illuminating in this regard.

is to be pleased because, according to the writer, he is responsible for the readers' new position of honour. Only as the readers develop a sense of who this Lord is can they know in greater sureness what pleases him.

6 Conclusions on Eph 5:3-14

The moral teaching in 5:3-14 is both common and unusual. It certainly coheres with various ideas presented in chapters 1-3. It also resembles aspects both of the antecedent Pauline corpus and of certain Hellenistic and Jewish writings. The writer makes his point differently from these other three sources of moral teaching. Instead of merely prohibiting certain sins, he restricts talking about them, as though such talk was a form of participation in them. Instead of discussing virtuous qualities such as goodness, righteousness and truth, he simply lists them as ideals against which his readers should measure their activities. Instead of advocating concrete forms of behaviour, he tells his readers to discover what pleases the Lord. The readers have an honourable standing before God that they must maintain, but can only do so in dynamic awareness of what pleases and displeases God.

This makes the writer's prayers (1:17-19; 3:14-19) for his readers all the more significant for the epistle's moral teaching. They are directed toward an intimate knowledge of God, such that the readers would understand in all wisdom and knowledge what God has done for them and how he has sovereign authority over them. He prays further that Christ control them, dwelling in their inner being, ultimately filling them with all of God's fulness. The writer desires a dynamism in his readers' relationship to Christ and to God, and it is on the basis of such a developing dynamism that he prescribes only basic behavioural guidelines. God may have prepared works beforehand in which his people should live, but his people learn these works only by growing in their knowledge of him.

This is not strict catechesis, the imparting of easily followed religious guidelines. This is religious devotion, expressed in the terms of an idealist who passively accepts certain cultural forms and social structures to help his readers get on with what he considers to be important in life. The readers are to please Christ in awareness that his light is shining on them. They are to maintain their honourable standing before God that they have received through their conversion from darkness to light.

Chapter 5

1 Eph 5:15-20 - Exegetical and Behavioural Issues

The message of these verses is relatively uncomplicated. The same sort of dualism as found earlier¹ now contrasts unwise with wise people (v 15), ignorance with knowing God's will (v 17) and drunkenness with being filled with or by the Spirit (v 18). As with previous uses of dualism, the actual comparison is between old and new orientations to living, between the lifestyles of the non-converted and the converted. The writer most recently portrayed this contrast through citing a hymnic portion comparing the sleep of death in unconversion with the light received from Christ in the converted state. Since Christ now shines on his readers, the writer can further direct them to live out their new orientation to living. The "therefore" (οὖν) indicates this natural connection between the two sections. Only now, the writer contrasts not unrighteousness with righteousness but ignorance with wisdom.

This is an important new motif in view of the previous discussion on honour-shame. To be labelled unwise or ignorant is a common designation of shame, while possessing wisdom is an indication of honour.² The writer once more appears to combine the threat of shame with the maintenance of honour to motivate appropriate behaviour.

The overall entreaty to wisdom falls into three main groups of exhortations: 5:15-16; 5:17; 5:18-20. Each will be treated briefly but separately.

1.1 Be Careful: 5:15-16

The first exhortation should more appropriately be designated a warning. The readers are told, "Look carefully then how you walk" (5:15, RSV).³ In this, the

¹ I.e. old person/new person (4:22-24); truthfulness/lying (4:25); stealing/working to give (4:28); useless speech/edifying, gracious speech (4:29); angry expression/compassionate forgiveness (4:31-32); unmentionable evils/righteous talk (5:3-4); darkness/light (5:8). Some commentators note that the dualism in these verses is expressed through μή . . . ἀλλὰ (not . . . but). Gnilka, *Der Epheserbrief*, (Freiburg: Herder, 1971), 266; Lincoln, *Ephesians*, (Dallas, TX: Word Books, 1990), 338; Schnackenburg, *Der Brief an die Epheser*, (Zürich: Benziger Verlag, 1982), 238.

² D Daube, "Shame Culture in Luke," in *Paul and Paulinism*, ed by MD Hooker and SG Wilson, (London: SPCK, 1982), 361, 363.

³ Several commentators note that βλέπετε commonly appears in exhortations urging careful action, found throughout the NT, and particularly in Paul in 1 Cor 3:10 (third person imperative); 8:9; 10:12 (third person imperative); 16:10; Gal 5:15; Phil 3:2; as well as in Col 2:8. See Barth, *Ephesians 4-6*, (New York: Doubleday, 1974), 577; Gnilka, *Der Epheserbrief*, 243; Robinson, *St. Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians*, (London: MacMillan, 1928), 202; Schnackenburg, *Der Brief an die Epheser*, 239. The term ἀκριβῶς intensifies the warning, introducing a sense of thoroughness, as the term does in places such as: LXX Deut 19:18; Wis 12:21; and in the NT: Matt 2:8; Luke 1:3; and Acts 23:15.

writer implies that there are hostile influences that can distract the readers from proper behaviour. Such a warning is important to observe and to emphasize, since the writer, again, refrains from laying down detailed behavioural rules. Though from this statement the writer proceeds to urge his readers to be wise people, he says "Be careful" instead of "Be wise."⁴

The terms for "wise" (σοφοί) and "unwise" (ἄσοφοι) appear in a comparative clause beginning with "as" (ὡς); they are exemplary targets, one to avoid, the other toward which to aim. They indicate the tendencies toward which the readers could be oriented rather than actual states that have been achieved in full. This resembles other earlier "walk" statements that also spoke of tendencies: no longer as gentiles (4:17, καθώς), as Christ (5:2, καθώς), as children of light (5:8, ὡς). In the context of this duality, wisdom refers to an awareness of the kind of behaviour "the Lord" wants, while non-wisdom refers to its opposite.⁵ The statement about living as those who are wise conveys the same thought as the participial phrase in 5:10 - discovering what pleases the Lord.

Attached to this basic exhortation to look carefully is a modal participial phrase that explains further how the readers are to look carefully.⁶ They are to be "making the most of the time, because the days are evil" (5:16, RSV). The expression "making the most of the time" is puzzling. One viewpoint attributes a salvational connotation to the verb ἐξαγοράζω, translating its object καρπὸν as "age."⁷ Accordingly, the evil days need purifying. Another considers ἐξαγοράζω

⁴ This is particularly emphasized by Gnilka, *Der Epheserbrief*, 267, and Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 341.

⁵ According to Gnilka, *Der Epheserbrief*, 267, it is knowledge of God's will that makes the wise person wise. See, also, Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 341, and Schnackenburg, *Der Brief an die Epheser*, 239-240.

⁶ Some commentators consider the participle as an additional imperative. See Gnilka, *Der Epheserbrief*, 267-68; F Mußner, *Der Brief an die Epheser*, (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus Mohn, 1982), 147. This weakens the force of πῶς in v 15. The agreement of the participle with the two preceding adjectives connects all three terms with "how" the readers should live.

⁷ Though Barth, *Ephesians 4-6*, 578-79, lists Calvin, Bengel, Aquinas, Origen and Robinson among those who tend toward this view, he does not state clearly the degree to which he accepts it. Robinson, *St. Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians*, 202, is actually non-committal in his grammatical notes concerning the idea of redemption, but points out quite rightly that καρπός in the NT can refer to an age. In his exposition on the verse, (pp 120-21), Robinson more clearly states the relationship between the transforming power of light in which the readers are said to participate, and the way the readers should live in the world as a result. Accordingly, redeeming the time refers to rescuing it from the evil that predominates.

as basically practical, translating καιρός "time."⁸ This would urge the readers to make the best use of the opportunities they have.

While the first explanation tends to over-spiritualize the statement, it is not totally misdirected. Certainly rendering καιρός as "age" makes the connected explanation clause awkwardly redundant, far in excess of any pleonasm in the letter. Further, the term "buy back," or perhaps more appropriately "buy up,"⁹ retains a commercial nuance here, also conveying an aspect of aggressiveness.¹⁰ But because, according to the writer, the days are evil,¹¹ the readers should take positive steps to ensure that they do not become carried along by this evil. Unless they aggressively buy the time, implies the writer, they might become absorbed by the all-pervasive evil that surrounds them. Without positively righteous actions, evil will prevail among them, making them less wise.

1.2 Do Not Become Ignorant: 5:17

The second exhortation is a further development of the first.¹² The RSV translates, "Do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is." In this case, the term γίνεσθε is better rendered "become," rather than "be."¹³ The active hostility of their environment emphasized by the previous exhortation also implies that if the readers fail to recognize this, they might drift in the wrong direction. The writer does not fault his readers for being ignorant. He warns them that complacency may cause them to deviate in that direction. He still refers to

⁸ Abbott, *The Epistles to the Ephesians and to the Colossians*, (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1897), 159-60; Gnllka, *Der Epheserbrief*, 267-68; Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 314-42; Schnackenburg, *Der Brief an die Epheser*, 241.

⁹ See Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 341-42. Though he translates the entire expression as "making the most of the time," he bases this on the market nuances of making purchases that this term implies.

¹⁰ See F Büchsel, "ἀγοράζω, ἐξαγοράζω," in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed by G Kittel, tr by GW Bromiley, (Grand Rapids: William B Eerdmans, 1964), 1: 128. The prefix ἐκ-intensifies the meaning of "redeem."

¹¹ Gnllka, *Der Epheserbrief*, 267-68, and Schlier, *Der Brief an die Epheser*, 243-44, relate the statement about evil days in v 16 to an overall eschatological view taken over by the writer from Jewish views that express the notion of wickedness of the last days preceding a final cataclysmic upheaval. See the discussions in Barth, *Ephesians 4-6*, 579; Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 342. Without denying the possibility of such a view, the letter itself says enough about the controlling influence of evil powers (e.g. 2:1-3; 6:12) so as not to necessitate such a view.

¹² This is true both by form, (διὰ τοῦτο) and by context (ἄφρονες can be synonymous with ἄσοφοι). See Gnllka, *Der Epheserbrief*, 268, and Schlier, *Der Brief an die Epheser*, 244-45.

¹³ Schnackenburg, *Der Brief an die Epheser*, 240-241, ultimately sees no difference in meaning between these two renditions, since the context warns against complacency.

tendencies. Rather than tending toward ignorance, they should understand what the Lord's will is. This is a gradual understanding, again part of the process of discovering what please the Lord (5:10).¹⁴

1.3 Do Not Be Drunk: 5:17-20

Two contrasting exhortations appear here. The first, a negative, urges the readers not to be drunk. The second urges them to be filled by (or with)¹⁵ the Spirit. Obviously to the writer, one activity is unrighteous and the other righteous. But the writer also contrasts two controlling influences, wine on the one hand and the Spirit on the other, which produce two different kinds of behaviours, "debauchery" on the one hand and worshipful activity on the other. These two outcomes may refer to divergent forms of "ecstasy," a label often applied to this context.¹⁶ However, ecstasy may be a misleading expression. Debauchery (*ἀσωτία*) denotes uncontrolled, sinful behaviour, not uncontrolled delirious behaviour.¹⁷ Likewise, 5:18-20 refers to worshipful acts such as speaking with songs, singing in one's heart to "the Lord" and giving thanks to God. These of

¹⁴ Barth, *Ephesians 4-6*, 580; Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 343; Schlier, *Der Brief an die Epheser*, 245. In his further explanation of how the readers are to learn God's will, Barth, *Ephesians 4-6*, 604-06, emphasizes both the imbibing of content and learning by experience. He does not, however, explain where he sees this broad understanding in the text.

¹⁵ Abbott, *The Epistle to the Ephesians*, 161-62, discusses *ἐν* as having an instrumental force, rather than expressing the content with which one is to be filled. The latter, he contends, would be a totally unparalleled use of *ἐν* with *πληρώω*. He nevertheless opts for a spatial concept, with *πνεῦμα* referring to the inner person - i.e. be filled in your inner spirit, a view that ignores the unusual way that *πληρώω* has been used with Christ and God as referents (1:23, 3:19, 4:10). Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 344-45, and Schnackenburg, *Der Brief an die Epheser*, 242, both begin with an instrumental notion that they see simultaneously conveying content - i.e. if one is filled by the Spirit, one is also filled with the Spirit in the same sense that a person can be filled with all of God's fulness (3:19) or the Church can be filled in all things (1:23). The most detailed description of this last view appears in Robinson, *St. Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians*, 203-04, where he concludes that the instrumental force may best be paraphrased, "Let your fulness be that which comes through the Holy Spirit."

¹⁶ Supporting evidence exists not only in Acts 2:1-13, but also in Philo, *De Ebrietate* 146-48, where he compares false ecstasy with true, a similarity so startling that outsiders easily accuse the religious ecstatic of being drunk just as Eli accused pious Hannah (1 Sam 1:12-18). Appeals to these types of writings appear in Barth, *Ephesians 4-6*, 580-82; Houlden, *Paul's Letters from Prison*, 328; Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 344-45; Schlier, *Der Brief an die Epheser*, 245-46; Schnackenburg, *Der Brief an die Epheser*, 241-42.

