

Biblical Theology of Church, Ministry and Mission

An Exegetical Paper
Exploring The
Image of The Church as The
‘Temple of God’
Within Pauline Thought
by Conrad Vine.

I hereby certify that the attached is my own work and conforms to the College’s policy on academic honesty as outlined in the College prospectus.

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Signature:

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Instructor: Dr Steve Currow

Student name: Mr Conrad Vine

Student #: 2267

Institution: Newbold College

Introduction

Focal theory: the concept of ‘church’ and its purpose has remained dynamic since the apostolic era, and the current debates about worship styles within the writer’s communion reflect an understanding of ‘church’ in which ‘church’ is viewed, inter alia, as providing the vehicle for a corporate worship experience. Consequently, congregations within the writer’s experience are aligning themselves along worship style lines, emphasising worship style rather than the worship’s content and focal point.

Purpose of the paper: the purpose of the paper is to explore the motif of the Church as the ‘temple of God’ within Pauline theology. The paper’s hypothesis is that whilst recognising that Paul provides a number of different images of the Church, the ‘temple’ motif may incorporate key concepts that directly address the concept and practice of ‘church’ within the modern context.

Significance of the paper: the paper is significant because through the exploration of the ‘temple’ motif within Pauline ecclesiology the writer hopes to identify key ecclesiological concepts which may provide a theological framework for exploring the concept and purpose of ‘church’ within local congregations that are trying to reconcile differing approaches to, and understandings of, church.

Method and methodology: the paper will utilize the following method: a) introduction (parameter setting); b) outline of the use of metaphors, linguistic definitions and cultural influences relating to Pauline ecclesiology; c) brief exegesis of 1 Cor. 3.16-17; d) brief exegesis of 2 Cor. 6.16-7.1; e) brief exegesis of Eph. 2.20-22; f) identification of key theological concepts across the above pericopes; g) identification of areas for further study in the area of systematic theology, and h) conclusions. The paper will use the above method because any valid conclusions about Pauline ecclesiology based on the ‘temple’ motif require a systematic exegesis of the above pericopes, and then an assessment across the pericopes concerned to identify the underlying theological concepts.

Limitations and delimitations: whilst recognizing the diversity of Pauline ecclesiological motifs, the paper will not a) engage in a systematic analysis of each motif; b) seek to identify the implications of the study of the ‘temple’ motif within a systematic theology context; and c) seek to provide an exegesis of the texts concerned from all possible perspectives under the post-modern approach to hermeneutics.

The paper will however a) engage in a brief exegesis of the above texts; b) seek to identify the key theological concepts and themes of church contained within the Pauline ‘temple’ motif; and c) briefly seek to identify potential areas of further study in the systematic theology context which have pastoral implications.

Motifs, linguistic definitions and cultural influences within Pauline ecclesiology

Motifs: there are over 100 different metaphors (motifs) for the Church¹ in the New Testament². The metaphors used defy a systematic ecclesiology as they often use mutually incompatible images³, their use reflecting the apostolic writers' concept that 'living words are channels, rather than receptacles, of thought'⁴.

To understand the metaphors, we should not seek to build a systematic ecclesiology around any given metaphor, but need to recognize that all the metaphors point to a greater reality, the activity of the Triune God on behalf of His people⁵.

¹ According to P.T. O'Brien, 'Church' in Gerald F. Hawthorne and Ralph P. Martin (eds.), *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters* (Leicester: InterVarsity Press, 1993), pp. 123-31, 'Church' is from the Greek 'ἐκκλησία, ἡ', itself derived from the preposition 'ἐκ' (out of + genitive) and the verb 'καλεῶ' (a contract verb of the φιλεῶ type), and means 'that which is called out', or 'those who are called out'. Originally being used in classical Greek, e.g. Euripides and Herodotus, it represented the assembly of free citizens of a city-state, come together to debate a current issue, with all members of the ἐκκλησία having the right to participate, speak and vote. The term ἐκκλησία was used in the LXX, Josephus and Philo to designate a gathering of people, e.g. the people of God, and while the term had no intrinsic cultic or religious meaning, it could be used of a gathering for a religious purpose. O'Brien further argues in a convincing manner that Paul's use of the term is almost exclusively for house-churches, and that for when they actually come together, rather than for our modern concept of a national church.

² These range from minor images such as the Ark to major such as the 'Body of Christ'. Maurice Schepers argues that there are five major images of the Church in the New Testament, the Church as the 'Kingdom', 'Temple of God', 'Body of Christ', 'Spouse of Christ', and as a 'Vine', which are the major images from a multiplicity that is required as 'the richness of the mystery of the Church is such that one symbol or figure could not adequately express its depths'. See Schepers, Maurice Bonaventure, *The Church of Christ* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ; Prentice-Hall Inc., 1963), pp. 21-32.

³ For example, the church as the mother of Christ (Rev. ch. 12) or as the bride of Christ (Eph. ch. 5).

⁴ Minear, Paul S., *Images of the Church in the New Testament* (Philadelphia, PN: Westminster Press, 1960), p. 20.

⁵ According to Horbury, William, 'New Wine in Old Wine-Skins: IX. The Temple', *The Expository Times* 86 No. 2 (1974), pp.36-41, in concluding a discussion on the 'temple' motif within the New Testament, 'within the context of the apostolic age, one facet of the newness found in Christ is epitomized by the fact considered here, that most of what the New Testament says about the Temple is material, not for the history of Israel, but for the doctrine of the Christian community in its relation to Father, Son and Holy Spirit', i.e. the 'temple' motif, as all the metaphors used for the church in the New Testament, ultimately points to God's actions on behalf of His people, and His people's appropriate response to His redemptive acts.

This paper therefore, whilst focussing on a single Pauline motif (that of the Church as the ‘Temple of God’), recognizes that such a focus can only be meaningful when understood horizontally within the broader corpus of Pauline and New Testament thought, and vertically as opening a window to something greater than itself⁶.

Linguistic definitions: there are two words used in the Greek New Testament for ‘temple’, ο ναός and το ιερον.

το ιερον is from the adjective ιερος, α, ον meaning ‘holy’, and is used primarily in reference to the general temple area and structures, including the inner sanctuary⁷. Rarely used for the Jerusalem temple in the LXX, it is used in the Pauline corpus only once (1 Cor. 9.13) to refer to the place where sacrifices were offered, and not for the actual sanctuary itself⁸.

ο ναός is from the verb ναίω, to dwell, and in classical Greek it meant the dwelling of a god, a temple. Whilst in the Hebrew Scriptures different terms are employed for ‘temple’ and ‘palace’, the LXX maintains a strict differentiation between ο ναός and all other words used to denote a dwelling place, palace, temple or location for theophanies. ο ναός itself is only used to refer to the temple cultus at Jerusalem, and more specifically to the sanctuary itself, the dwelling place of the true God⁹.

⁶ Within Pauline thought, whilst it is difficult to develop a systematic ecclesiology around any given metaphor (as with the other New Testament writers) that allows for the nuances of the contiguous Pauline metaphors, it is possible to trace development and enrichment of thought within a given metaphor, and to note how the spiritual principles embodied are progressively applied.

⁷ P.W. Comfort, ‘Temple’, in Gerald F. Hawthorne and Ralph P. Martin (eds.), *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters* (Leicester, England: InterVarsity Press, 1993), pp. 923-25.

⁸ C. Brown, ‘το ιερον’, in Colin Brown (ed.), *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1978), pp. 785-94.

