

Pauline Perspective of Formative Spirituality

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1. Introductory Word of Caution

We begin our exposé citing the words of Peter himself:

And count the forbearance of our Lord as salvation. So also our beloved brother Paul wrote to you according to the wisdom given him, speaking of this as he does in all his letters. There are some things in them hard to understand, which the ignorant and unstable twist to their own destruction, as they do the other scriptures (2 Pet. 3:15-16).

At the same time we are called to be ministers of the new covenant, teaching sound doctrine renouncing irreligion and worldly passions living sober and upright lives unlike ‘peddlers of religion.’ The following citations are enlightening.

- Titus 2:1 But as for you, teach what befits sound doctrine....
 Titus 2:12 training us to renounce irreligion and worldly passions, and to live sober, upright, and godly lives in this world,
- Romans 16:17 I appeal to you, brethren, to take note of those who create dissensions and difficulties, in opposition to the doctrine which you have been taught; avoid them.
- Ephesians 4:14 so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the cunning of men, by their craftiness in deceitful wiles.
- 1 Timothy 4:6 If you put these instructions before the brethren, you will be a good minister of Christ Jesus, nourished on the words of the faith and of the good doctrine which you have followed.
- Titus 1:9 he must hold firm to the sure word as taught, so that he may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also to confute those who contradict it.
- Hebrews 6:1 Therefore let us leave the elementary doctrine of Christ and go on to maturity, not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God,

2 Corinthians 2:17 For we are not, like so many, peddlers of God's word; but as men of sincerity, as commissioned by God, in the sight of God we speak in Christ.

2. Characteristic Features of the Pauline Greeting

Paul designates himself as an apostle of Jesus who has been called by the will God. He refers to his addressees, especially in 1 Cor., Phil., and Col., as 'saints.' In 1 Cor. 1:2, they are designated by the participle ἡγιασμένοις from ἀγιάζω meaning 'set apart as sacred to God or made holy.' In Phil. 1:1; Col. 1:1 and Eph. 1:1 they are referred to as ἁγίοις from ἅγιος meaning 'the holy ones or saints.' In Rom. 1:7, they are referred to as - κλητοῖς ἁγίοις - those called to be saints.

Romans 1:7 To all God's beloved in Rome, who are called to be saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

1 Corinthians 1:2 To the church of God which is at Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints together with all those who in every place call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, both their Lord and ours:

The Greek participle ἡγιασμένοις from the verb ἀγιάζω means to be set apart as sacred to God; to make holy, to consecrate; to regard as sacred; to purify, to cleanse.

Philippians 1:1 Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus, To all the saints in Christ Jesus who are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons:

Colossians 1:2 To the saints and faithful brethren in Christ at Colossae: Grace to you and peace from God our Father.

Ephesians 1:1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, To the saints who are also faithful in Christ Jesus:

The Greek noun ἁγίοις from ἅγιος, means set apart to or by God, consecrated; holy, morally pure, upright.

This reference to the Pauline audience as 'saints,' demonstrates Paul's understanding of the 'ecclesia.'

3. The Pauline Notion of Ecclesia

Pauline theology is inseparably linked to the Damascus Experience. It changed Paul's Christology, although his theology remained the same. The Damascus Experience was on par with the post resurrectional appearances of the Risen Lord to the Eleven (cf. Mk. 16:9, 12; Mt. 28:9-10, 17; 24:15, 31, 36, 50-53; Jn. 20:18, 19, 26; 21:7, 15). Although it is said of the Eleven in Mt. 28:17, and Lk. 24:41 that some doubted (οἱ δὲ ἐδίστασαν – *hoi de edistasan* - ἐδίστασαν from διστάζω doubt, be doubtful) and disbelieved for joy (δὲ ἀπιστούντων αὐτῶν ἀπὸ τῆς χαρᾶς – *de apistountōn autōn apo tēs charas* - ἀπιστούντων from ἀπιστέω fail or refuse to believe; prove or be unfaithful), Paul believes and though 'blinded' allows Ananias to lay hands on him (Acts 9:11-12, 17). The imposition of hands is a sign of self identification and healing (cf.). Something like scales (ὡς λεπίδες – *hōs lepidēs* - λεπίδες from λεπίς, ἶδος f flake, (fish)scale) fall from his eyes and he regained his sight. Then Paul rose and was baptized. The aorist tense is used both to describe his regaining sight and being baptized. This indicates that the effect of an action in the past continues into the present moment. The effect of regaining sight and the effect of baptism continue into the present moment. Paul becomes one of those who belong to the Way (Acts 9:2). The persecutor of Christians becomes a persecuted Christian.