¹⁷ The term *ἀσωτία* and the corresponding adverb *ἀσώτως* appear only three other times in the NT outside of Eph 5:18. Only one of the passages, 1 Pet 4:4, directly mentions immoral activities. The emphasis here is not merely on immoral activity, but on unrestrained immorality, "the excess" of "debauchery." Luke 15:13, and Titus 1:6 clearly have unrestraint in view as well. The same can be said about the use of these terms in the LXX. Though rare, they always convey the dual notions of unrestrained and inappropriate behaviour: Prov 28:7; 2 Macc 6:4; and Prov 7:11. Note also *T Jud* 16.1, *T Ash* 4.4 and *T Ben* 5.1, the only three places in Greek version of OT Pseudepigrapha where these terms are used.

themselves do not depict the frenzy often associated with ecstasy.¹⁸ The writer principally contrasts the effects of two different kinds of influences, one that leads to uncontrolled sinfulness and the other that leads to spiritual activities.¹⁹

Drunkenness is mentioned as an archetypal sin depicting an unrestrainedly immoral or profligate lifestyle - i.e. "debauchery" (5:18b, RSV). Being filled by (or with) the Spirit, however, entails a life that is oriented toward God. It is accomplished in the first instance by being involved in acts of praise and thanksgiving to "the Lord" (v 19) and "to God" (v 20). This is fitting activity for righteous people, as alluded to earlier by the writer in 5:4. In 5:3-4 he had listed forms of behaviour generally attributable to a debauched lifestyle, barely mentioning an alternative behaviour. Here the writer elaborates more on the kind of behaviour that he deems appropriate for the newly converted, barely mentioning what is inappropriate.²⁰

It is difficult to determine with certainty what being filled by (or with) the Spirit actually entails. This may indicate something akin to the Lukan concept of being filled with the Holy Spirit,²¹ though the grammatical constructions there are markedly different.²² Fulness has already been associated with the lordly Christ

¹⁸ Abbott, *The Epistle to the Ephesians*, 162: "It is hardly too much to say that this is a *reductio ad absurdum* of the supposed antithesis. There is nothing about excitement, nor does St. Paul anywhere sanction such conduct." Schnackenburg, *Der Brief an die Epheser*, 242, makes a similar observation.

¹⁹ GCA Harleß, *Commentar über den Brief Pauli an die Ephesier*, (Erlangen: Carl Heyder, 1834), 479-480, sees here a contrast between disorderly, slovenly behaviour and what he considers to be a Christian version of the Greek virtue of self-control or temperance (σωφροσύνη) - i.e. being filled by (or with) the Spirit. This may also have implications for the inclusion of the household material immediately following in v 21. Divine control results in praise to God and in an ordered, Christ-oriented way to household living.

²⁰ The elaboration in 5:19-20 on what is only barely mentioned in 5:4 is also noted by Gnlika, *Der Epheserbrief*, 247-48; Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 324; Schnackenburg, *Der Brief an die Epheser*, 220.

²¹ Lukan writings mostly use the verb *πλήρωμι*: Luke 1:15, 41, 67; Acts 2:4; 4:8, 31; 9:17; 13:9. In Acts 13:52, *πληρώω* also expresses the same filling with the Holy Spirit. Mitton, *Ephesians*, 190, alludes to the possibility of a common Christian tradition being employed both by "Luke" and the author of Ephesians. Gnlika, *Der Epheserbrief*, 269, also raises the possibility, but then quickly drops the correlation, since he cannot prove that the writer of Ephesians had access to the Lukan tradition.

²² In all the examples cited in the note above, "Holy Spirit" is in the genitive case, which is normally expected in verbs meaning "to fill, be full of." See F Blass and A DeBrunner, *A Greek Grammar of the New Testament*, tr and rev by RW Funk, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961), §172, 95.

earlier in the epistle,²³ also depicting the dynamism inherent in the divine presence within the church.²⁴ "Be filled with the Spirit" may indicate "appropriate the all-pervasive presence of God in your lives."²⁵ But the three statements antecedent to 5:18 that use the verb for filling (πληρώω) are much more complicated, also employing the noun for fulness (πλήρωμα) either in the same sentence (1:23, 3:19) or in the same vicinity (4:10, 4:13). In each of these cases, fulness in relation to Christ or God is a conclusion to which the passage builds, not a passing reference as it is in 5:18.

Fulness might actually be a food metaphor.²⁶ The state of being drunk with wine lies in the general semantic region of eating and drinking. The verbs to fill, both πληρώω and πίμπλημι, are known to be used in such contexts, indicating satiation.²⁷ The writer might be opposing drunkenness with another kind of gratification. One form is unrighteous, uncontrolled and hence, unwise. The other form is righteous, divinely controlled and hence, wise. If this is what the writer was conveying, then wine and the Spirit would be contrasting influences, one leading to immoral recklessness and the other to praise of God.²⁸ With or without fulness

²³ 1:22-23: "... and he has put all things under his feet and has made him the head over all things for the church, which is his body, the fulness of him who fills all in all" (RSV); 4:10: "He who descended is he who also ascended far above all the heavens, that he might fill all things" (RSV).

²⁴ See, especially, the discussion on fulness by Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 73-75, who also summarizes the scholarly discussion on this concept as it appears in Ephesians.

²⁵ Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 344: "The idea of being filled with the Spirit recalls that of being filled up to all the fulness of God in 3:19 and that of the Church as the fulness of Christ in 1:23 (cf. also 4:13). Clearly, the Spirit mediates the fulness of God and of Christ to the believer."

²⁶ Schnackenburg, *Der Brief an die Epheser*, note 598, p 242, may be intimating this when he says that perhaps the writer used the phrase ἐν πνεύματι instead of the dative by itself to emphasize the differences between being filled with wine and being filled by (or with) the Spirit.

²⁷ This nuance is noted by G Delling, "πλήρης, πληρώω, κτλ.," in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, 6: 283-288, but overlooked by R Schippers, "πληρώω," in *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*, ed by C Brown, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1975), 2: 733-41. It is a common meaning according to Liddell and Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968), 1420. For LXX uses with reference to food, see Eccl 6:7; Ezek 7:19; Hab 2:16; LXX Jer 13:13; Sir 1:16. For other kinds of satisfaction, see Job 20:6; LXX Ps 126:5; and Eccl 1:8. *Pss Sol* 4.12 is instructive in this last regard, especially since it uses πληρώω with ἐν: "He is satiated with lawless actions [ἐπλήσθη ἐν παρανομία] at one (place), and (then) his eyes are on another house/ to destroy it with agitating words;" tr by RB Wright, in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, ed by JH Charlesworth, (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1983), II: 656. Both Jer 13:13 and 3 Macc 5:10 refer to filling with wine. In each case, strong drink or wine is that with which people and elephants, respectively, are said to be filled, the former using a dative and the latter a genitive.

²⁸ HAW Meyer, *Critical and Exegetical Hand-Book to the Epistle to the Ephesians*, tr by MJ Evans, rev and ed by WP Dickson, (Winona Lake, IN: Alpha Publications, 1979 repr of 1884 ed), 505, points out that the word order emphasizes a contrast chiefly between two different states, "intoxication" and

as a food metaphor, the ethical message is basically the same. The writer wants the Spirit to dominate his readers' lives.

The four participles found in vv 19-20 describe how this filling is to be demonstrated.²⁹ The activities of "addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs," "singing and making melody to the Lord with all your heart," and "always and for everything giving thanks in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God the Father" (5:19-20, RSV) represent, respectively, what is to be expressed to others in the community, what is to take place internally within the readers' own hearts and what is to be expressed publicly to God. The "psalms," "hymns" and "spiritual songs" (v 19) with which the readers are to address one another are virtually indistinguishable from one another.³⁰ That these items can contain words of instruction for other Christians is demonstrated both within Ephesians itself³¹ and by Paul's statement in 1 Cor 14:26. In using such a range of terminology, the writer shows how the Spirit influences every aspect of worshipful communication between believers. He also shows how the effects of the Spirit should govern their communion within themselves individually and with God publicly.

The writer does not state overtly why he focuses on activities that affect the worship of the community. Drunkenness would be a recognized sinful behaviour. Public instruction, personal devotion and public thanksgiving to God seem to be

"inspiration," not between wine and the Spirit. Admitting the general truth of this statement does not disallow a contrast between the Spirit and wine. Schnackenburg, *Der Brief an die Epheser*, 242, affirms this last contrast, noting that the change to instrumentality inherent in the use of ἐν indicates the presence of the Spirit, ready to influence, rather than any pliability of the Spirit, who can be manipulated at will. Robinson, *The Epistle of St. Paul to the Ephesians*, 203, says: "The sequence of thought appears to be this: Be not drunk with wine, but find your fulness through a higher instrumentality, or a higher sphere."

²⁹ Meyer, *The Epistle to the Ephesians*, 507, regards these as coordinate, modal participles. One must also note that the participle in v 21 is also coordinate with these three, though it also introduces the new topic of household issues that will not be treated here.

³⁰ In the NT, φδοι and θυνοι appear as nouns only here and in a parallel passage in Col 3:16. ψαλμοι are mentioned several times, either as a reference to the collection found in the scriptures (Luke 20:42; 24:44; Acts 1:20; 13:33), or as a reference to something presented in public worship for the sake of edifying the church (1 Cor 14:26). In the LXX, the three terms are found virtually synonymously in the titles of Psalms. LXX Ps 64 uses all three terms together in the same line (title, then v 1), as does Symmachus Ps 66.1. Schnackenburg, *Der Brief an die Epheser*, 242-43, affirms this indistinguishableness, noting that their meaning is probably better derived from Christian communities than from the Psalms themselves.

³¹ Note e.g. the Berakah of 1:3-14, especially vv 6, 12 and 14, which all speak of the praise of God's glory, and the nearest example, 5:14b. For more on this, see Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 346. S Fowl, *The Story of Christ in the Ethics of Paul*, (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1990) demonstrates how Christian hymnic material is used in three instances in the Pauline tradition to convey ethical teaching.

unusual activities to stand opposite this. More will be said about this contrast in the last section. For now, one must observe that the writer, again, slips into his language of religious devotion. For him, proper behaviour, ultimately is religious behaviour. By extension, improper moral behaviour is antithetical to the God to whom he wants his readers to be devoted.

1.4 Conclusions

One cannot overemphasize the fact that throughout the moral teaching one encounters, principally, religious ethics. The writer has not appealed to behaviour to which all people everywhere would naturally assent. His primary interest is for his readers to behave as the converts they are. They are said to belong to God. Their behaviour should display their dedication to God.

In this context, then, wisdom is an indication of a life devoted to God, or more accurately, to the Lord. Wise people know that they must take care against being sucked into participating in the evil of the age. Positively, they know what the will of the Lord is, and therefore are able to avoid moral foolishness or ignorance. Becoming wise by learning the Lord's will is hardly satisfying philosophically. In the same manner, religious devotion is hardly a satisfying ethical solution to the kind of debauchery typified here by drunkenness. Nevertheless, the writer's moral implications are clear. When his readers, as converts, take care to look to or devote themselves to God or to Christ or to the Spirit for direction in their lives, they will not be immoral as immorality is conceived of by the writer.

2 Eph 5:15-20 - Affinities with Eph 1-3

In this short stretch of verses the writer does not develop any moral implications of previous statements in the same way as happens in earlier sections. The once-now schema may lurk in the background of the dualism, but is not drawn upon directly. Other themes receiving extended treatment in chapters 1-3, such as unity or Christ's love, are not taken up by the writer here. Nevertheless, to consider these verses in isolation from their antecedents would create the false impression that they could, in some way, stand alone. Basic ideas presented earlier are alluded to, if only in passing. These include the concept of filling, a negative view of the moral climate of the age, the role of the Spirit, and perhaps most significant, a wisdom schema. The first three of these will be treated together, while this last aspect will receive an independent discussion.

2.1 Combined Allusions

The concept of filling with regard to Eph 5:18 has already been briefly noted.³² There it was mentioned that though filling and fulness play significant roles indicating the pervasive presence of God and the lordly Christ, nothing of the tone of finality present in these earlier remarks exists here. If the writer is, in fact, alluding to the same concept, he has given no overt textual markers of this, and must be relying heavily on the assumption that it is so well-developed that these are not necessary.

The negative view of the moral climate of the age is stated clearly in 2:2-3. The "trespasses and sins" in which the readers are said to have lived are also said to have been in accord with "the spirit that is now [vôv] at work in the sons of disobedience" (2:2, RSV). The readers are said, further, to have been "children of wrath, like the rest of mankind" (2:3, RSV). When the writer explains that his readers must buy up the time "because the days are evil" he refers to a concept already established as background to God's gracious salvation. It is against this same negative backdrop that he has employed the once-now conversion schema in previous exhortations. It will become the foreground in 6:10-20.

The Spirit is referred to nine times prior to the exhortation of 5:18: 1:13, 17; 2:18, 22; 3:5, 16; 4:3, 4, 30. Two of these (1:13; 4:30) refer to the Spirit's presence until the believers' "redemption." Four of these (2:18, 22; 4:3, 4) refer to the Spirit's role in enacting unity within the church. Of the final three, one refers to the inner strengthening the Spirit is said to provide, while the final two mention the role of the Spirit in revealing information both to believers in general (1:17)³³ and to God's "holy apostles and prophets" (3:5). While each of these references assumes an abiding presence of the Spirit, the last three are more significant for Eph 5:18, which emphasizes the control the Spirit is to have over the readers' lives. Though the proper acquisition of knowledge is clearly an issue for 5:17, the writer makes no attempt to link this with the Spirit. Rather, he assumes in 5:18 that whatever knowledge his readers do have will be properly disseminated under the

³² This is found in 1:10, 23; 3:19; 4:10, 13. See discussion above, p 237.