⁹ W. von Meding, ‘το ναός’, in Colin Brown (ed.), *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1978), pp. 781-85.

Paul reflects this distinction throughout his writings, using ο ναός only six times¹⁰, of which one instance (2 Thess. 2.4) refers to the ‘man of lawlessness’ usurping God’s place in the sanctuary, (1 Cor. 6.19) refers to the individual believer as ο ναός, and the remaining instances (1 Cor. 3.16-17, 2 Cor. 6.16-7.1, Eph. 2.19-21)¹¹ relate ο ναός to the Church, which texts will be the focus for this paper.

Cultural influences: the Jerusalem temple occupied a central place within the Israelite cultus from the days of David and Solomon, to the reformed faith of Josiah, the exile, and within second temple Judaism. It was the dwelling place of YHWH, the visible symbol of YHWH’s election of Israel, His abiding presence, and the guarantee of Israel’s inheritance¹². However, the brutal reality of the exile required changes in this doctrine, so a subtle change takes place, with an increasing emphasis on the freedom of YHWH to dwell where He chooses, particularly amongst a people (with a concomitant emphasis on purity on the part of the chosen people)¹³.

Within Paul’s milieu therefore, there were a number of extant ideas concerning ‘temple’, including: a) the Hellenistic concept of a person as divinely indwelt¹⁴; b) the Qumran Essenes’ concept of the¹⁵ community as the true sanctuary of God (Himself present during their Torah study and worship), the Jerusalem

¹⁰ This figure is taken from the generally accepted Pauline corpus, and excludes the Book of Hebrews, which different vocabulary anyway to refer to temple imagery, e.g. τα αγια and η σκηνη.

¹¹ P.W. Comfort, ‘Temple’, in Gerald F. Hawthorne and Ralph P. Martin (eds.), *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters* (Leicester, England: InterVarsity Press, 1993), pp. 923-25.

¹² According to Horbury, William, ‘New Wine in Old Wine-Skins: IX. The Temple’, *The Expository Times* 86 No. 2 (1974), pp.36-41, key texts showing the OT perspective on the temple include (but are not limited to) Pss. 2, 20, 48, 68, 78, 89, 110, 132, Isa. 33.21, Ezek. 47.1, Mic. 4.11-13, Zeph. 3.14 *et al.*).

¹³ Horbury, William, ‘New Wine in Old Wine-Skins: IX. The Temple’, *The Expository Times* 86 No. 2 (1974), pp. 36-41. Key texts include Exod.25.8, 29.45, Lev. 26.11, Ezek. 11.16, 37.26-28.

¹⁴ This theory is primarily expounded by H. Wenschkewitz, ‘Die Spiritualisierung der Kultusbegriffe Tempel, Priester und Opfer im Neuen Testament’, *Angelos* IV (1932), pp. 70-230.

¹⁵ Defined by the Qumran Essenes (not surprisingly) as their own community.

Temple being defiled by sin¹⁶; c) a rival Samaritan temple on Mt. Gerizim¹⁷; d) a developing understanding of ‘temple’ within the early Church, in particular an emphasis that God does not inhabit physical temples¹⁸, and e) due to Judaism’s physical dispersion, an enhanced role for the synagogue and family vis-à-vis the Jerusalem temple, and hence a greater emphasis on spiritual rather than on physical aspects¹⁹.

Paul’s writings on ο ναός as ο ναός του θεου must therefore be seen within a cultural, linguistic, religious and philological milieu which already accepted spiritual concepts of ο ναός and was therefore more likely to accept his teachings, and it is with the above understandings that we can move to the relevant ο ναός pericopes themselves.

¹⁶ Marshall, I.H., ‘Church and Temple in the New Testament’, *Tyndale Bulletin*, vol. 40.2 November (1989), pp. 203-22.

¹⁷ See John ch. 4 and the exchange between Jesus and the Samaritan woman at the well.

¹⁸ The early Christians did still worship in the temple, e.g. Acts 2.46, 3.1-10, 22.17, but not for sacrificial purposes, more for worship and evangelism purposes. Stephen’s covenant lawsuit to the Sanhedrin (Acts 7.48) included the words ‘Yet the Most High does not dwell in houses made with human hands’ with a *peshet* interpretation from Isa. 66.1-2, and Paul’s speech in Athens, a short distance from Corinth (the church in which Paul uses the concept of ο ναός first as the church), includes the words ‘The God who made the world and everything in it, He who is Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in shrines made by human hands’ (Acts 17.24), a clear linkage with the concept of a sanctuary not ‘made with human hands’, as outlined in Heb. 9.24.

¹⁹ Marshall in Marshall, I.H., ‘Church and Temple in the New Testament’, *Tyndale Bulletin*, vol. 40.2 November (1989), pp. 203-22, makes a strong case for the reducing significance of the Jerusalem temple and physical cultic expression throughout late 2nd temple Judaism within the lives of Jews vis-à-vis the increasing role of the synagogue and home in the daily and weekly exposition of scripture, prayer and religious life, a change necessitated if only due to the physical impossibility of attending the cultic rituals in Jerusalem for members of the Diaspora. The increasing importance of the synagogue and home within Jewish religious life should not be under-estimated, as it meant that the early church, and particularly those house churches founded by Paul, utilized an existing mode of meeting and worship which was already understood, rather than being forced to create a new religious *modus operandi ex nihilo*. As opportunities to worship in synagogues were increasingly denied to followers of η οδός throughout apostolic times, and particularly following the destruction of Jerusalem by Vespasian and Titus, so early Christians were increasingly forced to focus worship and religious life in homes. This focus on the home as the locus for religious expression accompanied a greater emphasis within Judaism on the spiritual rather than the physical, hence the ease with which early Christians could accept that they were the ‘Temple of God’ rather than the physical Jerusalem temple.

1 Cor. 3.16-17²⁰

Purpose: written to a church in a city renowned for its licentious and immoral lifestyle, Paul deals with issues raised by the Corinthian church: divisions and factionalism; incest; intra-church litigation; sexual relations; meat offered to idols; disorders in public worship; spiritual gifts; and divergent resurrection beliefs.

The Corinthian church was struggling not only with the external influences of its immoral city, but with internal divisions and factionalism, so rather than providing an abstract outline of Christian theology, Paul writes a practical letter that outlines the theological principles and concomitant applications relating to the issues raised by the church.

Target pericope context: 1 Cor. 3.16-17 summarises a thought progression dealing with the divisions in the Church. Different factions claim allegiance to Paul, Cephas, Apollos or Christ, and this factionalism is preventing true spiritual growth (1 Cor. 3.1-4). Paul argues in 1 Cor. 3.5-9 that individuals not only work as the Lord ‘assigns’, but that there should be an essential unity between workers and work, as ‘we are God’s servants: working together, you are God’s field, God’s building’²¹, i.e. there should be unity within God for all members.

In 1 Cor. 3.10-15, Paul argues that all members, particularly leaders, are accountable to God for how they have contributed to the church’s growth, and that the end-time judgement will reveal the materials each person built with – an

²⁰ This paper assumes a Pauline authorship for this book, assuming that it was written by Paul in response to information received by Paul from a) Chloe’s people (1 Cor. 1.11), b) the letter sent by the Corinthians to Paul (1 Cor. 7.1), and c) the delegation consisting of Stephanas, Fortunatus and Achaicus (1 Cor. 16.17). The paper also assumes the letter was written from Ephesus (1 Cor. 16.8), to a church established by Paul during his second missionary journey. This paper assumes the inherent unity of purpose and authorship of the book, and rejects the complex authorship and composition theories as postulated by various critics (see Murphy-O’Connor, Jerome, *Paul: A Critical Life* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), p.253)

²¹ 1 Cor. 3.9, Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America, (ed.), *New Revised Standard Version Bible*, (London: HarperCollins, 1989).

experience that could be exceedingly sorrowful for those who, whilst saved, built with inferior materials²².