During the Damascus Experience Paul knew that he was involved in a theophany (cf. Acts. 9:3 – a light from heaven flashed about him). Only, he did not know the identity of the divinity in whose presence he was. The Damascus Experience revealed the self identification of Jesus, the Son of God with the Christian Community (cf. Acts 9:4 – Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?). Paul the Pharisee, who believed that accursed is the one who hangs upon a tree (Dt. 21:23 - ...his body shall not remain all night upon the tree, but you shall bury him the same day, for a hanged man is accursed by God), now realizes that such is God's sovereignty that it does not even bind Him to His word. Symbolically, Paul is blinded. His when restored signifies his 'new vision' of the crucified Jesus as the Son of God. The crucified Jesus who is God's only Son, is identified with the persecuted community. Sanctity then is associated with one's bonding into community, for the community is the body of Christ. Thus, Paul refers to the Christian Community as 'saints' (also refer Rom. 12:12 - 13; 15:25).

Romans 12:12-13 Rejoice in your hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer. Contribute to the needs of the saints, practice hospitality.

Romans 15:25 At present, however, I am going to Jerusalem with aid for the saints.

The sanctity of the community is based on its association with the Risen Jesus, and Paul designates fellowship of Christ by the term '*koinonia*' (1 Cor. 1:9). In 1 Cor. 1:9, Paul associates God's faithfulness with '*koinonia*'. For, in 1 Cor. 1:9 Paul says, 'God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.'

Paul uses the noun '*koinonia*' on twelve occasions (cf. Rom. 15:26; 1 Cor. 1:9; 10:16; 2 Cor. 6:14; 8:4; 9:13; 13:14; Phil. 1:5; 2:1; 3:10; Phlm. 1:6; Gal. 2:9). The noun - κοινωνία, - has many nuances which include the following meanings: fellowship, a close mutual relationship; participation, sharing in; partnership; contribution, gift. Paul also uses the verb κοινωνέω (*koinoneo*) meaning to share, to take part, to participate, to contribute, to give a share (Rom. 12:13; Gal. 6:6; 1 Tim. 5:22).

4. Sin, Grace, and Salvation

The Pauline usage of '*koinonia*' varies and has different nuances and meanings. For instance, in the text from Romans 15:26 and 2 Corinthians 9:13, it refers to contribution for the poor. In 1 Corinthians 1:9 it refers to fellowship of Jesus, the Son of God and our Lord. In 1 Corinthians 10:16 it refers to participation in the blood of Christ. In 2 Corinthians 6:14 there is reference to communion. In 2 Corinthians 8:4 it refers to fellowship in ministry. In Philippians 1:5 it refers to fellowship in preaching the gospel. In Philippians 2:1 it refers to fellowship of the Spirit. In Philippians 3:10 it refers to fellowship of his sufferings by becoming like him in his death.

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| Romans 15:26 | For Macedonia and Achaia have been pleased to make some contribution for the poor among the saints at Jerusalem; |
| 1 Corinthians 1:9 | God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. |
| 1 Corinthians 10:16 | The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not a participation in the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not a participation in the body of Christ? |
| 2 Corinthians 6:14 | Do not be mismatched with unbelievers. For what partnership have righteousness and iniquity? Or what fellowship has light with darkness? |
| 2 Corinthians 8:4 | begging us earnestly for the favor of taking part in the relief of the saints -- |
| 2 Corinthians 9:13 | Under the test of this service, you will glorify God by your obedience in acknowledging the gospel of Christ, and by the generosity of your contribution for them and for all others; |

2 Corinthians 13:14 The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

Philippians 1:5 thankful for your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now.

Philippians 2:1 So if there is any encouragement in Christ, any incentive of love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy,

Philippians 3:10 that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death,

This text of Phil 3:10 is unique in that it associates ‘*koinonia*’ with sharing in Christ’s sufferings by being conformed into Christ’s death in order to know the power of his resurrection.

Philemon 1:6 and I pray that the sharing of your faith may promote the knowledge of all the good that is ours in Christ.

Galatians 2:9 and when they perceived the grace that was given to me, James and Cephas and John, who were reputed to be pillars, gave to me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship, that we should go to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised;

In contrast, the Lucan use of ‘*koinonia*’ refers exclusively mutual relationship demonstrated by sharing all things in common.

Acts 2:42 And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.

The ‘*koinonia*’ of Acts 2:42 is elaborated in Acts 2:44-45,

Acts 2:44-45 And all who believed were together and had all things in common; and they sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all, according as any man had need.

Hence, while acknowledging that the Pauline signification of ‘*koinonia*’ is richer in meaning and variation than its Lucan counterpart, we note that Paul also uses it to describe the believers relationship with the Son of God who is referred to as our Lord, and also to describe fellowship in mission, fellowship of the Spirit and fellowship in the sufferings of Christ, fellowship in sharing the Eucharist, and fellowship in ministry.

Paul uses the metaphor of the body to denote the oneness of the community, while at the same time using the metaphor of the body to denote fellowship of Christ as the basis of communion (cf. 1 Cor. 12:12 - For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ; 2 Cor. 11:2 - I feel a divine jealousy for you, for I betrothed you to Christ to present you as a pure bride to her one husband). For Paul, ‘koinonia’ is sanctified because it is an expression of life ‘in Christ’ (cf. 1 Cor. 10:16-17; 12:12-13).