³³ Though a good case exists for arguing that "Spirit" (πνεῦμα) in 1:17 refers to a human spirit, rather than God's Spirit (Abbott, *The Epistle to the Ephesians*, 28), the appearance of the term "revelation" (ἀποκάλυψης) makes this extremely unlikely. In the former case, "spirit of wisdom" would refer to a "wise spirit." However, a "spirit of revelation" that is given must refer either to a spirit that reveals, or to a spirit that is revealed, and in either case indicates some sort of external force. Such a force can only be, for the writer, the Holy Spirit, first mentioned in 1:13.

influence of the Spirit.

2.2 The Wisdom Schema

Three times in chapters 1-3 (1:8, 17; 3:10), the writer directly speaks of wisdom (σοφία). In one of these places (3:10), he clearly refers to God's own wisdom in revealing the mystery concerning the salvation he is said to offer.³⁴ In two other places, however, the writer refers to the understanding his readers should have (1:8, 17). The first of these mentions the "wisdom and understanding"³⁵ accompanying God's grace poured out on believers,³⁶ in the context limited to an understanding of the mystery of salvation. The second also refers to knowledge about the readers' salvation, since the writer prays for his readers to be given the Holy Spirit, who himself is said to give wisdom and revelation in the area of knowing God.

Closely associated with the concept of wisdom, and scattered throughout preceding portions of the epistle, are a whole host of terms that overlap in semantic range with the idea of wisdom: *know, knowledge* - (γνώσκω, 3:19; 5:5); (γνωρίζω, 1:9; 3:3, 5, 10); (γνώσις, 3:19); (ἐπίγνωσις, 1:17; 4:13); *understand, mind, insight* - (νοέω, 3:4, 20); (νοῦς, 4:17, 23); (σύνεσις, 3:4); *will, plan, mystery* - (θέλημα, 1:1, 5, 9, 11; 2:3); (βουλή, 1:11); (πρόθεσις, 1:11; 3:11); (μυστήριον, 1:9; 3:3, 4, 9); *reveal, revelation* - (ἀποκαλύπτω, 3:5); (ἀποκάλυψις, 1:17; 3:3); *enlighten, darken* - (φωτίζω, 1:18; 3:9); (σκοτούμαι, 4:18); *truth, speak truth* - (ἀλήθεια, 1:13;

³⁴ Though there is some discussion as to whether the "manifold" (πολυποίκιλος) wisdom has any allusion to Jewish-Gnostic wisdom speculation, (see, especially Schlier, *Der Brief an die Epheser*, 159-166), it probably means no more than "multifaceted." See presentations in Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 187-88, and Schnackenburg, *Der Brief an die Epheser*, 141-42.

³⁵ These are probably more nearly a hendiadys (Lincoln, *Ephesians* 29; Schlier, *Der Brief an die Epheser*, 59) than a duality expressing, in Aristotelian terms, intellectual and practical knowledge (Abbott, *The Epistle to the Ephesians*, 14). Such a distinction would be evidence of a sophistication, generally uncharacteristic of the pleonastic style found in the letter.

³⁶ In the unclarity typical of Ephesians, several interpretive options exist for this verse. The phrase "in all wisdom and insight" (1:9, RSV) could modify either the verb "lavished" or the participle "made known." Further, the phrase could explain either how God lavished or how God made the mystery known, or it could state what else was either lavished or made known (See the options for the preposition ἐν found in CFD Moule, *An Idiom-book of New Testament Greek*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1959), 75-81. My position is that it belongs with the first verb, "lavished," as accompaniment, stating what else was lavished along with God's grace. Given the use of the qualifier "his" found throughout 1:3-14, but especially in v 7 and 9, its absence in v 8 is striking if the writer were conveying the notion of God's wisdom. If the phrase refers to wisdom and understanding to be exercised by people, it makes no sense being used with the participle "made known." See discussions in Abbott, *The Epistle to the Ephesians*, 14-15; Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 29-30; Masson, *L'Épître de Saint Paul aux Éphésiens*, (Neuchâtel: Delachaux & Niestlé SA, 1953), 144; Schlier, *Der Brief an die Epheser*, 59-60; Schnackenburg, *Der Brief an die Epheser*, 55.

4:21, 24, 25; 5:9); (ἀληθεύω, 4:15). Many of these have been discussed in earlier chapters. This terminology is applied to objective items of historical revelation surrounding the gospel and its ministers, as well as to subjective, relational aspects between the readers and God or Christ. It is only indirectly related to the statements to live wisely (5:15) and to know the Lord's will (5:17).

When the writer, in 1:8-9, speaks of God being wise in making known the mystery of his will, he refers to a different sort of will and wisdom from what he says his readers should exercise morally. One refers to the plan of the gospel, the other to how believers in that gospel should behave. The readers already know about God's will referred to in 1:8-9. They are called on to discover Christ's will for their lives morally. Since throughout the epistle God is said to be revealing mysteries and insights, it is only fitting that the readers be urged to participate in the phenomenon of revelation to a certain degree. This is not participation in the same phenomenon claimed by the writer in his learning of the gospel mysteries. Rather, it is a growing awareness of what constitutes appropriate behaviour. A statement such as "understand what the will of the Lord is" (5:17, RSV) may be dissatisfying to a modern ethicist, but it assumes a dynamic relationship with a living God who, according to the writer, does give insight.³⁷

3 Eph 5:15-20 and Pauline Moral Traditions

Eph 5:15-20 contains a minimal amount of significant affinities with ideas found in the undisputed Pauline epistles.³⁸ It is most like what is found in Col 3:16. Nevertheless, apart from specific verbal similarities, certain parallel ideas can be

³⁷ Schlier, *Der Brief an die Epheser*, 60, in commenting on Eph 1:8, distinguishes sharply between apostolic revelation, and what the readers might have heard through the apostles and prophets of 3:2ff. In keeping with such a distinction, the knowledge of the Lord's will addressed in 5:17 is not presented in the same revelatory category as what is given to the "holy apostles and prophets" (3:5). By inference, their knowledge of the Lord's ethical will would also come in the same manner as their knowledge of his salvational will. And yet they are also said to be in a discovery process themselves (5:10).

³⁸ In terms of linguistic parallels, Mitton, *The Epistle to the Ephesians*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1951), 306-07, finds one strong and two weak affinities with the undisputed Pauline letters: Rom 12:2 (discovering God's will, considered strong); 1 Cor 3:10 (an exhortation to watch out - considered weak); Phil 1:3-4 (an epistolary thanksgiving using the word "always" - considered weak). Additionally, he mentions Gal 1:4, which refers to "the present evil age," 1 Cor 14:15, which talks about singing, and 1 Thess 5:18, an exhortation to give thanks always. The parallels mentioned by Francis and Sampley, *Pauline Parallels*, (Philadelphia/Missoula, MT: Fortress Press/Scholars Press, 1975), 282-83, consist of: Rom 1:18-23 (esp v 22 and the claim to wisdom); Rom 14:5-12 (esp v 6 and the concept of eating with thanksgiving); 1 Cor 14:26-33a (worship background); 1 Cor 10:23-11:1 (esp v 30 and eating with thanksgiving); 1 Cor 14:13-19 (giving thanks in a worship context). Additionally they cite similarities between Eph 5:16 and 1 Cor 7:26 (a reference to "the present distress"); Eph 5:20 and 1 Thess 5:18 (giving thanks); and Eph 5:19 and 1 Cor 14:40 (conducting worship with order). Most of these are remotely related to Eph.

found. These exist principally in the notions of behavioural wisdom, a negative view of the moral climate of the age, the appearance of drunkenness as an archetypal sin of the unconverted, and the view of ordered, as opposed to purely ecstatic, worship. As in previous chapters, the similarities with Colossians will be treated at the end.

3.1 Behavioural Wisdom

Behavioral wisdom is here distinguished from notional or epistemological wisdom. This latter concept plays a significant part especially in the first three chapters of 1 Corinthians. With neither the same import nor frequency, Paul also refers to wise behaviour. In some respects, behavioural and notional wisdom are inseparable. What one thinks can determine how one behaves. Though appearing to be artificial, the distinction needs to be made here since the concept of wisdom in Eph 5:15-20 is not as profound as what is found in places such as 1 Cor 1-3.

When Paul mentions his debt both to the "wise and the ignorant" (Rom 1:14), he categorizes the gentile world in terms of cultured and uncultured, educated and uneducated.³⁹ However, he appeals to an altogether different sort of wisdom when, at the end of Romans, he urges his readers to be "wise as to what is good and guileless as to what is evil" (Rom 16:19, RSV).⁴⁰ The former reference emphasizes what is known, the latter what is done. Similarly, he refers to people who think themselves wise but become fools in their failure to recognize God and in their embracing of idolatry (Rom 1:22). In another epistle he claims that he has not conducted himself according to fleshly wisdom (2 Cor 1:12). When the writer of Ephesians urges his readers to live wisely and not to be ignorant, he is referring to knowledge and wisdom about what God wants, something that has scant but genuine existence in Pauline thought.

3.2 Moral Climate

Paul certainly had a negative view about the moral climate of his age. Such an observation is not meant to lead to a discussion of Paul's view of the moral plight of humanity or other related issues. Rather, the purpose here is to observe Paul's assumption that his age was evil, either through the influence of evil powers,

³⁹ CEB Cranfield, *Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1975), I: 83; Harry Parkin, "Romans i. 13-15," *Expository Times* 79 (1967): 95.

⁴⁰ This verse need not be thought of as being originally a part of Romans, though an emerging consensus includes chapter 16 within the original letter. See the useful discussion in Beker, *Paul the Apostle*, (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1990), 59-74; Dunn, *Romans 9-16*, (Dallas: Word Books, 1988), 884.

through the influence of evil people performing evil deeds, or some combination of both.⁴¹ When the writer of Ephesians urges his readers to buy up the time, he explains that "the days are evil." This is not a new view.

Paul says that Christ "gave himself for our sins to deliver us from the present evil age [αἰῶν]" (Gal 1:4, RSV), and elsewhere that Christians are to live uprightly "in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation" (Phil 2:15, RSV). "The god of this world [αἰῶν]" (2 Cor 4:4, RSV) prevents people from believing the gospel; believers are not to "be conformed to this world [αἰῶν]" (Rom 12:2, RSV) in their behaviour, on the assumption that the standards of that "world" are antithetical to those of God. 1 Cor 2:6-12 refers to a wisdom contrary to God's, belonging to the age. Rom 13:11-14 uses night and dark imagery to convey that the pressures of the times encourage believers to sin, as to a certain degree does 1 Thess 5:1-11. Though Eph 5:16 is distinctive in its terminology, referring to evil "days" (ἡμέραι) instead of an evil "age" (αἰῶν), the negative attitude toward the surrounding environment is definitely at home within Pauline thought.

3.3 Drunkenness as an Archetypal Sin

On one occasion Paul mentions, almost in passing, what seems to have been a problem of drunkenness within the Corinthian eucharistic celebrations (1 Cor 11:21).⁴² Every other time he refers to drunkenness or to carefree drinking, he does so to express general boundaries of sinfulness. Thus, drunkenness sometimes appears in lists of sins (1 Cor 5:11; 6:10; Gal 5:21).⁴³ Drunkenness as impropriety is certainly an inference to be drawn from the proverbial statement in 1 Cor 15:32: "If the dead are not raised, 'let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die'" (RSV). Twice, Paul refers to drunkenness as a sin of darkness, or of the night (Rom 13:13;

⁴¹ For a basic overview of this thought, see DEH Whitely, *The Theology of St. Paul*, (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1964), 23 and 26.

⁴² Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, (Grand Rapids: William B Eerdmans, 1987), 542-43, points out that with this remark "Paul's concern is not with the drunkenness of the one. . . but with the hunger of the other--especially in a context where fellow believers have more than enough to eat and drink" (p 543).

⁴³ 1 Cor 5:11: ". . . not to associate with any one who bears the name of brother if he is guilty of immorality or greed, or is an idolater, reviler, drunkard, or robber--not even to eat with such a one" (RSV); 1 Cor 6:9b-10: "Do not be deceived; neither the immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor robbers will inherit the kingdom of God" (RSV); Gal 5:19-21: "Now the works of the flesh are plain: immorality, impurity, licentiousness, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, anger, selfishness, dissension, party spirit, envy, drunkenness, carousing, and the like. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God" (RSV).

1 Thess 5:7); since believers are said to belong to the day, such activity is not fitting for them.

Both the night-day passages (Rom 13:13; 1 Thess 5:7) and two of the sin lists (1 Cor 6:10; Gal 5:21) are significant for Ephesians. The writer has just been using dark-light imagery (Eph 5:8-14). Prior to that, he had referred to certain wrongdoers who had no inheritance in the kingdom. Not only has he carried forward his concern with archetypal sinfulness, he has done so appealing to notions commonly used by Paul to express archetypal sinful behaviour. As surprising as the sudden, specific mention of drunkenness may appear to be in Eph 5:18,⁴⁴ its mention is certainly in keeping with the generalization of sinful behaviour found both in the undisputed Pauline epistles, as well as in Ephesians itself.