Target pericope: whilst this pericope is commonly understood in relation to 1 Cor. 6.19, i.e. that the ‘temple’ in question is the individual believer’s body, or possibly that Paul is using *sukkah* and not temple imagery²³, a detailed analysis of the Greek refutes these suggestions: the Greek through its use of plural verbs and personal pronouns clearly refers to the entire Corinthian church, not to individual believers²⁴: the ‘temple’ in question is the local church²⁵.

Furthermore, ‘οὐκ οἶδατε οὐτι’ implies that what Paul is teaching should already be known by the Corinthian church – they are doubly culpable for their factionalism. 1 Cor. 3.16-17 includes a solemn declaration of ‘holy law’²⁶: God

²² Manfred Brauch argues that Paul may have in mind in his description of the building materials the followers of Peter and of Apollos: Peter’s followers may have been ‘attempting to build their own legalistic Jewish practices into the structure of the church’, whilst Apollos’ followers ‘may be building with eloquent (worldly) wisdom and superspirituality’ (see Brauch, Manfred, *Hard Sayings of Paul* (Sevenoaks: InterVarsity Press, 1989), p.93).

²³ J. Massyngberde Ford argues that 1 Cor. 3.10-17 should not be understood as being a ‘temple’ text, as for one reason some of the building materials mentioned (hay, straw and stubble) are not appropriate for use in a temple construction, but should be understood as building a *sukkoth*, or temporary structure, linked with the Feast of Tabernacles. The building materials mentioned by Paul were all commonly used (according to Massyngberde Ford at least) in the construction of a *sukkoth*, for which a foundation was allowed to be built on a permanent basis, but whose superstructure had to be re-built each year rather than be allowed to remain *in situ*. References to fire are thus explained as referring to the fire ceremonies conducted in the Jerusalem temple during the Feast, and through the use of the *Sukkoth* imagery, Paul is (allegedly) highlighting the increased personal responsibility that church or community leaders have in the construction of God’s dwelling place. 2 Cor. 5.1-5 argues that our permanent home is in heaven, not on earth, and the temporary nature of the *sukkoth* motif supports this view. Whilst interesting, I believe that this interpretation fails to take into account a) the nature of the problems in the Corinthian church, b) Paul’s overall argument in response to the problems in Corinth, c) the holiness motif within the pericope and 1 Cor. 6.19 and 1 Cor. 5., d) the use of the temple motif in 2 Cor. 6.14-7.1 and Eph. 2.19-22, all of which argue for a primary understanding of the pericope in question as relating to the ‘temple’ motif, rather than the *sukkoth* motif.

²⁴ See Appendix 1 for a word-by-word parsing and translation of the target pericope, using the text as provided by Nestle-Aland²⁷.

²⁵ For a Jew like Paul, there was only one temple – that in Jerusalem. The idea that each individual church would be a separate temple in God would have been quite foreign, so we must assume that even though Paul is referring to the Corinthian church specifically here as the ‘temple of God’, Paul allows for us to understand the term as referring to the universal church, as the local church is a member and microcosm of the greater whole.

²⁶ Brian Rosner argues that Robert M. Grant explains that both 1 Cor. 3.16-17 and 1 Cor. 5.5 are from the ‘holy law’ genre, and are linked by a holiness motif (see Rosner, Brian, ‘Temple and Holiness in 1 Cor. 5’, *Tyndale Bulletin*, vol. 42.1 May (1991), pp. 137-145).

will destroy those who destroy His temple²⁷. One may survive the end-time judgement if one uses inferior building materials, but one will not survive if one ‘is destroying’ God’s temple²⁸.

The pericope outlines some key theological concepts: a) the *ἐκκλησία* is only the ‘Temple of God’ because of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit²⁹ – the Church is therefore a spiritual ‘temple’, and without the Holy Spirit the Church is just another *ἐκκλησία* of free persons coming together for a social or political purpose; b) the Church is God’s³⁰, not the possession of any individual or group of believers; c) God’s dwelling place is not somewhere distant – it is within the Church, the community of believers, that God dwells, d) by virtue of God’s presence, and for no other reason, God’s temple – ‘which ye are’ – is ‘holy’, and God ‘will’ destroy those who ‘are destroying’ the temple³¹. Members therefore, when in *ἐκκλησία*, are in the awful presence of the Holy Spirit, necessitating holiness³² and purity on their part³³.

²⁷ We see here a parallel to the Old Testament *lex talionis* in action – to destroy God’s temple is serious, as it is rejecting the redemptive power of the Holy Spirit not only for oneself, but also in the lives of those not yet reached by the church.

²⁸ Paul may have been drawing on Old Testament texts such as Lev. 26.11, Ps. 114, Ezek. 37.26 to support his idea that God would dwell in a people as well as, or in apposition to, a physical dwelling place.

²⁹ Ronald Y.K. Fung argues that the *καὶ* in 1 Cor. 3.16 is explicative rather than purely conjunctive, i.e. we could paraphrase the verse to read ‘Do you not know that you are God’s temple, because God’s Spirit is dwelling in you?’, see Fung, Ronald Y.K., ‘Some Pauline Pictures of the Church’, in I. Howard Marshall (ed.), *The Evangelical Quarterly*, vol. 53.2 April-June (1981), p.101.

³⁰ The position of *τοῦ θεοῦ* in the Greek pericope emphasizes the possession of the church by God, not by any individual believer.

³¹ Paul does not use a subjunctive for ‘will destroy’, e.g. God may destroy at sometime in the future, rather he uses a future indicative form, implying the absolute reality of the destruction of the person who is today destroying – imperfective aspect – God’s temple. Furthermore, the verb *οἰκεῖ* used in 1 Cor. 3.16 is present, indicative, active, i.e. Paul allows for no doubt as to whether the Holy Spirit is really dwelling in the Corinthian church or not. The indicative mood indicates the reality of the premise, whereas Paul could have used the subjunctive within a conditional clause to indicate an element of doubt in view of the problems in the Corinthian church. Paul does not even use a clause of simple condition (*εἰ* + indicative in protasis, indicative in apodosis), let alone a clause reflecting either probable future or present general condition. For Paul the case is clear – the Holy Spirit IS dwelling in God’s church, today, on an on-going basis, as a present reality, and Corinthian (and elsewhere) church members are called to be aware of this fact through the heat of their factionalism and strivings.

³² The pericope may be viewed not only as the logical conclusion to the immediately preceding texts, but as an internal prolepsis, pointing forward and preparing the minds of the Corinthian church for the discussions of 1 Cor. 5.1-6.20. The statement of ‘holy law’ in this pericope provides the principle within which the discussions of 1 Cor. 5.1-6.20 take place, where Paul moves from the corporate to the individual level, and shows that the principles of holiness and

This pericope may sound harsh, but in reality ‘to destroy this Church, this temple of God, is to destroy God’s alternative to the brokenness of human society; it is to make it impossible for God’s redemptive purpose and work, through his ‘temple’ in Corinth, to redeem Corinthian society’³⁴. The faction and strife-ridden Corinthian church was rejecting God’s way of redeeming them and their community, and thus, through opposing the redemptive work of the Holy Spirit, were in danger of committing the unpardonable sin³⁵.

purity necessitated at the church level are applicable at the individual level also. It is possible therefore to argue for unity and progression of thought within 1 Corinthians, with this pericope in particular not only concluding a progression of thought but also casting forward to later discussions.