1 Corinthians 10:16-17 The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not a participation in the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not a participation in the body of Christ? Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread.

1 Corinthians 12:12-13 For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body -- Jews or Greeks, slaves or free -- and all were made to drink of one Spirit.

We have noted that for Paul (Phil. 3:10) - τὴν κοινωνίαν [τῶν] παθημάτων αὐτοῦ - (*tēn koinonian tōn pathematōn autou*) sharing his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, is described as becoming conformed unto his death - συμμορφιζόμενος τῷ θανάτῳ αὐτοῦ (*summorphizomenos tō thanatō autou*). Being conformed into his death becomes a principal expression of life ‘in Christ.’ Hence, Paul says in Rom. 6:3-5, ‘Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life. For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his.’ In Acts 2:44-45 ‘koinonia’ based on common ownership of goods, and sharing of resources is portrayed as a characteristic of the Early Christian Community. In the Pauline corpus ‘koinonia’ is not only associated with generosity in contributing towards the upkeep of the poor, but also with fellowship of the Son of God, fellowship of the Spirit, fellowship in sacramental worship, fellowship in evangelization, fellowship in communion in the sense of co-existence, fellowship in ministry and fellowship of suffering by being conformed into his death.

As we have stated earlier Phil 3:10 is unique in its association of ‘koinonia’ with the sharing in the sufferings of Christ by being conformed into his death in order to know the power of Christ’s resurrection. Paul uses three words to refer to the resurrection – ἐγείρω (*egeiro* - Rom. 6:4, 9; 8:11; 10:9; 7:4; 8:34; 1 Cor. 15:12, 13, 21, 42; 2 Tim. 2:18), συνεγείρω (*sunegeiro* – 2 Cor. 4:14; Col. 2:12; Col. 3:1; Eph 2:6;), ἀνάστασις (*anastasis* - Rom. 1:4; 6:5, 1 Cor. 6:14; 15:4, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 20, 29, 32, 35, 42, 43, 44, 52; 2 Cor. 4:14; 5:15; Gal. 1:1; Eph. 1:20; 1 Thess. 1:10; Phil. 3:10), ἐξανάστασις (*sunanastasis* – Phil. 3:11).

Salvation and grace which is God's free and gratuitous gift in Christ, is presented by Paul as a choice to be made between being conformed (συσχηματίζεσθε from συσχηματίζομαι – meaning to be conformed to, be shaped by, live after the pattern of) and μεταμορφώσθε from μεταμορφόομαι - meaning to be changed in form, be transformed.

Romans 12:2 Do not be conformed to this world but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that you may prove what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

That the Damascus Experience left an indelible impression on Paul is evident in not merely in the references that he makes to the event itself (Gal. 1:16; 1 Cor. 15: 8; 2 Cor. 12:2-5), but in the allusions that he makes concerning the consequences of the event.

Galatians 1:16 was pleased to reveal his Son to me, in order that I might preach him among the Gentiles, I did not confer with flesh and blood...

1 Corinthians 15:8 Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me.

2 Corinthians 12:1-2 I must boast; there is nothing to be gained by it, but I will go on to visions and revelations of the Lord. I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago was caught up to the third heaven - whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, God knows.

The radicality of Paul's transformation is reflected in what Paul says in Phil. 3:7-8 - 'But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ. Indeed I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as refuse, in order that I may gain Christ.' Henceforth, he will consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us (cf. Rom. 8:18). He himself waits with eager longing and while groaning in travail, for the redemption of the body (cf. Rom. 8:19, 22-23). The reason being that he has seen the Risen Christ. He has been surrounded by immortality for which he constantly yearns, while still remaining in his 'earthly tent' (2 Cor. 5:1))

2 Corinthians 5:1 For we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

We state herebelow other texts that indicate the impact of the Damascus Experience on Paul's life:

- 2 Corinthians 1:19 For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, whom we preached among you, Silvanus and Timothy and I, was not Yes and No; but in him it is always Yes. 20 For all the promises of God find their Yes in him. That is why we utter the Amen through him, to the glory of God.
- 2 Corinthians 6:16 What agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; as God said, "I will live in them and move among them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people (cf. Is. 52:11)
- 2 Corinthians 13:4 For he was crucified in weakness, but lives by the power of God. For we are weak in him, but in dealing with you we shall live with him by the power of God.
- 2 Corinthians 13:5 Examine yourselves, to see whether you are holding to your faith. Test yourselves. Do you not realize that Jesus Christ is in you? -- unless indeed you fail to meet the test!