3.4 Ordered Worship

The conclusion of 1 Cor 14:40 is certainly well-known: ". . . all things should be done decently and in order" (RSV). Paul advocates bringing disorder under control. He insists that prophecy is to be preferred over *glossolalia* (14:1-25), that any *glossolalia* be accompanied by an interpretation (14:13, 27-28), and that *glossolalia* be restricted to two or at most three participants (14:27). "God is not a God of confusion but of peace" (14:33, RSV). A similar attitude is promoted in Eph 5:18-20. According to the writer, appropriate words of instruction, praise and thanksgiving should follow from the influence of the Spirit. This is to be a clear contrast with the disorder coming from some activities such as drunkenness.

3.5 Comparisons with Colossians

Eph 5:15-20 displays evidence of clear dependence on Col 3:16-17 as well as 4:5.⁴⁵ Main points of similarity include the remarks "making the most of the time" (Eph 5:16; Col 4:5, RSV), the exhortations to live wisely (Eph 5:15; Col 3:16; 4:5), the reminders urging thankfulness (Eph 5:20; Col 3:15, 17), and especially the listing of the terms "psalms, hymns and spiritual songs" accompanied by the notion of singing "in [their] hearts" to God (Col 3:16) or to the Lord (Eph 3:19-20).

⁴⁴ Barth, *Ephesians 4-6*, 580: "The sudden reference to drunkenness. . .;" Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 343: "Its more specific force introduces a change from the general nature of the preceding exhortations which at first appears quite surprising;" Mußner, *Der Brief an die Epheser*, 148: ". . . die zunächst überraschende Mahnung;" Schlier, *Der Brief an die Epheser*, 245: "Die Warnung. . . ist zunächst überraschend;" Schnackenburg, *Der Brief an die Epheser*, 241, "Unvermittelt und überraschend folgt die Mahnung;" Scott, *The Epistle of Paul to the Ephesians*, (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1930), 233: ". . . this warning against drunkenness may seem to come in abruptly, without much relevance to the general drift of the passage."

⁴⁵ This is enumerated in concise detail by Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 339-40.

These similarities aside, the overall thrust of each passage is unique. Col 3:15-17 is part of a general listing of behaviours to be exhibited by "God's chosen ones."⁴⁶ Wisdom is a method by which teaching through psalms, etc. takes place⁴⁷ or the way in which the Colossians should conduct themselves toward those outside of the community (Col 4:5). In Eph 5:15-20, however, wisdom is the basic organizing principle around which the exhortations for community life are centred. It is to characterize the readers' lives, not so that they can appropriately communicate either with insiders or outsiders, but so that they might live righteously. Time is to be redeemed because evil tendencies push the readers toward foolishness, not because outsiders need to be approached wisely. Ephesians is more comprehensive in its behavioural designs, demonstrating a concern for how the readers should address one another, themselves and the Lord and subsuming this beneath the Spirit's influence. Thus again, the similarities between the two epistles appear to be more formal than ideological.

4 Eph 5:15-20 and Non-Christian Moral Traditions

Four basic concepts in Ephesians will be related to comments found in non-Christian traditional materials: 1) wisdom; 2) knowing the will of a deity; 3) drunkenness; and 4) singing/religious devotion as an activity of righteous people. Some of the concepts treated in Eph 5:15-20 will be seen to have had a more widespread appeal than others.

4.1 Wisdom

Wisdom was a major concern within both Jewish and Hellenistic thought. Rather than attempt an overview of the topic, the purpose here is to show how concerns from various traditions intersect with what is found in Ephesians. In Eph 5:15-20 the writer of Ephesians conceives of wisdom in terms of proper behaviour: that which is opposite to the pattern of the evil days and that which is the Lord's will. Among various Greek and Jewish writings, wisdom can also have bearing on

⁴⁶ This generally upholds the basic distinctions by Merklein, "Eph 4,1-5,20 als Rezeption von Kol 3,1-17," in *Kontinuität und Einheit*, ed by P-G Müller and W Stenger, (Freiburg: Herder, 1981), 200-04, that Colossians uses an over-under/earthly-heavenly schema and Ephesians a pagan-Christian schema in presenting similar material.

⁴⁷ HAW Meyer, *Critical and Exegetical Hand-book to the Epistles to the Philippians and Colossians, and to Philemon*, tr by JC Moore, rev and ed by WP Dickson, (Winona Lake, IN: Alpha Publications, 1979 reprint of 1884 edition), 364, helpfully defines the phrase "in all wisdom" as "modal," governing "teaching and admonishing." Lightfoot, *Saint Paul's Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon*, (London: MacMillan, 1897), 222, argues that word-order favours placing the phrase with the preceding phrase, though he admits precedent for linking it with what follows as found in Col 1:28.

a person's behaviour.

In constructing his ideal state, Plato's Athenian character does not simply refer to the four chief virtues - wisdom, justice, "rational temperance of the soul" and courage; he also sees these as foundational to laws that affect proper human behaviour.⁴⁸ Thus wisdom plays a role in determining how people should behave. Aristotle also includes wisdom among the virtues but distinguishes between "wisdom" (σοφία) and "prudence" (φρόνησις).⁴⁹ Though he refers to these as "intellectual virtues," he also states that a wise person is equipped to live appropriately.⁵⁰ To varying degrees, each of Dio Chrysostom's discourses on kingship⁵¹ depict the quality of wisdom as a necessary virtue for a king, both guiding him in what he should know and informing him as to how he should behave.⁵² Epictetus assumes that wisdom helps people to determine their

⁴⁸ Plato, *Laws* 631B-C, tr by RG Bury, (London: William Heinemann, 1926), I: 25: "For they are true laws inasmuch as they effect the well-being of those who use them by supplying all things that are good. Now goods are of two kinds, human and divine; and the human goods are dependent on the divine, and he who receives the greater acquires also the less, or else he is bereft of both. The lesser goods are those of which health ranks first, beauty second; the third is strength, in running and all other bodily exercises; and the fourth is wealth--no blind god Plutus, but keen of sight, provided that he has wisdom for companion. And wisdom, in turn has first place among the goods that are divine, and rational temperance of soul comes second; from these two, when united with courage, there issues justice, as the third; and the fourth is courage."

⁴⁹ Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* 1140b, VI.v.4, tr by H Rackham, (London: William Heinemann, 1926), 337: Prudence is defined as "a truth attaining rational quality, concerned with action in relation to things that are good and bad for human beings." Wisdom is described as the pinnacle of human knowledge, requiring prudence for human good to be derived from it (1141b, VI.vii.5, p 345 in tr). Human good in the context refers both to the moral and to the beneficial.

⁵⁰ Aristotle, *The Nicomachean Ethics* I.xiii.20, 1103b, tr by H Rackham, 67-69 in tr: "Some forms of virtue are called intellectual virtues, others moral virtues: Wisdom, Understanding, and Prudence are intellectual, Liberality and Temperance are moral virtues. When describing a man's moral character we do not say that he is wise or intelligent, but gentle or temperate; but a wise man also is praised for his disposition, and praiseworthy dispositions we term virtues." For further connections between prudence and moral virtues, see X.viii.1-3, 1178a, pp 619-621 in tr.

⁵¹ Dio Chrysostom's Discourse 23 was entirely dedicated to the relationship between the wise person and happiness: wise people also know the four virtues, and by adhering faithfully to these they reap the benefits. In this discourse he does not emphasize a relationship between wisdom and morality, though he does mention in passing that when people commit evil, they ignore the virtues (23.6). His discourses on kingship also refer to the four virtues, but they emphasize how these engender proper behaviour. These discourses thus provide a better comparison with Ephesians' emphasis on wise behaviour.

⁵² See, especially, Discourse 3.6-7, tr by JW Cohoon (London: William Heinemann, 1932), I: 107-08: "For in the case of the generality of men, those either in private station or holding some petty office, the individual's personal fortune is of slight account and concerns himself alone; but let untold cities yield obedience to a man, let countless nations be governed by his judgment, let tribes of men unnumbered and hostile to one another look to his prudence alone, and that man becomes the saviour and protector of men everywhere--that is, if such be his type. For when a man governs and holds sway over all mankind, his prudence avails to help even the imprudent, since he takes thought for all alike; his temperance serves to restrain even the intemperate, since his eye is over all alike; his justice gives

behaviour. Though he speaks often about philosophy, wisdom by itself is not normally an overt aspect of this. Wise people should know the difference between good and evil and live accordingly.⁵³ Only a wise person knows how to love.⁵⁴

Again, without attempting any depth of examination, wisdom traditions in Judaism intersect even more strongly with the perspective of Eph 5:15-20.⁵⁵ Not only should the wise person exhibit proper moral behaviour,⁵⁶ that person should also do this out of devotion to God, or more exactly, in the fear of the Lord,⁵⁷ a notion certainly present in Eph 5:21.⁵⁸ Occasionally wisdom appears as a guiding principle for moral behaviour in various OT Pseudepigrapha.⁵⁹ Among Essene writings, it is scarcely mentioned in either the Community Rule or the Damascus Document, a surprising omission given the extent to which these writings are appealed in relation to other portions of the moral teaching in Ephesians.⁶⁰

of itself even to the unjust; and his courage is able, not only to save the less valiant, but even to fire them with greater courage."

⁵³ Epictetus' discourse II.xxi.8-9, tr by WA Oldfather, (London: William Heinemann, 1925), I: 385-87: "When such are the men we live among--so confused, so ignorant both of what they mean by 'evil' and what evil quality they have, or whether they have one, or, if so, how they come to have it, or how they will get rid of it--among such men I wonder whether it is not worth while for us also to watch ourselves, each one asking himself the question: 'Is it possible that I too am one of these people? What conceit am I cherishing regarding myself? How do I conduct myself? Do I for my part act like a wise man?'. . ."

⁵⁴ See discourse II.22, I: 391-405 in tr. The argument is lengthy, but demonstrates that the wise person will recognize that if all his or her surroundings are subsumed in importance beneath the "moral purpose," then all attachments will be internal, safe from the threat of any external danger. Such people love better, since they are not dependent on external viewpoints and are consequently impervious to intrusions by divisive objects such as, for example, money.

⁵⁵ This is especially true of the proverbial aspect found in Proverbs, Wisdom of Solomon and Ecclesiasticus.

⁵⁶ Among numerous examples to be found are Prov 2:6-9; Wis 1:4-5; Sir 1:24-26.

⁵⁷ Again, among many possible examples, see Prov 1:7; Sir 1:14-19. The Wisdom of Solomon contains no statements about fearing the Lord.

⁵⁸ This explicit mention of the fear of Christ coupled with the grammatical attachment of the participle with the verb in v 18 links the household material in 5:21-6:9 with the exhortation to live wisely in 5:15. See Gnlika, *Der Epheserbrief*, 273; Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 366-67.

⁵⁹ *I Enoch* 5:8: "And then wisdom shall be given to the elect. And they shall all live and not return again to sin, either by being wicked or through pride; but those who have wisdom shall be humble and not return again to sin;" *T Lev* 13:7: "nothing can take away the wisdom of the wise man except the blindness of impiety and the obtuseness of sin;" *Ep Arist* 260: "What is the fruit of wisdom?" His reply was, "A clear conscience of no evil done, and of living one's life in truth." Also note *I Enoch* 98.9; 99.10; *T Sim* 2.3; *T Lev* 7.3. Translations are from *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*.

⁶⁰ 1QS 7.9 does prohibit the use of "foolish" words. Both 1QS 11.5-6 and CD 2.3-4 laud wisdom and prudence, but speak of these as God's attributes rather than as achievable ideals for humans.

Eph 5:15-20 appears closer to Jewish notions because it relates wisdom both to proper behaviour and to following the Lord. But the writer is making an appeal that would not be incomprehensible to his gentile audience. Ultimately, one must see that he is discussing Christian wisdom. But a concern for wisdom must also be seen as common to that time and general location.

4.2 Divine Will

Concern with conforming to the will of a deity in ethical matters does exist in Greek thought, but not as a necessarily major issue in ethical discussions.⁶¹ By contrast, doing God's will or pleasure has a significant place within various Jewish writings. The similarities with terminology in Ephesians are most noteworthy, especially in the Psalms, but also certain prophetic and wisdom writings.⁶² Though sometimes in these instances the divine will is restricted to the Law,⁶³ it often expands to include general qualities transcending the Law - e.g. contrition, mercy, righteousness, and wisdom.⁶⁴ Doing God's will is an aspect of pleasing God. It

⁶¹ A computer search through the *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae* versions of Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*, Plato's *Laws*, and the works of Dio Chrysostom and Epictetus for "θέλημα," "βουλή," "βούλαι," "βουλων" and "εὐδοκ" appearing within four lines of "θεα," "θεο," and "θεω," yielded only one reference in Dio Chrysostom worth considering. When discussing the ideal king, who is to be under the control of the gods, he says: "Virtue he regards as holiness and vice as utter impiety, being firmly persuaded that not only those who rob temples or blaspheme gods are sinners and accursed but, much more so, the cowardly, the unjust, the licentious, the fools, and, in general, those who act contrary to the power and will of the gods" (3.54, I: 129 in tr).