³³ Brian Rosner argues strongly for a holiness motif in 1 Cor. 5, linking the offender to the call for holiness in the church, and basing his position on the Old Testament law texts that promote the purity and holiness of Israel, e.g. Deut. 23.2-9, Josh. 7.25, Lev. 26.23-25, 26.27-28, 40-41. See Rosner, Brian, ‘Temple and Holiness in 1 Cor. 5’, *Tyndale Bulletin*, vol. 42.1 May (1991), pp. 137-145.

³⁴ Brauch, Manfred, *Hard Sayings of Paul* (Sevenoaks: InterVarsity Press, 1989), p.94.

³⁵ It is interesting to note that Paul does not suggest in any way that the Holy Spirit would depart the εκκλησια in the case of impurity or a lack of holiness amongst the members, as one could have expected him to say within the context of the visions of Ezekiel, which show God’s presence departing His temple after sitting in judgment on the people of Judah. There is no hint in this pericope that the Holy Spirit will ever leave His church, as it is the ναος του θεου and not the ναος του ανθρωπου, and this fact should be cause for encouragement for church members of all communions today who are disappointed or saddened when they perceive that their εκκλησια is not being consistent with the call to holiness in this pericope. God will not abandon his εκκλησια, rather, He will bring judgment on those who are destroying His εκκλησια.

2 Cor. 6.14-7.1³⁶

Purpose: Paul's experience with the Corinthian church was not easy, and may have involved several trips and letters, not all of which are extant³⁷. The immediate reason for 2 Corinthians is Paul's relief and joy at the positive report received from Titus about the church's reception of his previous correspondence, but he includes a sincere thanksgiving for the positive report from Titus, a defence of his plans against the charges of fickleness, a defence of the character of his ministry, encouragement for participation in the collection for the Jerusalem church, and a vindication of his apostleship against those who were questioning his apostolic authority³⁸.

Target pericope context: in 1 Cor 6.1 Paul urges the believers 'not to accept the grace of God in vain', and after again defending his apostolic ministry on behalf of the Corinthian believers in 1 Cor. 6.3-11, expresses the depths of his feelings

³⁶ See Appendix 2 for a word-by-word parsing and translation of the target pericope, using the text as provided by Nestle-Aland²⁷.

³⁷ From the evidence of 1 & 2 Corinthians, Paul's relationship with the local church was not easy. Based on the evidence of the two books and Acts of the Apostles, Guthrie presents a well-argued case for the following outline of the contacts between Paul and the Corinthian church: a) Paul wrote a letter known as the 'previous letter' (1 Cor. 5.9) warning against contact with immoral persons; b) Paul heard reports from church members and received a letter, resulting in the writing and sending of 1 Corinthians; c) Paul heard other adverse reports, and decided to make a further visit, probably from Ephesus, from which he was obliged to retire in haste, known as the 'painful visit' (2 Cor. 2.1); d) On his return to Ephesus he wrote the 'sorrowful letter' to remedy the situation (2 Cor. 2.4). This letter was carried by Titus; e) Paul left Ephesus and moved to Macedonia, where he met with Titus, who was bringing the response from the Corinthian church (2.Cir. 7.5-7); f) Paul wrote 2 Corinthians expressing his relief at the success of his 'sorrowful letter', spent the winter in Corinth, and then moved to Jerusalem with the collection for the poverty-stricken Christians in Jerusalem. Whilst this outline may never be confirmed by external evidence, it represents a reasoned attempt at identifying the extent and nature of the relationship between Paul and the Corinthian church from the extant evidence. Even if individual elements of the suggested chronology are questioned, the general picture is of a complex and difficult relationship in which Paul dealt with internal and external problems in the Corinthian church, and with ongoing opposition to his apostolic authority from some factions within the church. See Guthrie, Donald, *New Testament Introduction* (Leicester: InterVarsity Press, 4th edn., 1990), pp. 432-88.

³⁸ 2 Corinthians is a much more personal letter than 1 Corinthians, which primarily deals with practical matters raised in various ways by the Corinthian church members. In 2 Corinthians, Paul defends the nature and calling of his apostolic ministry against a faction within the church that is seemingly unwilling to accept his authority. Paul's tone and language in 2 Corinthians is therefore not as calm nor as reasoned as in 1 Corinthians, but exposes his concerns for the church in Corinth, his hurt at what has happened in their relationship to date, and his overwhelming desire for the church in Corinth 'not to accept the grace of God in vain' (1 Cor. 6.1).

for the Corinthian church in 1 Cor. 6.11-13³⁹. From 1 Corinthians, we are aware of continued sexual immorality and idolatry within the church, and the target pericope should therefore be understood within the context of Paul's renewed and deep concern for the church members' spiritual state, e.g. 'we implore you on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God' (1 Cor. 5.20).

Target pericope: the target pericope is the subject of much critical debate, which focuses on the authorship, style, and purpose of the pericope. Whilst recognizing that there are serious debates concerning the pericope⁴⁰, this paper assumes both Pauline authorship and intent in incorporating this pericope in its given context⁴¹.

³⁹ In these verses Paul shows the depths of his feeling for the Corinthian church, despite all that they, or certain factions within the church, have done to Paul. Paul is conscious that his is a 'ministry of reconciliation', and is concerned not only that people are opposed to his ministry, but also that they do not imperil their salvation.

⁴⁰ According to Horbury, William, 'New Wine in Old Wine-Skins: IX. The Temple', *The Expository Times* 86 No. 2 (1974), p.40, 'Whereas the style of this passage is distinctive, and reminiscent of apocalyptic and Qumran literature, in theme it is entirely typical of the Pauline use of Temple-imagery to inculcate holiness'. A major proponent of the Qumran influence on the pericope in question is Bertil Gartner, who argues strongly, but not conclusively, for a dominant Qumran influence in all the pericopes in question. See Gartner, Bertil, *The Temple and the Community in Qumran and the New Testament* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1965), pp.49-71.

⁴¹ The pericope in question has raised a number of significant doubts as to its authorship, purpose and inclusion within 2 Corinthians. Critical studies as outlined in the *Word Biblical Commentary* on 2 Corinthians have raised a number of questions, including (but not limited to): a) how well this pericope fits into its immediate context, particularly the difficult transition from 1 Cor 6.13 to v.14, i.e. is this an interpolation or from the original autograph?; b) the large number of *hapax legomena*, the alleged spirit of cultic exclusiveness more reminiscent of the Qumran sectaries than of Pauline thought, particularly in Eph. 2, the use of dualistic concepts and contrasts as favoured by the Qumran sectaries, the *peshet* style of the Old Testament quotations, and the alleged use of 'flesh' and 'spirit' in an un-Pauline manner have all raised questions of whether this pericope has a Pauline authorship, or whether it is the interpolation by a later Christian writer with heavy influence from the thought of the Qumran Essenes. Whilst these concerns are serious, further critical studies have provided further insights, and showed that whilst this pericope is indeed dissimilar to its immediate context, there is nothing intrinsically un-Pauline, either in language, structure, style or content, and as there are no MSS that carry the book of 2 Corinthians without this pericope in its current position, one may therefore conclude that this pericope has genuine Pauline authorship (or 'redactorship' of a then-extant document), and that it is not a later interpolation, but was incorporated by Paul deliberately. See Martin, Ralph P. (ed.), *Word Biblical Commentary 2 Corinthians* (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1986), pp.190-212.