Paul does not lose heart because he believes the Holy Spirit helps him in his weakness – (ἀσθενεία from ἀσθένεια -astheneia-, ας f weakness (of any sort); illness, helplessness). So, though his outer nature is wasting away due to the trials and persecutions, he says his inner nature is being renewed (2 Cor. 4:16). Therefore, Paul considers such persecutions momentary difficulties which prepare for him an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison. When Paul says in 2 Cor. 5:4, ‘For while we are still in this tent, we sigh with anxiety; not that we would be unclothed, but that we would be further clothed, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life,’ he alludes to the Damascus Experience (cf. 2 Cor. 12:2-5). When Paul says in 1 Cor. 15:40, ‘There are celestial bodies and there are terrestrial bodies; but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another,’ he alludes to the revelation of glory that engulfed him on the road to Damascus. No doubt Paul progressed in deepening the initial revelation received on the road to Damascus. Yet, the event itself can never be over-emphasized. As Paul himself admits in 2 Cor. 12:2-5 it was his glimpse of heaven while still on heaven. That Paul progressed in deepening the initial revelatory experience received on the road to Damascus is seen in his appeal to the Corinthians ‘We entreat you not to accept the grace of God in vain’ (2 Cor. 6:1). The grace of God- τὴν χάριν τοῦ θεοῦ (*tēn charin tou theou*)- which refers to the ‘gospel’ of which Paul says ‘Now I would remind you, brethren, in what terms I preached to you the gospel, which you received, in which you stand, by which you are saved, if you hold it fast - unless you believed in vain. For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve’ (1 Cor, 15:1-5).

Sin compromises the integrity of the ‘Body of Christ.’ Sin destroys ‘*koinonia*’

(1 Corinthians 1:11-13 For it has been reported to me by Chloe's people that there is quarreling among you, my brethren. What I mean is that each one of you says, "I belong to Paul," or "I belong to Apollos," or "I belong to Cephas," or "I belong to Christ." Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul?)

Sin has to be understood as either the destruction or the undermining of 'koinonia' It could comprise divisive tendencies based upon the glorification of individualism which results in the erosion of oneness. It may comprise a refusal to be conformed into the death of Jesus. It could be inability and the unwillingness to collaborate in evangelization and ministry. The situation is described in 1 Cor. 3:1-4, when Paul says 'But I, brethren, could not address you as spiritual men, but as men of the flesh, as babes in Christ. I fed you with milk, not solid food; for you were not ready for it; and even yet you are not ready, for you are still of the flesh. For while there is jealousy and strife among you, are you not of the flesh, and behaving like ordinary men? For when one says, "I belong to Paul," and another, "I belong to Apollos," are you not merely men?'

Sin may also cause difficulties of mutual co-existence (cf. 1 Cor. 6:1-7, 'When one of you has a grievance against a brother, does he dare go to law before the unrighteous instead of the saints? Do you not know that the saints will judge the world? And if the world is to be judged by you, are you incompetent to try trivial cases? Do you not know that we are to judge angels? How much more, matters pertaining to this life! If then you have such cases, why do you lay them before those who are least esteemed by the church? I say this to your shame. Can it be that there is no man among you wise enough to decide between members of the brotherhood, but brother goes to law against brother, and that before unbelievers? To have lawsuits at all with one another is defeat for you. Why not rather suffer wrong? Why not rather be defrauded?').

It may constitute a refusal to remain in fellowship with the Son of God or the Holy Spirit (cf. 1 Cor. 3:16-17, 'Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you? If any one destroys God's temple, God will destroy him. For God's temple is holy, and that temple you are).

Personal sanctity is demanded because of the sanctity of the community which is the Body of Christ (cf. 1 Cor. 6:15-17, 'Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I therefore take the members of Christ and make them members of a prostitute? Never! Do you not know that he who joins himself to a prostitute becomes one body with her? For, as it is written, "The two shall become one flesh." But he who is united to the Lord becomes one spirit with him). **That is why the sinner is to be excommunicated** (1 Corinthians 5:1-2 It is actually reported that there is immorality among you, and of a kind that is not found even among pagans; for a man is living with his father's wife. And you are arrogant! Ought you not rather to mourn? Let him who has done this be removed from among you).

Sin also has a personal dimension as seen from Rom. 1:26-32. The root cause is failure to acknowledge God as God (Rom. 1:18-25 ... For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and wickedness of men who by their wickedness

suppress the truth. For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. Ever since the creation of the world his invisible nature, namely, his eternal power and deity, has been clearly perceived in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse; for although they knew God they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking and their senseless minds were darkened. Claiming to be wise, they became fools, and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man or birds or animals or reptiles. Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves, because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed for ever! Amen).

For Paul, the sin of division against ‘koinonia’ of the community springs from a much deeper cause. It is the manifestation of arrogance and conceit.

{1 Corinthians 4:6 I have applied all this to myself and Apollos for your benefit, brethren, that you may learn by us not to go beyond what is written, that none of you may be puffed up in favor of one against another (φυσιοῦσθε κατὰ τοῦ ἑτέρου) – *phusouste kata tou heterou* - φυσιοῦσθε from φυσιώω (*Phusio-ō*) means cause conceit or arrogance; pass. to be conceited or arrogant.