⁶² In the LXX, the terms θέλω, θέλημα, εὐδοκέω and εὐδοκία appear with God as subject, often to express what pleases God in general, but also what God wants in terms of moral behaviour. For θελ- terms see LXX Pss 5:4; 39:8; 50:16; 102:7; 142:10; Isa 56:4; Jer 9:23-24; Hos 6:7; Wis 6:4; 9:13-17. For εὐδοκ- terms see LXX Pss 18:4; 50:16, 19; 118:108; 146:11; Sir 2:16; 15:15; 31:19; 32:3.

⁶³ LXX Ps 102:7: "He made known his ways to Moses, his will to the children of Israel" - the MT uses עֲלִילָה, which often refers to God's saving acts in the wilderness experience. Isa 56:4: "Thus saith the Lord to the eunuchs, as many as shall keep my sabbaths, and choose the things which I take pleasure in, and take hold of my covenant." Sir 2:16: "They that fear the Lord will seek that which is wellpleasing unto him; and they that love him shall be filled with the law." Sir 15:15: ". . . to keep the commandments, and to perform acceptable faithfulness." Tr by LCL Brenton, *The Septuagint with Apocrypha: Greek and English*.

⁶⁴ LXX Ps 39:6, 8: ". . . whole-burnt-offering and sacrifice for sin thou didst not require. . . I desired to do thy will, O my God, and thy law in the midst of my heart." LXX Ps 50:16-17: "For if thou desiredst sacrifice, I would have given it: thou wilt not take pleasure [οὐκ εὐδοκήσεις] in whole burnt-offerings. Sacrifice to God is a broken spirit: a broken and humbled heart God will not despise." LXX Ps 142:10: "Teach me to do thy will; for thou art my God; thy good Spirit shall guide me in the straight way." LXX Jer 9:23-24: "Thus saith the Lord, Let not the wise man boast in his wisdom, and let not the strong man boast in his strength, and let not the rich man boast in his wealth; but let him that boasts boast in this, the understanding and knowing that I am the Lord that exercise mercy, and judgment, and righteousness, upon the earth; for in these things is my pleasure [τὸ θέλημά μου], saith the Lord." Hos 6:7: "For I will have mercy rather than sacrifice, and the knowledge of God rather than whole-burnt offerings." Wis 9:17: "And thy counsel who hath known, except thou give wisdom, and send thy Holy Spirit from above?" Tr by LCL Brenton, *The Septuagint with Apocrypha: Greek and English*.

also involves doing what is thought to cohere with God's character beyond the written precept. This same basic view also exists in various OT Pseudepigrapha using similar terminology.⁶⁵ Such an outlook is quite similar to what appears in Ephesians in reference to Christ.

4.3 Drunkenness⁶⁶

Paul declares drunkenness to be a sin. Other NT writings tend not to be as forthright on the subject.⁶⁷ Non-Christian traditions are even more ambivalent. Drunkenness is definitely a problematic state, often leading to harmful actions. But drunkenness tends not to be faulted as much as the improprieties committed by the one who is drunk. This tends to be true in both Jewish and in Hellenistic writings.

In the LXX, some statements seem to censure drunkenness outright as an improper, perhaps even sinful, state.⁶⁸ Most often, however, drunkenness is

⁶⁵ The Law of God is sometimes directly in view. *T Naph* 3.1-2: "Do not strive to corrupt your actions through avarice or to beguile your souls by empty phrases, because those who are silent in purity of heart will be able to hold fast God's will and to shunt aside the will of Beliar. Sun, moon, and stars do not alter their order; thus you should not alter the Law of God by the disorder of your actions." Most often, responsiveness to the person and/or character of God is in view. *T Ben* 11.2: "And in later times there shall rise up the beloved of the Lord, from the lineage of Judah and Levi, one who does his good pleasure [or, according to the de Jonge text, doing the pleasure of his will, *ποιῶν εὐδοκίαν θελήματος αὐτοῦ*] by his mouth, enlightening all the nations with new knowledge;" *Asen* 12.2 God's creatures respond to their creator: ". . . and hear your voice, Lord,/ and keep your commandments which you have commanded to them,/ but are doing your will to the end;" *T Jos* 4.6: "But I kept telling her [Potiphar's wife] that the Lord did not want [*οὐκ . . . θέλει*] worshipers who come by means of uncleanness, nor would he be pleased [*οὐδὲ . . . εὐδοκεῖ*] with adulterers, but with those who were pure in heart and undefiled in speech."

⁶⁶ Philo's remarks about the confusion between religious devotion and drunkenness as pertains to Hannah are often cited to explain the contrast between drunkenness and fullness of the Spirit. They will not be discussed here, especially since it has already been stated that Eph 5:18 does not emphasize the similarities between drunkenness and ecstasy, but the differences between drunkenness and fullness of the Spirit. Philo begins discussing his views on drunkenness in *De Plantatione*, 139-177, having to explain the account of Noah's drunkenness which arises from comments about his having planted a vineyard. Philo continues the discussion in his next treatise, *De Ebrietate*. In the first piece he summarizes various views on drunkenness prevailing among Greek philosophers. In the second, he surveys the entire range of biblical passages that deal with drinking wine. Ultimately, he says nothing substantially different from what appears in the literature under discussion in this section. Translations of these works are found in *Philo*, tr by FH Colson and GH Whitaker, (London: William Heinemann, 1930), III: 285-305 and III: 319-435.

⁶⁷ Luke 21:34 refers to drunkenness as a sin. Both Luke 12:45 and Matt 24:49 refer to drunkenness negatively, but concentrate on the over-consumption of wine as indicating non-watchfulness for the Lord's return. Rev 17:2 and 6 refer to drunkenness negatively, but also metaphorically. A negative attitude toward unguarded wine consumption is also present in Matt 11:19 and Luke 7:34, which are speaking of a cavalier attitude toward life.

⁶⁸ Joel 1:5: "Awake, ye drunkards, from your wine and weep: mourn, all ye that drink wine to drunkenness: for joy and gladness are removed from your mouth." Isa 28:7: "For these have trespassed through wine; they have erred through strong drink: the priest and the prophet are mad through strong drink, they are swallowed up by reason of wine, they have staggered through drunkenness; they have erred: this is their vision." Tr by LCL Brenton, *The Septuagint with Apocrypha: Greek and English*. See also 1 Kgdms 1:13-14, where Eli's assumption of Hannah's drunkenness indicates his personal

disapproved of as an unwise activity because of the damaging consequences that it frequently produces.⁶⁹ Greek OT Pseudepigrapha versions rarely refer to drunkenness. The one exception is *T Jud*, which basically comments on the foolishness of the activity in much the same way as the LXX passages just mentioned.⁷⁰ Drunkenness does not seem to be a sin in itself as much as a state that induces people to commit horrible offenses.

Some Classical and Hellenistic writings exhibit a viewpoint that is similar to what is found in Jewish wisdom writings. Sometimes drunkenness is even considered to be harmless, or even appropriate, if entered into under the right circumstances. In the *Laws*, Plato's Athenian character sees drunkenness as detrimental when uncontrolled, but beneficial when brought under appropriate supervision, because it allegedly predisposes people to learn more.⁷¹ Generally,

repugnance at the thought that someone would dare to appear drunk before God's shrine.

⁶⁹ Prov 23:29-30 is significant, not only as an example of this, but because it is sometimes considered to be quoted in Eph 5:18 (see Bruce, *The Epistles to the Ephesians, to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians*, (Grand Rapids: William B Eerdmans, 1984), 379; Houlden, *Paul's Letters from Prison*, 328; Robinson, *St. Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians*, 203): "Who has woe? who trouble? who has quarrels? and who vexations and disputes? who has bruises without a cause? whose eyes are living? Are not those of them that stay long at wine? are not those of them that haunt the places where banquets are? Be not drunk with wine; but converse with just men, and converse with them openly." Tr by LCL Brenton, *The Septuagint with Apocrypha: Greek and English*. Verse 30 reads differently in the MT, which does not mention drunkenness. Other verses expressing a similar notion are LXX Ps 106:27; Prov 20:1; 23:19; 26:29; 31:4-5; Sir 19:1; 34:25-31; Tob 4:15; 4 Macc 2:7. It is a feature in several narrative sections where bad consequences ensued from drunkenness: Gen 9:21; 1 Kgdms 24:36; 3 Kgdms 19:9. It is also used in negative imagery: Isa 19:14; 24:20; 49:26; Jer 26:10; 28:7, 39, 57; 31:26; Hos 4:11; Nah 3:11.

⁷⁰ *T Jud* 11.2, 12.3 and 12.6 all discuss the problems for Judah when he, in his drunkenness, had sexual intercourse with his son's widow. 14.1-4 embellishes on this episode with moral principles: "And now, my children, I tell you, Do not be drunk with wine, because wine perverts the mind from the truth, arouses the impulses of desire, and leads the eyes into the path of error. For the spirit of promiscuity has wine as its servant for the indulgence of the mind: If any one of you drinks wine to the point of drunkenness, your mind is confused by sordid thoughts, and your body is kindled by pleasure to commit adultery. Thus he commits sin and is unashamed." *T Jud* 16.1-3 is even more instructive: "Take care to be temperate with wine, my children; for there are in it four evil spirits: desire, heated passion, debauchery [ἀσωτία], and sordid greed. If you drink wine in merriment, showing due respect for the fear of God, you shall live. But if you drink without restraint and the fear of God departs, the result is drunkenness and shamelessness sneaks in. But if you wish to live prudently, abstain completely from drinking in order that you might not sin by uttering lewd words, by fighting, by slander, by transgressing God's commands, then you shall not die before your allotted time." Tr by HC Kee in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*.

⁷¹ In Plato, *Laws*, the basic discussion on drunkenness and drinking parties begins in section 637A (I: 43 in tr). At 640D-E, the Athenian character states that drinking parties should be led by commanders who are "sober" and "wise" - i.e. virtuous (I: 55). He begins to relate this to the matter of education in 641B (I: 57). At 645D (I: 71) he maintains that "the drinking of wine intensif[ies] pleasure and pains and passions and lusts," also intensifying "sensations and recollections and opinions and thoughts" in such a way as to resemble the open-minded state of childhood. He continues, however, noting that some people are led more to disorder, and these should be led to use drunkenness as a test of their self-control (647D, I: 79). He concludes (649D, I: 85): "And are not

drunkenness is depicted negatively as foolish behaviour, particularly since it is an exhibition of failure to adhere to sobriety, one of the cardinal virtues, and also because people who are drunk do destructive deeds.

In his *Nicomachean Ethics* Aristotle⁷² displays a basically negative attitude toward the issue, being forthright in denigrating the injurious by-products of drunkenness, but also faulting it for sometimes producing a boldness that however fleetingly resembles the virtue of courage.⁷³ Dio Chrysostom frequently highlights the shameful and disorderly nature of the drunken condition.⁷⁴ Epictetus rarely discusses the topic. Though he mentions negative consequences of drunkenness, he also associates it with friendship; one becomes unpleasant to one's friends by abstaining from drink, but in so deciding, one has also chosen virtuously.⁷⁵

When Ephesians refers to drunkenness, it does so in the immediate context of an exhortation to wisdom. Eph 5:18 upholds the folly of drunkenness because it leads to profligate living. However, the statement also corresponds to the Pauline tradition where drunkenness is evil in itself, a sin belonging to the evil days. Drunkenness in Ephesians is both foolish and unrighteous.

these the conditions in which we are of the character described,—anger, lust, insolence, ignorance, covetousness, and extravagance; and these also,—wealth, beauty, strength, and everything which intoxicates a man with pleasure and turns his head? And for the purpose, first, of providing a cheap and comparatively harmless test of these conditions, and, secondly, of affording practice in them, what more suitable pleasure can we mention than wine, with its playful testing—provided that it is employed at all carefully?"

⁷² Aristotle does address the topic of drunkenness elsewhere ("Problems", Book III), but he seems more concerned there with physical bodily issues, even though he is more specific than in his *Ethics*.

⁷³ Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* III.v.8, 1113b-1114a, p 147 in tr: "Indeed the fact that an offence was committed in ignorance is itself made a ground for punishment, in cases where the offender is held to be responsible for his ignorance; for instance, the penalty is doubled if the offender was drunk, because the origin of the offence was in the man himself, as he might have avoided getting drunk, which was the cause of his not knowing what he was doing;" III.8.13-14, 1117, p 169: ". . . whereas the courageous are confident for the reasons already explained, the sanguine are so because they think they are stronger than the enemy, and not likely to come to any harm (A similar boldness is shown by men who get drunk, for this makes them sanguine for the time being)."

⁷⁴ This is most extensively developed in discourse 30.36-40 (II: 427-31 in tr), where he reports a story describing drinking wine as governed either by "Intelligence" (νοῦς) or "Intemperance" (ἀκράτεια), the former a male and the latter a female cupbearer. Those who take their wine from the former cupbearer maintain sobriety. Those who take from the latter fall into drunken, disorderly behaviour. Other passing comments depicting a negative view on drunkenness include: 4.11 (I: 173); 6.36 (I: 269); 8.3, 9 (I: 877, 381); 31.55, 90 (III: 61, 95); 32.14 (III: 185); 64.22 (V: 65); 70.10 (V: 159); 77.2 (V: 261).