The pericope begins with an opening statement (‘do not be mismatched with unbelievers’), which is commonly understood as referring to marriage between believers and unbelievers⁴².

However, the use of the imperative of prohibition in the Greek – ‘μη γινεσθε ετεροζυγουντες’ rather than the subjunctive of prohibition⁴³, and the five rhetorical questions that immediately follow, suggest a different understanding: that there is a basic incompatibility between Christians and non-Christians. The rhetorical questions, comprised of antithetical entities, suggest a clear answer, i.e. what do Christ and Satan, light and darkness, righteousness and wickedness, belief and unbelief, and the temple of God and idols have in common? Nothing! After all, ‘ημεις γαρ ναος θεου εσμεν ζωντος’ (the crux of the pericope).

The antithetical nature of the relationship between the believer and unbeliever is based on the simple fact that ‘ημεις γαρ ναος θεου εσμεν ζωντος’. The antithesis is not due to any inherent qualitative difference between believer and unbeliever, but is due purely to (and required by) God’s presence in His εκκλησια.

Paul then introduces in *peshet*⁴⁴ style a collection of Old Testament texts from the LXX to support his argument. Not quoting directly, and amending where necessary for emphasis⁴⁵, Paul emphasizes three imperatives in v. 17 – ‘come

⁴² This interpretation is largely based on the vocabulary used, and the verb ετεροζυγω = I mismatch / unevenly yoke, which is a *hapax legomena*, and is taken to refer to the Old Testament injunctions in Lev. 19.19 and Deut. 22.10 against mating animals of different species together.

⁴³ The use of the imperative of prohibition implies that Paul is instructing the members to stop what they are already doing, rather than prohibiting future actions, in which case he would have chosen the subjunctive of prohibition.

⁴⁴ According to ‘The SCM Dictionary of Biblical Interpretation, the *peshet* style of interpretation was defined following the discovery of certain Qumran texts, and is viewed as a literary genre in its own right. The method is to introduce a number of texts, and then provide an explicit interpretation, normally prefaced by the word *peshet*, ‘its interpretation (*peshet*) is...’. See Brooke, George J., ‘Peshet’ in R.J. Coggins and J.L. Houlden (eds.), *The SCM Dictionary of Biblical Interpretation* (London: SCM Press, 1990), pp. 531-32.

⁴⁵ For instance, according to both the Word Bible Commentary (Martin, Ralph P. (ed.), *Word Biblical Commentary 2 Corinthians* (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1986), pp.190-212.) and Ronald Fung (Fung, Ronald Y.K., ‘Some Pauline Pictures of the Church’, in I. Howard Marshall (ed.),

out’, ‘be separate’, and ‘touch nothing unclean’, followed by a promise, ‘καγω εἰσδεξομαι υμας’. The promise (and those following in 1 Cor. 6.18) seems to include an element of conditionality – God will dwell in His people as they obey His imperatives.

The pericope climaxes with a concluding exhortation, ‘given the above divine promises, beloved, let us⁴⁶ cleanse ourselves from every defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God’ (1 Cor. 7.1). This climax provides the key to the pericope’s opening statement: a) those who profess to be Christians must not deceive themselves, or ‘receive God’s grace in vain’; b) the church, the ‘Temple of God’, is holy entirely due to God’s presence, and God’s presence demands purity and holiness from the members; c) holiness requires Christians both to reject idolatrous and evil influences⁴⁷, and to simultaneously dedicate themselves to a life of purity before God; d) the Church as ‘temple’ is more than just a local ἐκκλησία at a particular time in history – it is a universal communion across time: and d) God promises a deeper indwelling for His people than previously encountered, but this requires His people, corporately and individually, to reject evil influences and devote themselves to Him.

The Evangelical Quarterly, vol. 53.2 April-June (1981), p.102.), Paul adds the verb ενοικειν – ‘to dwell’ to the verb εμπεριπατειν – ‘to walk’ to his quote from Lev. 26.12, emphasizing the ‘dwelling in’ of God amongst His people beyond a mere ‘presence among’ implied in the LXX version of Lev. 26.12. Paul is adding greater depth to the traditional words of the old covenant, emphasizing the greater qualitative difference between the dwelling of God amongst His people in the past, and in His people within the ἐκκλησία.

⁴⁶ Given the difficult nature of the relationship between Paul and the Corinthian church, Paul uses the exhortatory subjunctive in 1st person plural rather than in 2nd person plural to emphasize solidarity with the Corinthian church in their struggle for holiness. This use of the 1st person plural fits in with the 1st person plurals used in 1 Cor. 6.13 and 7.2, providing a continual thread of inclusive language that supports the assumption that this pericope is both Pauline and intentionally placed in its current context.

⁴⁷ Paul is not advocating the church should consist of social recluses, as his advice throughout the two letters to the Corinthians urges the church members to participate, to the extent possible, in normal daily life, e.g. 1 Cor. 5.10, 7.12-16, 10.27.

Eph. 2.19-22⁴⁸

Purpose: a prisoner in Rome⁴⁹, Paul⁵⁰ wrote Ephesians as an expression of his contemplations on the unity of being εν Χριστω. Whether written as a circular to the churches in Asia, or to the church itself in Ephesus or Laodicea⁵¹, the letter contains profound insights and a focus on grace and the preeminent role of Christ vis-à-vis the εκκλησια, containing an exalted Christology rather than the doctrinal focus on righteousness by faith found in Romans and Galatians.

After initial greetings, Paul introduces a doctrinal discussion, covering the wonder of Christian salvation, both individually and corporately, and discusses the ministry of the Church before turning to practical issues: the imperative of unity; the gifts of the Holy Spirit; the necessity of love to maintain unity; life and relationships in the household; and Christian warfare.

Target pericope context: in Eph.2.1-10, Paul describes to the Gentiles how they were - their miserable and wretched state, ‘dead through the trespasses and sins in which you once lived’ (Eph. 2.1), and reminds them of the dramatic change wrought for them by God, ‘But God...made us alive with Christ’ (Eph. 2.4), emphasizing the role of God in saving the gentiles εν Χριστω Ἰησου.

⁴⁸ See Appendix 3 for a word-by-word parsing and translation of the target pericope, using the text as provided by Nestle-Aland²⁷.

⁴⁹ Eph. 6.19, Col. 4.3-11.

⁵⁰ Up until the 19th century, there was general acceptance amongst scholars of the Pauline authorship of Ephesians, but from the mid-19th century onwards, critical scholarship began to cast doubt on the Pauline authenticity of some, or all, of Ephesians. Guthrie provides a comprehensive survey of the arguments for and against Pauline authorship, primarily around questions relating to the book’s self-claims, and doctrinal, linguistic, stylistic, literary and historical issues, and concludes by viewing the evidence of external attestation as conclusive, thereby arguing for Pauline authorship, a conclusion in line with much modern conservative and evangelical scholarship. See Guthrie, Donald, *New Testament Introduction* (Leicester: InterVarsity Press, 4th edn., 1990), pp. 496-40.