Also refer – Col. 2:18 Let no one disqualify you, insisting on self-abasement and worship of angels, taking his stand on visions, puffed up without reason by his sensuous mind

In the text of Colossians, Paul associates φυσιώω (*Phusio-ō*) meaning arrogance with the sensuous mind - ὑπὸ τοῦ νοῦς τῆς σαρκὸς αὐτοῦ, - (*Hupo tou nous tes sarkos autou*) – the fleshy mind of the puffed up person.

1 Tim. 3:6 He must not be a recent convert, or he may be puffed up with conceit and fall into the condemnation of the devil (cf. 1 Tim. 6:4)}

Even when Paul admonishes Christians saying, ‘Wherefore whosoever shall eat the bread or drink the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner, shall be guilty of the body and the blood of the Lord.... For any one who eats and drinks without discerning the body eats and drinks judgment upon himself’ (1 Cor. 11:27, 29), and thus accuses them of being guilty of the death of Jesus, and therefore being guilty of crucifying him again by their irreverence, he does so in a context where the ‘koinonia’ has been flagrantly violated by the rich who are drunk when the poor arrive.

It is in this context that one should understand the Pauline greeting ‘Grace and peace to you in our lord Jesus Christ!’ χάρις ὑμῖν καὶ εἰρήνη – (*charis humin kai eirene*) is a dynamic relationship which has a vertical and horizontal dimension based on love of God and neighbour. In Rom. 1:1-7, grace is a call and a commission (Rom 1:1-7, ‘Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy scriptures, the gospel concerning his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh and

designated Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness by his resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord, through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith for the sake of his name among all the nations, including yourselves who are called to belong to Jesus Christ; To all God's beloved in Rome, who are called to be saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ').

When two Pauline texts, Gal. 1:15 and 2 Cor 12:9 are considered in tandem, it becomes evident that the Pauline notion of grace is linked to the divine call. If the call is through grace (διά - *dia*) then grace is the medium by which the call is made. Grace is inseparably linked to the call. Metaphorically speaking grace is the paper on which the call/invitation is written. The two are inextricably interwoven. The paper on which the words of invitation are written become the invitation itself. The call is an expression of grace. So, too is the response to the call. It is a continuation in grace.

Galatians 1:15 But when he who had set me apart before I was born, and had called me through his grace,

2 Corinthians 12:9 but he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." I will all the more gladly boast of my weaknesses, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.

Grace is a free and gratuitous gift extended in a call; yet we continue in grace by fidelity to the call. A life of grace then, is a life wholly dedicated to mission. Commitment to mission is χάρις ὑμῶν καὶ εἰρήνη. If so, what is true is that we pray as we live! How we live is how we pray! Paul says in 2 Cor 5:7, ... 'we walk with faith, not by sight.'

Salvation consists in union with the crucified Christ. Should one ask why, Paul says in 1 Cor. 1:18, 'For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.' Then again in 1 Cor. 1:22-23, Paul says, 'For Jews demand signs and Greeks seek wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.' Pauline spirituality is centered on the cross of Jesus. Paul does not need to speak of the resurrection, for he has 'seen' the Risen Lord Himself. In contrast to Peter who did not know what to say at the Transfiguration (Mk. 9:6), Paul knows what to do after being blinded on the road to Damascus. He will not only preach Christ crucified. He will live henceforth,'always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in our bodies' (2 Cor. 4:10).

In Romans 1:16, Paul says, 'For I am not ashamed of the gospel: it is the power of God for salvation to every one who has faith, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.'

The gospel is the power of God for salvation. For Paul, the gospel is Christ Jesus, crucified. In Eph. 1:13, Paul designates Christ's word as the gospel of salvation: 'In

him you also, who have heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and have believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit...’ **For Paul salvation is through our Lord Jesus Christ’ (1 Thess. 5:9). Salvation is in Jesus Christ (2 Tim 2:10).**

To be raised with Jesus means salvation. So too, ‘to be raised’ also refers to salvation. We have already explained that Paul uses three terms to refer to the resurrection – ἐγείρω (*egeiro*), συνεγείρω (*sunegeiro*), ἀνάστασις (*anastasis*), and ἐξανάστασις (*sunanastasis*). For Paul, salvation is experienced here and now, and is also awaited in the future. It remains a future expectation as well as a present reality. Therefore, while Paul says in 2 Cor. 5:2, ‘Here indeed we groan, and long to put on our heavenly dwelling’ in an earlier verse in 2 Cor. 4:11, he will speak of the wish to manifest the life of Christ in his own mortal flesh. Paul says in 2 Corinthians 4:11, ‘For while we live we are always being given up to death for Jesus' sake, so that the life of Jesus may be manifested in our mortal flesh’ - ἡ ζωὴ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ φανερωθῆ ἐν τῇ θνητῇ σαρκὶ ἡμῶν (*hē zoē tou iēsu phanerothē en tē thnetē sarki hemōn*). The subjunctive mood of the aorist tense use of the verb φανερωθῆ from φανερώω meaning - make known, reveal, show; make evident or plain; pass. be revealed or made known; be evident or plain; appear, reveal oneself – expresses a wish.