⁷⁵ Epictetus IV.ii.7 (II: 307 in tr). Other brief references: III.i.16 (II: 11); III.xxvi.6 (II: 229).

4.4 The Praise of the Righteous

Eph 5:18-20 presents what to modern eyes appears as a contrast of non-sequiturs - riotous living versus religious talk directed to others, to oneself and to God. This may not have been as unusual a contrast for gentiles of that time as may first appear. For example, Plato, in his *Laws*, goes to great lengths to have his Athenian character delineate what sort of music is the best sort of music to be performed and sung at banquets. He entrusts the final decision to virtuous banquet leaders who oversee to ensure such an appropriate mix of rhythm, tune and content of songs that education is promoted, the gods are honoured and people are not stirred up to a harmful frenzy.⁷⁶

Awareness of such a discussion does not permit any inference that the writer was modifying or even aware of Plato's and others' writings on the subject. Rather, it is brought to bear on Eph 5:18-20 only to demonstrate that some sectors of the first-century world would be familiar with discussion that seeks to combine regulation of drunkenness on the one hand with appropriate singing and praise on the other. More about this will be said in §5 of this chapter.

Since Eph 5:18-20 contrasts not only foolishness with wisdom, but righteousness with unrighteousness, certain Jewish attitudes toward praise are worth acknowledging. A common description within hymnic writings depicts righteous people as those who praise their God, or give thanks, in distinction from the various wrongdoings of the sinful.⁷⁷ This is true not simply within the Old

⁷⁶ The subject of the value of the Dionysiac choir takes up the entire second book of the *Laws* (652B-674C, I: 89-163 in tr). In the midst, the Athenian character suggests a control between drinking and singing based on inhibitions associated with age: "Shall we not pass a law that, in the first place, no children under eighteen may touch wine at all, teaching that it is wrong to pour fire upon fire either in body or in soul, before they set about tackling their real work, and thus guarding against the excitable disposition of the young? And next, we shall rule that the young man under thirty may take wine in moderation, but that he must entirely abstain from intoxication and heavy drinking. But when a man has reached the age of forty, he may join in the convivial gatherings and invoke Dionysus, above all other gods, inviting his presence at the rite (which is also the recreation) of the elders, which he bestowed on mankind as a medicine potent against the crabbedness of old age, that thereby we men may renew our youth, and that, through forgetfulness of care, the tempter of our souls may lose its hardness and become softer and more ductile, even as iron when it has been forged in the fire. Will not this softer disposition, in the first place, render each one of them more ready and less ashamed to sing chants and 'incantations' (as we have often called them), in the presence, not of a large company of strangers, but of a small number of intimate friends?" (666A-C, I: 133-35)

⁷⁷ LXX Pss 5:6-7, 8-11; 7:14-17; 32:1; 35:1-9; 49:15-16; 50:13-14, 19; 58:11-17; 61:1-8; 64; 72; 74; 85:8-14; 91; 94; 100; 108:1-5; 118:3-7, 61-62, 161-67, 171; 139; 144:20-21. Representative of these are Ps 51:1-4, 8-9 and 96:10-12: "Why dost thou, O mighty man, boast of iniquity in thy mischief? All the day thy tongue has devised unrighteousness; like a sharpened razor thou has wrought deceit. Thou hast loved wickedness more than goodness; unrighteousness better than to speak righteousness. Pause. Thou hast loved all words of destruction, and a deceitful tongue. . . [v 8] But I am as a fruitful olive in the house of God: I have trusted in the mercy of God for ever, even for evermore. I will give

Testament, but also with extra-biblical hymnic traditions such as the *Pss Sol*⁷⁸ and the Qumran scrolls.⁷⁹ While none of these writings can be cited as direct influences for Eph 5:18-20,⁸⁰ they demonstrate one way in which the writer of Ephesians can possibly consider songs, hymns, spiritual songs, personal praise, and thanksgiving as righteous activities. Such a concept would not seem unusual to gentiles, who could recognize the value of appropriate praise to deity and of instruction in song.⁸¹

4.5 Conclusions

The topics found in Eph 5:15-20 are not commonplaces in the same way that the material in 4:25-5:2 appears to be. Nevertheless the statements in 5:15-20 would not necessarily sound unusual to gentile readers. There is some degree of overlap between what is found in these verses and what can be found in non-Christian writings concerning wisdom, a moral will of deity, drunkenness and hymnic expression of religious devotion. Though what is found in Eph 5:15-20

thanks to thee for ever, for thou hast done it: and I will wait on thy name; for it is good before thy saints;" [96:10] "Ye that love the Lord, hate evil; the Lord preserves the souls of his saints; he shall deliver them from the hand of sinners. Light is sprung up for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart. Rejoice in the Lord, ye righteous; and give thanks for a remembrance of his holiness." Tr by LCL Brenton, *The Septuagint with Apocrypha: Greek and English*.

⁷⁸ E.g. *Pss Sol* 3:1-3, 9: "Why do you sleep, soul, and do not praise the Lord?/ Sing a new song to God, who is worthy to be praised./ Sing and be aware of how he is aware of you,/ for a good psalm to God is from a glad heart./ The righteous remember the Lord all the time, by acknowledging and proving the Lord's judgments right. . . [v 9] The sinner stumbles and curses his life,/ the day of his birth, and his mother's pains;" 8.8, 34: "God exposed their sins in the full light of day;/ the whole earth knew the righteous judgments of God. . . [v 34] Worthy of praise is the Lord for his judgments by the mouth of the devout;" 15.3, 10: "A new psalm with song with a happy heart,/ the fruit of the lips with the tuned instrument of the tongue,/ the first fruits of the lips from a devout and righteous heart. . . [v 10] And the inheritance of sinners is destruction and darkness, and their lawless actions shall pursue them below into Hades."

⁷⁹ The hymnic scroll is too fragmented to provide convincing examples, but 1QS 10.1-11.22 concludes the Community Rule with a praise to God correlated with the necessity to conform to His righteous ways: ". . . For the whole of my life the graven Decree shall be upon my tongue as a fruit of praise and the offering of my lips. I will sing in Knowledge, and my whole lyre shall throb to the Glory of God, and my lute and harp to the holy Order which He has made. I will raise the flute of my lips because of His righteous measuring-cord" (1QS 10.8b-9). Tr by A Dupont-Sommer, *The Essene Writings from Qumran*, 98.

⁸⁰ The same Greek terms for "psalms," "hymns" and "songs" are certainly present in the LXX, but both the LXX and the *Pss Sol* use the term ἐξομολογέω instead of εὐχαριστέω for thanksgiving, the latter term being more prevalent in the NT than in either the LXX or in Greek versions of OT Pseudepigrapha.

⁸¹ See, e.g. especially Epictetus, I.xvi.15-21 (I: 113 in tr), where he concludes that praise "on every occasion" should be directed to deity for the providential provision of life, food, shelter and other aspects of life often taken for granted. Dio Chrysostom, 2.62-63, speaks of songs and prayers to deity that are both appropriate and inappropriate for kings. Mention has already been made of Plato's *Laws*, where his Athenian elaborates at length on the sort of music that is appropriate for the instruction he envisages taking place at drinking parties (652B-674C, I: 89-163).

seems to be closer to Jewish concerns than gentile, it is not strange. Nevertheless, one must also note that the writer of Ephesians also places his material in the context of a concern for righteous behaviour needing to be actively embraced in the midst of an evil age.

5 Eph 5:15-20 - Mealtimes as a Social Phenomenon

More than one commentator has suggested a possible link between the contrast found in Eph 5:18-20 and Christian mealtimes.⁸² Most of these mention the possibility of an abuse of the Lord's Supper of the type found in 1 Cor 11. Instead of proposing the correction of abuses at Christian meals, others have considered that Eph 5:18a may be a mild polemic against Dionysian frenzies present at non-Christian meals.⁸³ While there has been at least one attempt to substantiate the latter possibility,⁸⁴ many have, with reason, recognized such suggestions as basically insupportable.⁸⁵ Eph 5:18-20 makes no overt claim to be associated with any mealtime.

The basis for trying to explore such a background here is that the contrast in Eph 5:18 looks as though it belongs in a mealtime context. Drunkenness is to be opposed by fulness of the Spirit, which in turn leads to worshipful acts expressed to others, to oneself and to God. The writer might be charging his readers to avoid drunkenness at all times, and on pertinent special occasions to be filled with the Spirit. However, at least one Pauline letter indicates that drunkenness, worship, instruction and a meal could all take place at the same occasion.⁸⁶ Eph

⁸² Gnilka, *Der Epheserbrief*, 269; Robinson, *St. Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians*, 122; Schlier, *Der Brief an die Epheser*, 246. Houlden, *Paul's Letters from Prison*, 328, does not overtly mention mealtimes, though he does illumine the prohibition in Eph 5:18 by mentioning 1 Cor 11:21, which itself is addressed to a Christian meal, as a possible example of the "esoteric" uses of alcohol creeping into community gatherings.

⁸³ Barth, *Ephesians 4-6*, 580; Patzia, *Ephesians, Colossians, Philemon*, (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1990), 263; Scott, *The Epistle of Paul to the Ephesians*, 233-34. Also see DE Aune, "Septem Sapientium Convivium," in *Plutarch's Ethical Writings and Early Christian Literature*, ed by HD Betz, (Leiden: EJ Brill, 1976), 78.

⁸⁴ C Rogers, "The Dionysian Background of Ephesians 5:18," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 136 (1979): 249-257.

⁸⁵ Abbott, *The Epistle to the Ephesians*, 161; Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 343-44; Meyer, *The Epistle to the Ephesians*, 505; Schnackenburg, *Der Brief an die Epheser*, 241.

⁸⁶ Not just 1 Cor 11:7-34 may be at issue here, but perhaps even chapters 11-14. For a comparison of Graeco-Roman mealtime practices with the material found in these chapters, see DE Smith, "Meals and Morality in Paul and His World," in *Society of Biblical Literature 1981 Seminar Papers*, ed by KH Richards, (Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1981), 319-39. Acts 20:7-12 indicates that Christians on at least one occasion gathered for a special meal, whether or not simply the eucharist, at which instruction in the faith also occurred.

5:18-20 looks as though it, too, could fit in such a situation.

P Berger and T Luckmann assert that language conveys social structure.⁸⁷ If they are correct, then beneath the overt statements of 5:18-20 may lie some traces of a social institution - meals. That is not to say that Eph 5:18-20 is a correction of overt abuses of the Lord's Supper or other such gatherings, as 1 Cor 11 is. The passage mainly contrasts sin/foolishness and righteousness/wisdom. Drunkenness is presented as an archetypal foolish sin. Filling by (or with) the Spirit is an archetypal form of righteousness/wisdom, expressed through personal and corporate praise to God. It is for this reason that most commentators are correct in asserting that Eph 5:18-20 is not primarily about meals.

An examination of mealtime issues should not preclude the main thrust of the statements in 5:18-20. These verses are not about mealtimes. However, the type of comparison present in the verses suggests that the social structure of mealtimes mediates the specific items mentioned in the contrast. This may be true not only for Eph 5:18-20, but also for a number of other specific statements found within the moral teaching thus far.

Though special mealtime functions were common among educated urban elite, evidence suggests that convivial gatherings could be popular even for poor country folk.⁸⁸ People regularly gathered for meals, which often included drinking, singing and discussion. Pauline and Lukan traditions indicate that this could also have been true for some groups of Christians.⁸⁹ Some extra-biblical evidence from the early second century displays this as well.⁹⁰ An examination of mealtime patterns recorded in various Greek writings may help illumine the sort of environment in which Christians held their meals. In the process, it will be seen that drunkenness and filling by (with) the Spirit need not be as startling a contrast as at first seems

⁸⁷ PL Berger and T Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality*, (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1966), 53-56.

⁸⁸ Dio Chrysostom 2.63 attributes the following words to Alexander the Great, who was idealizing on the kingship based on Homer's writings: "Nor, by heavens, should he ever utter such prayers as those we find in the ballads and drinking-songs of the Attic symposia, for these are suitable, not for kings, but for country folk and for the merry and boisterous clan-meetings" (II: 91 in tr).

⁸⁹ Besides 1 Cor 11:7-34 and Acts 20:7-12 cited above, see also Acts 2:46-47 and Gal 2:11-13.

⁹⁰ See, e.g., Pliny, "Pliny to the Emperor Trajan" X.xciv.7, in *Letters and Panegyricus*, tr by B Radice, (London: William Heinemann, 1969), II: 289: "After this ceremony it had been their custom to disperse and reassemble later to take food of an ordinary harmless kind [cibum, promiscuum tamen et innocuum]; but they had in fact given up this practice since my edict, issued on your instructions, which banned all political societies."

to be the case.

A number of primary sources from various backgrounds disclose the basic format of the gathering, sometimes referred to as the Symposium.⁹¹ The term could apply to the drinking party occurring after the meal, and was also applied to a literary genre that claimed to have recorded specific conversations alleged to have taken place at a particular party. Generally, at such gatherings there would be the meal itself, followed by the drinking of some wine libation, followed by the singing of a song, usually a hymn of praise to a god, and then by entertainment, signalled by the inevitable arrival of the "flute-girl," or further extended discussion, or perhaps more singing. While discussion could take place throughout the evening, there could also be set times when people would pose specific questions or problems needing to be solved. In an uncontrolled setting, the drinking could turn into a drunken orgy. In a controlled session, there would usually be some constructive form of entertainment or discussion.