⁵¹ There is considerable debate amongst scholars as to whether Ephesians was written a) to the church in Ephesus, b) as a circular letter to the churches in Asia (the Roman province in modern western Turkey), or c) to the church in Laodicea. Given the MSS evidence, which includes witnesses that exclude the words εν Εφεσω, the author of this paper will assume that Ephesians was written by Paul as a circular letter to the churches in Asia, churches that included Jews, gentiles, slaves, freemen, men, women and children. This disparate group of persons, previously divided by ethnic, religious and economic barriers, needed a common focus for unity, and Ephesians provides that focus – Christ.

In vv.11-13, Paul again reminds the Gentiles of the contrast between their former separation – ‘then...at that time’ (‘ποτε...τω καιρω εκεινω’), and their new state now (‘νυνι’ – an emphatic form of ‘now’). In vv. 14-18, Paul adapts a primitive Christian ‘hymn’⁵², emphasizing that Christ through the cross has not only brought reconciliation between Jews and gentiles⁵³, thereby establishing a new humanity, but also between the new humanity and God, with the new humanity enjoying ‘access in one Spirit to the Father’ (v.18)⁵⁴.

Target pericope: Paul begins the pericope with ‘Αρα ουν ουκετι εστε...’, ‘so then, no longer are you...’. The pericope is the conclusion to which he has been leading, and what are Paul’s conclusions?

Firstly, the gentile believers are no longer estranged because they are gentiles per se, but are ‘citizens with the saints and also members of the household of

⁵² Lincoln, Andrew T., *Word Biblical Commentary Ephesians* (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1990), p. 159.

⁵³ Paul uses the terms ‘μακρων’ and ‘εγγυς’ in v. 17, ‘far’ and ‘near’, echoing the terminology of Isa. 57.19, a divine promise by God of a future restoration and building up, wrought by God for those who ‘are contrite and humble in spirit’. Within Is. 57.14-21, we see the concept of God building up for His people, His people who are both near and far, and Paul uses this terminology in v. 17 to emphasize not only the divine purpose as expressed in Old Testament for God to make ‘peace’ with ‘the far and the near’, gentiles and Jews, but he prepares the minds of the readers for the building imagery which concludes the target pericope in an (admittedly oblique) internal prolepsis.

⁵⁴ Bertil Gartner argues that there are clear echoes of Qumran thought throughout the entire chapter (Ephesians 2), and particularly in vv.18-22. In v.18, the concept of ‘access’ is generated by the use of the verb προσαγειν, which is, according to Gartner, often used to denote ‘the presentation of a sacrifice in the temple or appearance in the temple before God’. The verb therefore has a cultic nature, and within the context, implies a spiritual temple rather than a physical temple. This focus on the spiritual aspect of the cultus means ‘that those who obtain access are of the company of the sanctified, the true people of God’, and it is this spiritualized focus of the community of God, offering spiritual sacrifices in a spiritual temple, which is, according to Gartner, derived in part from the thought of the Qumran Essenes, particularly as expressed in 4QFlor. Whilst an interesting case, the author of this paper does not find the Gartner argument for a pre-eminence to be given to Qumran thought in the development of Pauline thought at this juncture to be conclusive, as it has already been argued that there were many different influences within the Pauline milieu which were already tending to spiritualize the concept of temple and worship, due in part to the physical impossibility for many to actually worship and offer sacrifices in the Jerusalem temple, and the Qumran community therefore represent only one of many potential influences and sources of ideas that Paul could have drawn upon, even before allowing for divine inspiration. See Gartner, Bertil, *The Temple and the Community in Qumran and the New Testament* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1965), pp. 60-66.

God' (v.19)⁵⁵. The dividing wall between Israel and the gentiles, graphically demonstrated by the dividing wall that delineated the 'Court of the Gentiles' in the Jerusalem temple, no longer existed (spiritually). The old barriers, hostilities, divisions and alienations are no more – Christ has created a 'new humanity' with equal access to God⁵⁶.

Secondly, this 'household of God' is being built (divine passive⁵⁷) on the foundations of the apostles and prophets⁵⁸, with Christ Jesus himself as the 'cornerstone'⁵⁹. The building has a coherent structure, the extent and scope of the structure being defined by the cornerstone, Jesus Christ. The use of ακρογωνιαου⁶⁰ has led to considerable debate about whether Paul is referring

⁵⁵ There is a great contrast between the position of the gentiles as they were, in Eph. 2.1-3, and how they are now in vv.19-22, 'in Christ' and intrinsic members of a greater eschatological entity, with a newfound unity predicated on the historic and ongoing actions of Christ.

⁵⁶ Paul introduces the notion of a 'house' in v. 19, and throughout the rest of the pericope we see a fusion of the concepts of 'building' and 'temple'. In 1 Cor. 3. 10-11, there is the brief mention of the church with Christ as the 'foundation', but the temple imagery in 1 Cor. 3.16-17 remains distinct. In the above pericope, Paul uses a number of words all based on the noun οικος, (παροικοι, οικειοι, εποικοδομηθεντες, οικοδομη, συνοικοδομεισθη, κατοικητηριον), all of which I have parsed, and provided dictionary forms, literal and formal translations for in Appendix 3. The fusion of the 'temple' and 'building' metaphors is explicitly made throughout Eph. 2.20-22, and this allows Paul to paint a picture for the readers, attributing various parts of the building to different actors. Herman Ridderbos argues that the use of the 'temple' and 'building' metaphors 'had its points of departure primarily in the prophetic promise of the gracious restoration of the people who had been given up to exile, of the reconstruction of their devastated houses and walls, of their cities and temple. The concept upbuilding thus becomes a symbol of the gracious dealings of God with the remnant of His people, and is found in this sense in later Judaism's expectation for the future. In this redemptive-historical and eschatological sense it is applied in the whole of the New Testament and especially in Paul to the Christian church as well', (Ridderbos, Herman N. *Paul: An Outline of His Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1975), pp. 439-30). Ridderbos identifies an eschatological tone in the current pericope, a tone which becomes more apparent as one goes through the pericope in detail.

⁵⁷ The passive tense of the verb is taken in context to have the syntactical significance of the divine passive, i.e. it is God who is the subject of the verb, or it is God who is building the building.

⁵⁸ Due to the single use of the definite article for both 'apostles' and 'prophets', this text may be understood to be referring to New Testament prophets and not the Old Testament prophets, under the terms of the Granville Sharp rule in Koine Greek syntax.

⁵⁹ The phrase 'with Jesus Christ Himself as the cornerstone' is grammatically a genitive absolute, setting it off from the rest of the sentence. The result is to emphasize the facts that a) it is Christ Himself and no other (in particular, Paul or any of the 'super-apostles') who is the cornerstone, and b) the nature and function of the role of Christ – determinative and normative for the rest of the building. See Appendix 3 for a detailed parsing and translations.

⁶⁰ ακρογωνιαου, ο is the dictionary form, and it means 'lying at the corner'.

to the cornerstone or the capstone⁶¹, but whichever option is preferred, the use of ἀκρογωνίαου represents a Pauline use of a conflated *testimonia*⁶² about Christ found elsewhere in apostolic consciousness⁶³, attributing to Christ the eschatological fulfilment of the prophecies of Ps. 118.22, Isa. 8.14, 28.16. Christ is ‘Israel’s true king, the individual embodiment of the faithful remnant and the personal revelation of Yahweh on earth’⁶⁴.