We give below some of the numerous Pauline references to life or salvation or love of God or communion or evangelical collaboration or lifestyle or hope or new creation or reconciliation or triumph or God experience or freedom or justification or adoption or being one in Christ, all of which are expressions of redemption.

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| Romans 3:24 | they are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus, |
| Romans 6:11 | So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus. |
| Romans 6:23 | For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. |
| Romans 8:1 | There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. |
| Romans 8:2 | For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set me free from the law of sin and death. |
| Romans 8:39 | nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. |
| Romans 12:5 | so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. |

- Romans 15:17 In Christ Jesus, then, I have reason to be proud of my work for God.
- Romans 16:3 Greet Prisca and Aquila, my fellow workers in Christ Jesus,
Romans 16:7 Greet Andronicus and Junias, my kinsmen and my fellow prisoners; they are men of note among the apostles, and they were in Christ before me.
- Romans 16:9 Greet Urbanus, our fellow worker in Christ, and my beloved Stachys.
- 1 Corinthians 1:2 To the church of God which is at Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints together with all those who in every place call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, both their Lord and ours:
- 1 Corinthians 3:1 But I, brethren, could not address you as spiritual men, but as men of the flesh, as babes in Christ.
- 1 Corinthians 4:17 Therefore I sent to you Timothy, my beloved and faithful child in the Lord, to remind you of my ways in Christ, as I teach them everywhere in every church.
- 1 Corinthians 15:19 If for this life only we have hoped in Christ, we are of all men most to be pitied.
- 2 Corinthians 5:17 Therefore, if any one is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has passed away, behold, the new has come.
- 2 Corinthians 5:19 that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation.
- 2 Corinthians 2:14 But thanks be to God, who in Christ always leads us in triumph, and through us spreads the fragrance of the knowledge of him everywhere.
- 2 Corinthians 12:2 I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago was caught up to the third heaven -- whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, God knows.
- Galatians 2:4 But because of false brethren secretly brought in, who slipped in to spy out our freedom which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage --

- Galatians 2:17 But if, in our endeavor to be justified in Christ, we ourselves were found to be sinners, is Christ then an agent of sin? Certainly not!
- Galatians 3:26 for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith.
- Galatians 3:28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

Paul refers to the centrality of Christ's death and resurrection to the redemption of humanity by speaking of the crucifixion in terms of a sacrifice of atonement put forward by God himself (Rom. 3:25 – '.....whom God put forward as an expiation by his blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God's righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins'). Jesus by his blood shed on the cross has made expiation or atonement for our sins (ἱλαστήριον – *hilasterion*). Jesus is the new seat of God's mercy – the *hilasterion*, put forward by God Himself. For in Jesus Christ there was no YES and NO. He was the fulfillment of all God's promises (2 Cor. 1:19-20). Because of this man from heaven (1 Cor. 15:47), we also shall bear the image of the man of heaven (1 Cor. 15:49). In 2 Cor. 2:14-15 Paul says, 'But thanks be to God, who in Christ always leads us in triumph, and through us spreads the fragrance of the knowledge of him everywhere. For we are the aroma of Christ to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing.....'

The offer of salvation comes from the gift of 'grace' through the proclamation of the gospel. For Paul, every instance of proclamation is the 'day of salvation' (2 Cor. 6:2 cf. Is. 49:8)

- 2 Corinthians 6:2 For he says, "At the acceptable time I have listened to you, and helped you on the day of salvation." Behold, now is the acceptable time; behold, now is the day of salvation.

God's apocalypse of the Risen Christ to Paul on the road to Damascus motivated Paul to begin an apocalyptic which we describe as a historical movement in the quest of salvation along a hitherto un-trodden path and perceived in hitherto unknown categories. Paul's initial experience served as the bed rock of his apocalyptic. In his quest for communion with the Risen Christ, the overriding perspective of being conformed into his death became of starting point of his understanding of discipleship and sacramental worship. At the same time, the Damascus Experience which served as the launching pad for Paul's apocalyptic, was an unrepeatable historical event, Paul's experience of the Risen Christ gradually and progressively deepened during the course of his pastoral ministry. The persecutions he faced in the course of mission as elaborated in the 'catalogue of suffering' reflect how Paul experienced the power of the Risen Christ anew, in such moments (1 Cor. 4: 11-13; 2 Cor. 4:8-9).