Special songs, or *scolia* (σκόλια), were sung at such gatherings. One person would sing a line, to be followed by another who would try to provide some witty rejoinder.⁹² This kind of singing could become quite raucous.⁹³ It was also known to have filled a religious purpose.⁹⁴

In the estimation of certain philosophers, those evenings with discussion

⁹¹ Aristophanes, "The Wasps" 1208-1264, tr by BB Rogers, (London: William Heinemann, 1924) I: 523-27 in tr; Dio Chrysostom 27.1-4, II: 349-51 in tr; Plato, "Symposium," tr by WRM Lamb, (London: William Heinemann, 1925); Plutarch, "Quaestiones Convivales," *Plutarch's Moralia*, tr by PA Clement and HB Hofflet, (London: William Heinemann, 1969), VIII; Xenophon "The Banquet," tr by OJ Todd, (London: William Heinemann, 1923) IV: 535-635.

⁹² Aristophanes, "The Wasps" 1225, I: 525, depicts the beginning of one such song in a parody of a banquet: "I'll start the catch Harmodius. You're to cap it. 'Truly Athens never knew' [the rejoinder] 'Such a rascally thief as you.'" Dio Chrysostom 2.63 records another *scolion* that is thought to be undignified: "Would that I became a lovely ivory harp,/ And some lovely children carried me to Dionysus' choir!/ Would that I became a lovely massive golden trinket,/ And that me a lovely lady wore!" (I: 91 in tr).

⁹³ Plutarch, "Quaestiones Convivales" I.1.614, VIII: 21 in tr, describes the "singing of any kind of song" as one of a list of undesirable activities taking place when drinking parties got out of hand.

⁹⁴ Plutarch, "Quaestiones Convivales" I.1.615, VIII: 23 in tr, discusses the origin of the *scolion*: "As for the *scolia*, some say that they do not belong to a type of obscurely constructed songs, but that first the guests would sing the god's song together, all raising their hymn with one voice, and next when to each in turn was given the myrtle spray (which they called *aisakos*, I think, because the man to receive it sings) and too the lyre was passed around, the guest who could play the instrument would take it and tune it and sing, while the unmusical would refuse, and thus the *scolium* owes its name to the fact that it is not sung by all and is not easy."

centred on some worthwhile topic, or topics, were considered most preferable.⁹⁵ In such situations, it is not at all unusual to see drunkenness purposefully bypassed in lieu of conversation. At the beginning of Plato's "Symposium," the various participants in the evening's meal complain how they had been drinking too much at parties during the week. They choose, then, to forgo the normal bout of drinking, replacing it instead with discourses in honour of the god Love.⁹⁶

Dio Chrysostom refers to a range of participants in describing what sorts of things go on at Symposia, referring to some who become drunk, to some who become loquacious, to others who sing incessantly regardless of their musical ability, to others who ruin the evening through their abstention altogether from wine to

... the man that is gentle and has a properly ordered character, easily endures the rudeness of the others, and acts like a gentleman himself, trying to the best of his ability to bring the ignorant chorus into a proper demeanour by means of fitting rhythm and melody. And he introduces appropriate topics of conversation and by his tact and persuasiveness attempts to get those present to be more harmonious and friendly in the intercourse with one another. (27.3-4, II: 351 in tr)

Xenophon describes a very ordered evening in his record of a Symposium. The host purposely invites those "whose hearts have undergone philosophy's purification," whom he happens to meet on the way home, over "generals and cavalry commanders and office-seekers," who would presumably disrupt the evening with drunkenness, bravado or some sort of flattery or foolish boasting (I.4, IV: 535 in tr). As the evening commences, the dinner guests are described as being so overcome with the atmosphere engendered by the god Love that they eat in silence, until interrupted by a notorious comic who arrives at the door, uninvited (I.8-13, IV: 537-39). Even he cannot rouse the guests, but with his entrance, a series of interesting conversations begin.

Since so much of what takes place at these sorts of mealtimes depends on the kind of control exerted by the host or by some influential guest, it is no wonder that Plato holds so much stock in the commander of feasts when describing facets

⁹⁵ Plutarch, "Quaestiones Convivales" I.1.614, VIII: 15-17 in tr: "Then, too, there are, I think, topics of discussion that are particularly suitable for a drinking-party. Some are supplied by history; others it is possible to take from current events; some contain many lessons bearing on philosophy, many on piety; some induce an emulous enthusiasm for courageous and great-hearted deeds, and some for charitable and humane deeds. If one makes unobtrusive use of them to entertain and instruct his companions as they drink, not the least of the evils of intemperance will be taken away."

⁹⁶ "Symposium" 176E. Plutarch, "Quaestiones Convivales" IV.6.671C-672C, VIII: 361-67 in tr, discusses "Who the god of the Jews is," attempting to draw parallels between Jewish and Bacchic practices.

of his ideal state.⁹⁷ Without proper direction, such meals easily degenerated into mindless frenzy.

The most illuminating parallel between mealtime traditions of the philosophers and Eph 5:18-20 is in the mutual concern shared by each for appropriate singing and discourse to triumph over drunken debauchery. A mealtime background to Eph 5:18-20 does not necessitate that these verses be considered either as a corrective for the type of behaviour denounced by Paul in 1 Cor 11 or as a polemic against Bacchic drunkenness. Rather, it may indicate a contrast that may have been quite familiar to gentile readers. Controlled discussion is to be preferred over drunken dissipation. Only, the writer of Ephesians, instead of championing philosophy, advocates a fulness of the Spirit that leads people to worship God and praise Christ. In the Pauline tradition drunkenness was a sin thought to be typical of outsiders. The writer of Ephesians is pitting archetypal foolish and sinful behaviour of unbelievers against the kind of activity that should both characterize the mutual interaction of saints and express their devotion to God.

Accordingly, God's influence should extend to all areas of the readers' lives. Drunkenness is not an indication of God's influence. Singing to one another in psalms, hymns and spiritual songs is. That such a contrast would be most meaningful in a mealtime context may indicate the writer's assumption that his readers regularly gathered for meals, which, like some meals among unbelievers, could have had some aspects of meaningful song, worship or discussion.

Mealtime patterns may also underlie a number of other statements in the moral teaching. Throughout there has been an unusual emphasis on speech, a facet seldom observed.⁹⁸ The gifts given to the church in 4:11 have a speaking function. Those who learn from these gift-individuals themselves are to be involved in speaking truth to one another (4:15). The concentration of terms dealing with teaching and learning has already been observed.⁹⁹ Some of the sententious statements in 4:25-5:2 deal with speech issues - lying (4:25), useless vs

⁹⁷ Plato, *Laws* 640D-E and 671B-E, I: 55 and 151-53 in tr. Note also Plutarch, "Questiones Convivales" I.4.620A-622C, VIII:49-63 in tr. Here the participants in the symposium all discuss what sort of person is the best to rule at such gatherings.

⁹⁸ Two who have observed this are: Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 334; LH Marshall, *The Challenge of New Testament Ethics*, (London: MacMillan, 1946), 284.

⁹⁹ See Chapter 2, §1.1 and §2.1.

good words (4:29), slander and shouting (4:31). The main proscription in 5:3-5 is against speaking about certain sins, a point that has already been related to mealtime conversations.¹⁰⁰ Other sins are to be exposed, an activity that certainly can involve oral behaviour (5:12).

Such a heavy concentration of speech concerns may indicate that a gathered fellowship, which some traditions indicate could involve a meal, stands behind much of the paraenesis, not as an overt concern, but as a mediating social structure. This would not at all be surprising in a letter that seems to have no specific circumstances to which it was addressed. One can easily envisage the writer being guided by what he would consider familiar structures in the absence of pressing concerns.

If this is the case, it may also explain how the writer could move so freely from an exhortation involving worship activities to one involving household issues. The church would not only have gathered for a meal, it would have met within the context of a household.¹⁰¹ Again, this would not mean that the writer addresses his concerns to church conduct. Only that the realities of the social situation in which the writer assumed his readers met would themselves mediate the type of statements the writer would make.

This discussion has been filled with all sorts of conditional statements. It is admittedly speculative. At best, it has suggested only the application of a known historical model to the data as it appears in Ephesians. Its usefulness lies in proffering a human situation for the moral teaching, as opposed to assuming a collection of catechetical or traditional statements. Recognition of such a setting does not necessarily change the meaning of any of the exhortations examined thus far. It can, however, help to explain how some of these could appear the way they do in the letter.

Such an acceptance of mealtime patterns, especially with the known concern to have controlled rather than drunken activity, may reflect further accommodation of social structures on the part of the writer. It places the uniqueness of his message not on any alternative structures but on the singularity of the God who is to be worshipped as people live within those structures. The writer is seen once

¹⁰⁰ See Chapter 4, §1.1.

¹⁰¹ R Banks, *Paul's Idea of Community*, (Grand Rapids: William B Eerdmans, 1988), 33-42; W Meeks, *The First Urban Christians*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983), 21.

more advocating religious devotion as the primary objective for his readers' moral lives.

6 Conclusions on 5:15-20

In resistance to the evil age that the writer assumes to have a potential exertion over his readers, he advocates watchfulness. He wishes his readers to be sure that they live wisely, knowing the Lord's will. For him, moral behaviour is deity-centred behaviour. This would not have been a very unusual outlook for a first-century person living in the Eastern Roman Empire. In such a setting, the writer can contrast drunkenness as foolish, sinful activity with divine influence leading to righteous religious behaviour, a contrast that would not necessarily seem strange to others of that era.

The writer addresses converts. He is seeking to enhance their devotion to their God. He implies that such devotion should make a difference by promoting a sort of righteousness that many people of that time would find commendable. This is moral teaching for a religious purpose.

Summary and Conclusions

1 Summary

The preceding study has been undertaken, in part, to redress an imbalance in Ephesians studies. The moral teaching has rarely been explored in lengthy, sustained units exceeding twelve verses. When this occurs, it often concentrates on a single theme, to the exclusion of other issues also existing in the epistle. This is a surprising phenomenon in view of the length of the moral teaching section itself and the proportion of material that it actually represents within the epistle.

The object of this study has been to discuss the numerous ways in which the writer of Ephesians throughout Eph 4:1-5:20 urges his readers to behave as converts to faith in Christ. After determining exegetically what the verses at hand say about moral behaviour, the message was compared to a variety of different writings. The first, more "doctrinal" half of the epistle was brought to bear to show the various ways it complements the moral teaching. Both Pauline and non-Christian moral traditions were compared to see more clearly how the writer of Ephesians fits into a first-century scene. Three social science models and one from social history were then applied to see how the moral teaching depicts human realities possibly existing in a first-century Hellenistic environment.

Five basic thematic points have been discussed in relation to Eph 4:1-5:20, focussing on the five exhortatory appearances of the term *περιπατέω*. These form the bases of the different ways that the readers are told to behave as converts. They provide guidelines rather than rigid standards, also conveying how the readers should express their morality as religious devotion to God or to Christ.

The first statement (4:1) urges the readers to live worthily of their calling to salvation. It summarizes in advance the writer's thrust over the next chapters. It also gives way immediately to explicit and implicit requests for the readers to behave in a unified fashion, requests that also express what it means to live worthily of the calling. Explicitly (4:2-3), the readers are told to give every effort to keep a unity already created by the Spirit. The writer, in 2:11-22, had discussed unity as reconciliation effected by Christ between Jew and gentile. The resultant unity between all believers should be preserved. Implicitly (4:7-16), the readers are told to heed certain Christ-given individuals whose function is to teach them about issues surrounding the faith. By so doing, they learn those things that help them speak the truth to one another in love (4:15) and that help them contribute to the

overall welfare of the church (4:16). These activities promote spiritual growth and lead the believers to a unity of the faith and of the knowledge of Christ (4:13).

The second statement (4:17) urges the readers to live no longer as gentiles. They must forsake the dominating influence of the prevailing culture that had also governed their pre-conversion past. The writer's comments were observed to resemble some Jewish and Pauline stereotypes of gentile behaviour, featuring but not restricted to sexual misconduct (4:17-19). Instead of succumbing to the influences of godlessness, the readers should cast them off, renew their thinking and embrace the new orientation to living inherent in their faith in Christ (4:22-24). Both the negative picture of gentile lifestyle and the positive statement that the new orientation involves "holiness and righteousness" (4:24) resemble thoughts appearing in a large number of non-Christian writings both from Judaism and from the Graeco-Roman world.

The third statement (5:2) tells the readers to follow Christ's example in his love for others. It was seen to have provided a positive contrast to the negative exhortation in 4:17 to forsake gentile lifestyle. It was also seen as summarizing a series of sententious exhortations expressing community interests (4:25-5:2). These statements foster moral commonplaces found throughout the LXX, various Jewish Pseudepigrapha and various Classical and Hellenistic writings such as Plato's *Laws*, Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* and the discourses of Dio Chrysostom and Epictetus. Common issues such as truth-speaking, refraining from anger, refraining from stealing, working, giving to the needy, speaking proper words, forgiving and being kind all take on a different dimension when seen as leading to the exhortation to love as Christ loved. Not only does the writer of Ephesians depict them as self-giving acts; he also implies that doing them expresses devotion to God.