Thirdly, we have parallel concepts in vv. 21-22: the whole eschatological structure⁶⁵ is being ‘joined together’⁶⁶ and is ‘growing into a holy temple in the

⁶¹ The traditional interpretation was that Paul was referring to the cornerstone, the major stone placed at the base of the superstructure which defined the limits and scope of the future building activity, as its size and angles determined the horizontal and vertical dimensions for the builders. However, following studies by J. Jeremias (see Lincoln, Andrew T., (ed.), *Word Biblical Commentary Ephesians* (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1990), pp. 154-55), a number of scholars have accepted the idea that Paul is referring to the capstone, the stone that sits at the apex of an arch, and which therefore supports the entire structure – its removal would cause the collapse of the entire structure. Further studies by McKelvey (see Lincoln, Andrew T., (ed.), *Word Biblical Commentary Ephesians* (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1990), pp. 154-55), argued for a return to the traditional understanding of Christ as the ‘cornerstone’, as he poses the ‘architecturally impossible notion of an unfinished building with the top stone already in position’ (Fung, Ronald, ‘Some Pauline Pictures of the Church’, *The Evangelical Quarterly*, LII no. 2 (1981), p. 103). The crucial question is really whether we accept that Paul is using the ‘LXX usage in Isa. 28.16 and the Christological imagery of 1 Cor. 3.11...or...the ‘stone’ *testimonia*, which were in fairly common use in the early church?’ (Lincoln, Andrew T., (ed.), *Word Biblical Commentary Ephesians* (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1990), pp. 155). Either option retains the concept of Christ being determinative within the new structure being built, the integrating block around which everything else is built.

⁶² *Testimonia* ‘form a particular class of OT quotations in the NT and early Christian literature...They are texts chosen to support the claim of the earliest Christian preaching that the OT prophecies concerning the messiah and the end time have begun to be fulfilled in Jesus and in the events in which he was the chief figure’, see Lindars, Barnabas, ‘Testimonia’ in R.J. Coggins and J.L. Houlden (eds.), *The SCM Dictionary of Biblical Interpretation* (London: SCM Press, 1990), pp. 675-76.

⁶³ 1 Pet. 2.4-10.

⁶⁴ Bruce, F.F., ‘New Wine in Old Wine-Skins: III. The Corner Stone’, *The Expository Times* 84 (October 1972 – September 1973), pp. 231-35.

⁶⁵ See Appendix 3 for further discussion on the textual variants presented in this text. Essentially, one can either read ‘every building’, implying that Paul is discussing individual congregations, or one can read ‘the whole building’ (depending on whether one accepts witnesses with the feminine definite article in the attributive position or not), in which case Paul is talking about the universal church, an eschatological reality that is the fulfillment of the prophecies of Isa. 2.1-5, 56.7, 66.18-20 and Mic. 4.1-5. Even allowing for the fact that the original autograph read πᾶσα οἰκοδομη, i.e. ‘every building’, we can understand from the use of the ‘stone’ *testimonia* in v. 20 that Paul is here arguing that whilst each church is providing a spiritual dwelling place for God in their locality, they are simultaneously being built by the actions of the Triune God into a universal and eschatological reality in which people of all nations can come and commune with God. Paul is moving from the designation of the local congregation in Corinth in the 1 Cor. 3.16-17 pericope as the ‘Temple of God’, through the use of eschatological and covenant Old Testament texts in the 2 Cor. 6.14-7.1 pericope to a broader vision of the church as the ‘Temple of God’ – the greater eschatological reality, foretold by the

Lord’ and ‘into a dwelling place of God’. Christ is the common element in both processes, with both God the Father and God the Holy Spirit involved in the intentional upbuilding. The Triune God is working in unity and harmony to build a spiritual temple / dwelling place for God, and the gentile believers, together with their Jewish fellow-members, are part of the process.

Fourthly, there is ongoing growth – the Church of then, and of today, isn’t the finished article, but continues ‘συναρμολογουμενη’ and ‘αυξει’, growth which neither precludes the abiding and ongoing indwelling of God, which requires mutual adjustment one to another both between members and churches, and whose unity and direction is all ‘in Christ’.

Having assessed the individual pericopes in detail, and allowing for the Pauline milieu, it is now time to assess the key theological concepts presented across and beyond the pericopes⁶⁷.

Old Testament prophets, in which God would create a people for Himself, and a temple which would be ‘a house of prayer for all nations’.

⁶⁶ Further use of the divine passive, i.e. by God Himself.

⁶⁷ This paper does not have the time for a full synchronic or diachronic survey of the ‘Temple of God’ motif, but recognizes that such surveys are necessary to develop a full understanding of the motif within the Biblical context.

Key ‘Temple of God’ theological concepts

Across pericopes: a number of key theological concepts arise across⁶⁸ the pericopes, and these are as follows: the Church is the spiritual ‘Temple of God’ and not just any εκκλησια, solely because God chooses to dwell in the Church through His Holy Spirit; the Church belongs to God (‘του θεου’, not ‘του ανθρωπων’), whose work in building the temple demonstrates an essential unity of purpose and action across the Trinity, a unity of purpose that stands in sharp contradistinction to the alienation and disunity exhibited by those God seeks to bring into His temple; the temple is holy and inviolable, due to God’s indwelling and awful presence, and God will destroy any who destroy, or seek to destroy, His dwelling place; God calls on all who would be members of the new ‘Temple of God’ both to reject idolatrous and immoral influences and values, and to devote themselves in humility⁶⁹ to him in pure lives that are ‘perfecting holiness’⁷⁰; the ‘Temple of God’ motif may apply at different levels – the individual⁷¹, the local church, the universal church, and at an eschatological level⁷², incorporating all who would seek communion and enter a covenant relationship with God, with the same commitment and devotion to God as enunciated in the language of the new covenant⁷³ being required at all levels; God promises a deeper level of indwelling than at any time in salvation history since the Fall to those who enter His holy temple – the covenant

⁶⁸ The theological concepts listed are included across the three target pericopes, not necessarily within each individual pericope.

⁶⁹ Church members may feel a sense of ownership over their local church due to an erroneous sense of their own importance due to years of service or leadership or financial contributions, but the pericopes make it clear that the church is God’s, not that of any person, and our approach should therefore be one of humility rather than ownership.

⁷⁰ See Footnote # 46 above. Paul is not advocating that members of the new spiritual temple become recluses or live out of the world in seclusion and away from the world’s potentially evil influences, e.g. as in the Oneida Community, or in the monastic orders of the mediaeval ages, but he is advocating that Christians, whilst living in the world and witnessing to the world, do not adopt the values, ideas or principles of the world, and thereby endanger their souls.

⁷¹ 1 Cor. 6.19 includes this concept, and is the summary of the discussions in 1 Cor. 5 and 1 Cor. 6 concerning standards of se

⁷² There is a mystery about how ‘what is divine is linked to what is human in the Church’ according to Rudolf Schnackenburg (Schnackenburg, Rudolf, *The Church in The New Testament* (London: Burns & Oates Limited, 1st edn, 1965), p. 143.

⁷³ The 2 Cor. 6.17-7.1 pericope includes language from the Old Testament covenant, but it an intensified form, and Paul relates it to the new covenant that God is offering to those who would seek to enter his holy temple.

language in 2 Cor. 6.16-18 is intensified and deepened by Paul to emphasize the fact that God is proposing to dwell ‘in’ rather than merely ‘among’⁷⁴; Christ is the cornerstone of the building, thereby determining the nature, scope and character of the Church, and this pre-eminent role is possible because it is He who at Calvary broke down the barriers between gentiles and Jews, God and the human race, thereby creating a new humanity which is both reconciled to, and has full access to, God; the apostles and prophets form the foundation of the new building, with individual believers of any race forming the building blocks, each of whom is being shaped by God in the Holy Spirit to fit into the overall superstructure; and the temple is growing, a dynamic that finds its purpose and direction in Christ, and which requires the individual members and churches, as building blocks, to be willing to be shaped to fit into the overall divine pattern.