5. Formative Spirituality in the Light of Philippians

Christ's self-emptying remains the paradigm of Christian transformation. The Christological hymn of Phil. 2:6-11 sums up the paschal mystery of Christ. He was 'in the form of God,' and therefore in his pre-existent state could not exist except in the form of God. By the phrase 'in the form of God' Paul indicates that the form of God was the sphere in which Jesus existed. The form of God is the appropriate form of existence of Jesus in his pre-existent state. Paul is thus referring to the divinity of Jesus. Also, by the statement that Jesus who was 'in the form of God' - ἐν μορφῇ θεοῦ (*en morphē theou*) - took the form of a slave - μορφὴν δούλου- (*morpēn doulou*), Paul indicates that the word μορφή is being used in two different senses. For the phrase μορφῇ θεοῦ is used metaphorically, since the form of God eludes the naked human eye.

The metaphorical use of 'form of God' is meant to amplify the contrast with the form of the slave. He who was one with God, now empties Himself, by taking the form of a slave. In other words, the process of self emptying does not consist of Jesus emptying Himself of his divinity, but in taking upon a form that was totally alien to His from the very beginning of, namely, his pre-existent state. In other words, while retaining His divinity he empties Himself by taking on a form totally alien to him, namely, the 'form of a slave.' In the paschal mystery, Christ empties himself not by a process of diminishment but by a process of acquisition of the doleful human condition. Hence, the methodology of formative spirituality viewed from a Pauline perspective underline the importance of imbibing Gospel values as part of the process of 'putting of the mind of Christ.' Some relevant Pauline texts are appended hereunder:

1 Corinthians 2:16 "For who has known the **mind of** the Lord so as to instruct him?"
But we have the **mind of Christ**.

To take on the mind of Christ, Paul 'humbled himself and became obedient unto death' (Phil. 2:8). Therefore, he says, in Rom. 5:3, 'More than that, we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit which has been given to us.' Paul is able to rejoice amidst all his afflictions because of his glimpse into the 3rd heaven fourteen years ago (2 Cor. 12:2-5, 'I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago was caught up to the third heaven -- whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, God knows. And I know that this man was caught up into Paradise -- whether in

the body or out of the body I do not know, God knows -- and he heard things that cannot be told, which man may not utter. On behalf of this man I will boast, but on my own behalf I will not boast, except of my weaknesses'). **Therefore, Paul says,** 'Even if I am to be poured as a libation upon the sacrificial offering of your faith, I am glad and rejoice with you all (Phil. 2:17). **He will continue to insist,** 'Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice' (Phil. 4:4). **Paul rejoices in his sufferings because he sees it as a continuation of Christ's afflictions for the sake of the Church** (Col. 1:24 Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I complete what is lacking in Christ's afflictions for the sake of his body, that is, the church). **Therefore, he says in Rom. 12:14-21,** 'Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them. Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. Live in harmony with one another; do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly; never be conceited. Repay no one evil for evil, but take thought for what is noble in the sight of all. If possible, so far as it depends upon you, live peaceably with all. Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God; for it is written, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord." No, "if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him drink; for by so doing you will heap burning coals upon his head." Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good' (cf. Lev. 19:18; Dt. 32:35; Heb. 10:30). **Paul's conviction that he continues to share in the sufferings of Christ deepens through his experience of the sustaining power of Christ in the midst of affliction. The 'Peristasis Catalogue' which documents his list of sufferings testifies to the exceeding power of God at work in the apostolic ministry, especially in the proclamation of the gospel. This exceeding power inherent in the gospel is automatically unleashed in the midst of persecution so that the missionary may be sustained. And so, Paul says in 2 Cor. 4:8-9** 'We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed...' The adversative 'but' highlights the exceeding power of God that prevents the collapse of the mission by providing sustenance to the missionary. It is in this divine power that Paul experiences in the midst of affliction that he is able to always rejoice; as poor, yet making rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing everything' (**2 Cor. 6:3-10** 'We put no obstacle in any one's way, so that no fault may be found with our ministry, but as servants of God we commend ourselves in every way: through great endurance, in afflictions, hardships, calamities, beatings, imprisonments, tumults, labors, watching, hunger; by purity, knowledge, forbearance, kindness, the Holy Spirit, genuine love, truthful speech, and the power of God; with the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and for the left; in honor and dishonor, in ill repute and good repute. We are treated as impostors, and yet are true; as unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and behold we live; as punished, and yet not killed; as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing everything'). **It is this constant and unceasing affliction reflected in 2 Cor. 7:5** (For even when we came into Macedonia, our bodies had no rest but we were afflicted at every turn -- fighting without and fear within) **which prompts Paul to exclaim** 'I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but **Christ** who lives in me; and the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me' (**Gal. 2:20**).

Taking on the mind of Christ involves a choice that has to be made. The mind has to be turned away from things of the flesh; the mind has to be set on the Holy Spirit.

Romans 8:5-6 For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit.
To set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace.

This fundamental choice in favour of the Holy Spirit and against the flesh is the transformation that takes place on account of the renewal of the mind. Non conformity to the world hastens the process of transformation.