The fourth statement (5:8), urging the readers to live as children of light, was seen as a summary of the writer's desire for his readers to forsake unrighteousness and to live righteously (5:3-14). Again focussing on sexual misconduct, the writer states that some activities are so evil that they do not deserve mention in conversation (5:3-5, 12). He intimates that even talking about misdeeds is a form of participation in them. He assumes that his readers know what comprises impure, covetous and shameful behaviour, as well as foolish talk and levity (5:3-5). He also assumes that they have some idea of what sorts of activities might be good and right and true (5:9) so that they can measure the propriety of their

lifestyle. The listing of these last three qualities resembles various Greek lists of virtues found especially among writers such as Plato, Aristotle and Dio Chrysostom. Eph 5:9 differs from these writers by relating these virtues to the concept of pleasing the Lord (5:10). This concept resembles various statements in the LXX that speak of pleasing God. It presupposes a dynamic relationship between the readers and their Lord, a relationship desired by the writer within his lengthy prayers on their behalf. The writer was also observed using common Jewish imagery expressing both unrighteousness/righteousness and pre-/post-conversion when he spoke about light and darkness (5:8-14). Both this imagery and the notion of pleasing God appear in significant places in antecedent Pauline writings (Rom 12:2; 13:11-14; Phil 1:9-11; 2:14-16; 1 Thess 4:1; 5:4-7). The influence of various Qumran writings on this section was explored and found to be doubtful.

The fifth statement (5:15) tells the readers to live carefully as wise people. The writer was seen depicting a negative view of his surrounding world by implying that evil influences could hinder his readers from behaving properly (5:15-16). He also adds a wisdom/foolishness duality to that of righteousness/unrighteousness. He repeats his concern of 5:10 in urging his readers to know the Lord's will (5:17). The contrast between drunkenness and fulness of the Spirit combines Pauline notions of sin with the more widely attested issue of living wisely. Ephesians seems to be unusual in contrasting debauched behaviour with acts of worship (5:18-20), but the application of a social history model showed otherwise.

Numerous statements promoting religious devotion were observed, scattered throughout these five sections. Some of these are motivations to perform a desired behaviour. Others are exhortations themselves. The desire for the readers to know the will of the Lord (5:17) or to discover what pleases the Lord (5:9) appears to be just as much a part of the writer's concept of morality as his directives to speak the truth (4:25) or to refrain from anger (4:26, 31). It has been demonstrated throughout this study that the moral teaching is inseparable from the writer's religious viewpoint. Many deeds are to be performed out of devotion to God, to Christ or to the Spirit. This devotion presumes that the readers are involved dynamically with these persons in such a way that they can "grow" into and out from Christ (4:15-16), "be renewed" in their own spirits (4:23), "grieve the Spirit" (4:30), offer loving deeds as sacrifices to God (5:2), please "the Lord" through righteous activity (5:10) and even know this Lord's will (5:17). This dynamism is

inherent in the new life of faith that the readers enjoy as converts.

As this message has been traced through the moral teaching, it has also been compared with various statements from antecedent Pauline letters comprised of Colossians and the seven letters of undisputed Pauline authorship. In the process it has been observed that the writer of Ephesians presents the same kinds of concerns found in these other writings, sometimes with identical expressions and other times with unique formulations. Some aspects and emphases of Ephesians' moral teaching differ from what is found in antecedent Pauline epistles, but the basic outlook of this moral teaching is Pauline. Issues such as walking worthily of the call to salvation, living in a unified fashion, resisting gentile influences, being oriented to the new life in Christ, performing loving deeds, living righteously and living wisely all find expression in the antecedent Pauline corpus.

When various aspects of Ephesians' moral teaching were compared with moral views depicted in a variety of Jewish and Classical or Hellenistic writings, a number of striking similarities were observed. Outside of direct quotations from the LXX (Eph 4:25, 26, and perhaps 5:18a) no direct influence of any of these outside sources of moral exhortation could be proven. Nevertheless, Ephesians appears as a product of its age. The body, a common metaphor for unity used by Graeco-Roman thinkers as diverse as Socrates, Cicero, Seneca and Epictetus, also appears in similar fashion in Eph 4:7-16. Elements from Jewish stereotypes of gentile behaviour found in writings such as *Sib Or* 3, 4 and 5, *Wis 14*, *T Jud* and *T Dan* all bear some resemblance to Eph 4:17-19, though Eph 4:17-19 fails to include idolatry in its stereotype. Comments from writers as diverse as Plato, Aristotle, Musonius Rufus, Seneca and Heraclitus all indicate that dissatisfaction with moral decay was not solely a Jewish or Christian concern. Further, the terms "holiness" and "righteousness" in Eph 4:24 were seen to form a hendiadys not restricted to any background, whether Jewish, Christian or Graeco-Roman. A variety of commonplace concerns were seen existing in Eph 4:25-5:2, and to a lesser degree in Eph 5:3-14 and 15-20. These have already been mentioned above.

In spite of these similarities, Ephesians presents a unique outlook. The body metaphor may signify unity, but that unity is said to be in the Spirit (4:3), in Christ (4:13) and empowered by Christ (4:11, 15-16). Eph 4:17-19 might find congruence with non-Christian ideas, but Eph 4:21 relates these observations to truth "in Jesus." Eph 4:24 relates the common categories of holiness and righteousness to God's

standards expressed in the truth of the gospel (4:24). The commonplaces of 4:25-5:2 belie treatment as pure moralism when the fellow-membership in the body of Christ (4:25), the influence of the devil (4:27), the response of the Spirit (4:30) and the forgiveness of God (4:32) are all brought to bear on these issues. The concern for others and for devotion to God that these moral instructions evince is summarized in the example of the love of Christ who gave himself as a benefit for the readers and as an act of devotion to God (5:2). When the readers act correspondingly, they are said to be imitators of God (5:1).

In the same manner Eph 5:3-14 and 15-20 diverge from various non-Christian writings advocating similar behaviour by relating God's displeasure at immorality (5:5) and the Lord's pleasure at proper behaviour (5:10) to orientation to Christ's light (5:8, 14), to the Lord's will (5:17) and to the fulness of the Spirit (5:18), which itself results in worshipful devotion to God and to Christ (5:19-20). The writer of Ephesians presents proper behaviour as a religious endeavour that presumes a dynamic, ongoing relationship between his readers and God, Christ or the Spirit.

Four different social models have been applied to the moral teaching. The first, involving social network and exchange theories, demonstrates how Eph 4:7-16 reflects normal group activities. Various statements in Ephesians indicate that the writer assumes he addresses a group to which some people have stronger attachments than others. Such situations create a potential for innovations to enter the group more rapidly than if the community were more tightly knit. The writer's concern that his readers heed special instructors was seen as forming part of a defensive group mechanism to protect it from receiving deviant information, and thus become less unified. This undergirded the implicit message of these verses that promote unified behaviour.

The second model, applied both to Eph 4:17-24 and 4:25-5:2, drew on modern analyses of New Religious Movements to help explain how a group could simultaneously reject aspects of its surrounding culture while accepting other elements of the supporting social system. This approach resembled earlier attempts by others to apply various church-sect theories to the text of Ephesians, but differed by not trying to fit the letter into an evolutionary line extending from Paul to the beginning of the second century. The model used was developed by Roy Wallis to show that new movements, while gaining acceptance in a society, can demonstrate in varying degrees aspects of three simultaneous responses to the social world in

which they are seeking acceptance: rejection, accommodation and affirmation. This model was combined with the systems theory of Richard Münch to delineate more clearly what was being rejected, accommodated or affirmed. Ephesians strongly rejects gentile immorality. Simultaneously, it passively accepts community or political structures such as household patterns (5:21-6:9), economic activities such as work (4:28), and community values such as the concept of right and wrong (5:3, 8), sexual righteousness (4:19) and even the ideas of holiness and righteousness (4:24). Ephesians conceives of gentile shortcomings as a failure in the social sphere related to gentiles ignoring God, which in turn leads to indecent behaviour (4:17-19). It advocates the development of a strong religious dynamism that leads people to know Christ (4:13, 20), imitate God (5:1), do loving deeds out of devotion to God (5:2) and please the Lord by living righteously (5:10). The thrust of the moral teaching is not aimed at social change but at religious devotion.

The third model showed how, anthropologically, Ephesians reflects elements of an honour-shame mentality. Much of the argument in 5:3-14, as well as throughout the epistle, hinges on the readers acknowledging their honourable standing as converts to motivate their obedience to God and Christ. The strong sense of moral propriety (5:3-4), the sense that moral wrongdoers have a disapproved status (5:5), the idea that some deeds bring shame (5:12) and the idea that an authority-figure could actually be pleased by the appropriate conduct of an underling (5:10) all point to a setting dominated by the approval of others. This contrasts with those societies in which violations of standards are in themselves guilt-producing. A guilt orientation was not seen as antithetical to an honour-shame setting in Ephesians, since the honour and shame ultimately exist in terms of God's or Christ's approval. In this setting the enigmatic statement to expose shameful deeds (5:12) was clarified as basically a concurrence with "the Lord" as to what was evil, and hence to be avoided.

The fourth model explored aspects of Graeco-Roman mealtime practices to suggest a different slant on the contrast appearing in Eph 5:18-20. These verses may not have been simply addressing unrighteous behaviour potentially infiltrating Christian communities. Rather, they may be presenting alternatives familiar also to those outside the believing community. Refraining from drunkenness in favour of profitable speech was a common issue found in a variety of philosophical discussions about mealtime conversations. Ephesians was seen to have modified

this by substituting worshipful conversation prompted by the influence of the Holy Spirit. Further, it was suggested that a basic mealtime orientation may be an underlying social structure behind much of the moral teaching in Ephesians, perhaps explaining why so much of the specific moral teaching deals with issues concerning appropriate speech.

2 Conclusions

Though a number of issues could be highlighted both in terms of implications of this study as well as suggestions for further study, only three major issues are offered here. They deal principally with the evaluation of traditional influences on Ephesians.

First, due attention needs to be given to the significance of the religious viewpoint expressed by various moral statements in the New Testament. Though different writers on New Testament ethics have acknowledged this need,¹ frequently its implications are subsumed beneath the recognition of resemblances with statements found in various extra-biblical writings. How does Christian moral teaching differ from non-Christian moral teaching? This clearly goes beyond the exploration of the relationship between theology and ethics. Theologically, the writer of Ephesians says that his readers have not been saved by good works (2:8-9). He does not contradict himself when he portrays moral behaviour as an expression of religious devotion. Perhaps more attention should be given to exploring the connection between religious devotion and morality when a relationship between the two is expressed by other New Testament writers.

Second, this study has not uncovered any evidence of borrowing from non-Christian traditions outside of the LXX, in spite of conceptual resemblances between these and various statements in Eph 4:1-5:20. There are undoubtedly cases where some non-Christian writings have influenced the formulation of certain statements in the New Testament. Rather than mainly attempting to discover these kinds of influences, perhaps further work should also emphasize reconstructing various first-century world views. Certain statements from a variety of traditions may be similar simply because they are all products of their age. The verbs used by scholars to convey traditional influences can sometimes be illuminating:

¹ See, e.g., AJ Malherbe, "Exhortation in 1 Thessalonians," in *Paul and the Popular Philosophers*, (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990), 61; WA Meeks, "Understanding Early Christian Ethics," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 105 (1986): 3-11.

"borrow," "take over," "depend on." These all indicate a linear model whereby various writers come under the influence of specific texts. Without ignoring such instances where this is the case, scholars might be well-served by trying to learn more how people in certain situations generally tended to think, concentrating on how these influenced the products of various religious communities.

Third, this study has used different social models to show how various aspects of Ephesians' moral teaching could have fit into actual human situations. In particular the New Religious Movements model has suggested an alteration from currently prevailing views. Some studies have used social science models to explain similarities between non-Christian and Christian views by positing some sort of selective borrowing on the part of first-century believers so as to become more acceptable to outsiders. One major study assumes that Ephesians itself evinces a sociological tension by being both separatistic, involving the development of distinct practices, and evangelistic, entailing conformity to certain standards to gain a hearing, or at least involving interaction with standards foreign to the group.² Another, in surveying household codes in the Graeco-Roman world and in the NT, suggests, again, that in order to "promote integration into Greco-Roman society," Christians had to employ "selective acculturation," choosing what they would accept from the surrounding culture.³

As insightful as these studies are, they assume that various Christians had to change in order to accept certain standards prevailing outside the group. The NRM model developed in this study suggests the opposite: some Christians reflected elements from the surrounding culture as part of their belief system because that was the society from which they came. As far as the writer of Ephesians was concerned, existing social patterns that he did not regard to have been anti-God or anti-Christ were a means to the achievement of a morally righteous and beneficial-to-others existence lived in devotion to God or to Christ. Further studies may indicate that the passive acceptance of basic social structure systems held true for other NT writers besides the writer of Ephesians. If this were the case, then perhaps attention should also be focussed on how these other writers promoted religious virtuosity.

² MY MacDonald, *The Pauline Churches*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 103.

³ DL Balch, "Household Codes," in *Greco-Roman Literature and the New Testament*, ed by DE Aune, (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1988), 33.

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