It should be noted that in 1 Cor. 3.16-17 and 2 Cor. 6.14-7.1 there is no mention of Christ. Whilst the above three pericopes occur within differing contexts and address different issues, there is a clear theocentric focus rather than ecclesiological focus across the pericopes, the motif pointing more to the actions of God rather than to the Church itself⁷⁵. The pericopes present a coherent and unified Triune God, emphasising the diversity of roles within an ontological unity of purpose.

Moreover, Eph. 2.1-22 demonstrates that ecclesiology should not ‘swallow up’ Christology, as ‘it is Christ’s reconciling death on the cross on which the very

⁷⁴ A useful diachronic theological study can be made of the various levels and intensities of communion ‘on offer’ to mankind throughout salvation history, a study in the form of a parabola, starting with the face to face communion in Eden between God and man, the separation of the Fall, the highly restricted access of the Israelite cultus both in the wilderness and temple eras, the incarnation (‘and the Word became flesh, and lived among us’ [John 1.14a]), the indwelling promised in the temple imagery through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, and finally face to face communion restored in the New Jerusalem.

⁷⁵ Ronald Fung quotes R.J. McKelvey in *The New Temple, The Church in the New Testament* as saying that the omission of mention of Christ in the Corinthian pericopes should not be ‘attributed to lack of development in Paul’s thought, but to the theocentric orientation of the temple concept and to the nature of the argument in hand’. See Fung, Ronald Y.K., ‘Some Pauline Pictures of the Church’, in I. Howard Marshall (ed.), *The Evangelical Quarterly*, vol. 53.2 April-June (1981), p. 102.

existence of the Church depends'⁷⁶. Longitudinal development in Pauline temple motif thought across the pericopes per se is therefore difficult to argue, as the motif is used as a window on the workings of God, and is therefore subject to the complexities of Pauline thought on 'θεοσ-ology', 'Πνευμα-ology' and 'Χριστ-ology'.

Relationship to other motifs: any attempt to define and explore the temple motif in isolation will not present a true understanding. While it carries within itself clear theological concepts (see above), these concepts are directly related to the other Pauline motifs through the focus on God.

The Church is, *inter alia*, the 'Bride of Christ', the 'Body of Christ', 'God's people' and the dwelling place of the Holy Spirit, all of which metaphors have a common grounding in the Triune God.

'The unity of God inevitably unifies, in this broad way, all the images of the Church'⁷⁷, and the temple motif therefore directs our attention from ourselves, from our struggles, disappointments and joys within our local community of faith and towards God. Our disunity is seen in the light of His unity, our discord in the light of His concord, our alienation in the light of His reconciliation, and our stubbornness in the light of His role in shaping us to be fit for membership in His holy temple.

Given the above, the paper now suggests areas for further systematic theological study to identify modern applications of the above theological principles.

⁷⁶ Lincoln, Andrew T., *Word Biblical Commentary Ephesians* (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1990), p. 161.

⁷⁷ Fung, Ronald Y.K., 'Some Pauline Pictures of the Church', in I. Howard Marshall (ed.), *The Evangelical Quarterly*, vol. 53.2 April-June (1981), p.106.

Suggested areas of research in systematic theology

Suggested areas for research in systematic theology: given the above theological concepts within the temple motif, the relationship of the temple motif with other Pauline motifs, and the purpose and delimitations of this paper, the following areas for further systematic theology for practical application are suggested:

- The Pauline principles of holiness⁷⁸ are clear, but how are these to be expressed within the modern context?
- How can the Church move from an understanding of holiness that is reflected in a focus on external appearances to one based on the expression of inner devotion and purity?
- Pauline theology teaches that God's temple is spiritual, and is comprised whenever believers come together, so how may the Church foster the 'building up' of the spiritual temple when many churches today devote much time, energy and significant resources building up their physical 'temples'?⁷⁹
- When believers come together into the 'Temple of God', they come into the presence of the Living God, from whom none can hide. Worship is therefore corporate and individual communion with God, and because it is in His awful presence, should be conducted in an atmosphere of reverence, holiness and purity - yet how may these principles be expressed and retained within modern worship practice?
- Grounded in both the unity of purpose and the diversity of roles within the Triune God, through which hermeneutical approaches may the modern Church both recognize and accept God's shaping, moulding, building and edification?
- The temple motif suggests an eschatological communion in and across time, a communion which transcends today's denominational barriers.

⁷⁸ They may be summarised as rejection of idolatry and immoral influences and devotion to God through purity.

⁷⁹ Indeed, are the two temples compatible, or if they are, which should take pre-eminence?

How may the Church express this transcendent and mystical union whilst retaining spiritual integrity within individual denominations' theological interpretation?

Conclusion

Given the purpose of the paper⁸⁰, the paper seeks ‘to identify key theological concepts which may provide a theological framework for exploring the concept and purpose of ‘church’ within local congregations that are trying to reconcile differing approaches to, and understandings of, church’.

Recognizing that there are a number of cultural, linguistic, philological factors within the Pauline milieu, and the fact that images of the Church are ‘living words are channels, rather than receptacles, of thought’⁸¹, the paper has provided a brief overview of the key theological concepts contained within the three Pauline pericopes that refer to the Church as the ναος του θεου, including: a) the temple is spiritual, with God indwelling through His Holy Spirit – the temple is therefore holy and inviolable; b) God will hold to account all who violate His temple; c) God is promising a deeper level of indwelling within the new covenant relationship in return for lives of holiness and devotion to Him; d) Christ is the cornerstone, the apostles and prophets the foundation, and believers are being moulded by God into a growing superstructure in the Holy Spirit, a holy temple and dwelling place of God.

Within these theological concepts, the recommendations for further systematic theological study focus on applying the theological principles within the modern context, and include a focus not only on reflecting ‘how’ we ‘do’ church, but at a more fundamental level ‘what’ we understand the εκκλησια του θεου itself to be.

⁸⁰ ‘...the purpose of the paper is to explore the motif of the church as the ‘Temple of God’ within Pauline theology. The paper’s hypothesis is that whilst recognizing that Paul provides a number of different images of the church, the ‘temple’ motif may incorporate key concepts that directly address the concept and practice of ‘church’ within the modern context’.

⁸¹ Minear, Paul S., *Images of the Church in the New Testament* (Philadelphia, PN: Westminster Press, 1960), p. 20.

Ultimately, it is the Triune God in general and Christ in particular who is the focus of the temple image across the pericopes, not the Church nor individual members: in Him each local church is growing as part of the universal Church into an eschatological entity: an entity open to all nations, an entity subject to the unified work of the Triune God, and whose direction, coherence, structure and essential unity are all exclusively found 'in Christ'.

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⁸² The book '*The New Temple, The Church in the New Testament*' by R.J. McKelvey appears to be an *opus magnum* on the topic of the temple motif in the New Testament, and is quoted or referenced extensively by many of the authors outlined in the Bibliography. Whilst the author of this paper could not physically access a copy of McKelvey's tome, the author recognizes that R.J. McKelvey has produced a serious work on the issue of the temple in the New Testament, and has sought to identify during the research for this paper key McKelvey concepts wherever possible from a detailed reading of the other sources in the Bibliography and their footnotes.

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