Romans 12:2 Do not be conformed to this world but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that you may prove what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

The sensuous mind is sinful. Hence, while in this earthly body, Paul continues to yearn that he may be further clothed, and swallowed up by life (2 Cor. 5:4).

Colossians 2:18 Let no one disqualify you, insisting on self-abasement and worship of angels, taking his stand on visions, puffed up without reason by his sensuous mind,

2 Corinthians 5:4 For while we are still in this tent, we sigh with anxiety; not that we would be unclothed, but that we would be further clothed, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life.

Galatians 3:27 For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.

Paul associates ‘futility of the mind’ with hardness of heart which alienates the sensuous mind from the life of God (Eph. 4:17-18).

Ephesians 4:17-18 Now this I affirm and testify in the Lord, that you must no longer live as the Gentiles do, 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; they have become callous and have given themselves up to licentiousness, greedy to practice every kind of uncleanness.

Refusal to conform to the world is equated with putting off the old nature which is characteristic of the former manner of life corrupt in its deceitful lusts. Men of corrupt mind and counter faith oppose the truth (2 Tim. 3:8).

- Ephesians 4:22-24 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.
- 1 Timothy 6:5 ... and wrangling among men who are depraved in mind and bereft of the truth, imagining that godliness is a means of gain.
- 2 Timothy 3:8 As Jannes and Jambres opposed Moses, so these men also oppose the truth, men of corrupt mind and counterfeit faith;

6. Towards becoming Ministers of the New Covenant

In 2 Cor. 3:6 Paul refers to himself as a minister of the new covenant. In 2 Cor. 5:18 he designates his mission as a ministry of reconciliation. We shall now discuss the implications of these two designations – minister of the new covenant and ministry of reconciliation.

A minister of the new covenant is,

- **All things to all men (2 Cor. 9:19-22).**
- **A new creation in Christ (2 Cor. 5:17).**
- **One who regards no one from a human point of view (2 Cor. 16).**
- **One who continually boasts in his weakness (2 Cor 11:30; cf. 2 Cor. 11: 20 – 29), and who experiences vulnerability and helplessness {ἀσθενῶν from ἀσθενής, ἐς sick; weak; delicate (of parts of the body); helpless} in the course of ministry (2 Cor. 4:7) like a ‘clay jar.’**
- **A steward of the mysteries of God (1 Cor. 4:1). Such mysteries involve the mediation of salvation apart from the Mosaic Law through the gift of Christ Jesus in his blood (cf. Rom. 3:21-26 ‘But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from law, although the law and the prophets bear witness to it, the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction; since all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, they are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus, whom God put forward as an expiation by his blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God's righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins; it was to prove at the present time that he himself is righteous and that he justifies him who has faith in Jesus’).**
- **Not conformed into the world but transformed by the renewal of the sensuous mind, which is then set on things of the Spirit (cf. Rom. 8:6-7; 12:2; 2 Tim. 3:8).**
- **Celebrates the Eucharist with discernment (1 Cor. 11:27, 29)**
- **One who lives not for himself but for Christ alone (cf. Gal. 2:20)**

- One who in all things and in all situations ‘walks by faith and not by sight’ (2 Cor.5:7), always yearning to ‘put on the heavenly dwelling’ (2 Cor. 5:2).
- One whose approach to life is dictated by the dictum ‘now is the day of salvation’ (cf. 2 Cor. 6:2), and who rejoices in every circumstance of life (Phil. 4:4), and rejoices especially, when he is poured out as a libation for the salvation of others (Phil. 2:17)
- One who forgives (cf. 2 Cor. 2:6)
- One who is uncompromising in his moral behaviour (cf. Eph. 4:22-24)
- Faithful in transmitting the deposit of ‘faith’ (1 Cor. 11:23-24; 15:1-2).
- One who is obedient to and in communion with the Magisterium (1 Cor. 3:4-6, cf. 1:12; 15:5-6; Gal. 1:17, 18, 19; 2:1, 9, 11).

Paul by his own admission ‘confronted Peter to his face.’ The Greek text - κατὰ πρόσωπον αὐτῷ ἀντέστην (*kata prosopon auto antesten*) - is rendered differently. Three instances are given below.

According to the King James Version,
Paul says, ‘I withstood him (Peter) to the face

According to the American Standard Version,
Paul says, “I opposed him (Peter) to the face

According to the Revised Standard Version,
Paul says, ‘I opposed him (Peter) to his face

The Greek verb ἀντέστην from ἀνθίστημι means to resist, oppose, withstand; or hold one's ground (Eph 6.13).

We recall Paul’s own exhortation in 1 Cor. 8:13 concerning eating food offered to idols: ‘Therefore, if food is a cause of my brother's falling, I will never eat meat, lest I cause my brother to fall.’ Yet, Paul acknowledges that idols do not exist (1 Cor. 8:4). So, Paul advocates the idea that refraining from eating food offered to idols is meant to safeguard the ‘weaker’ Christians whose conscience is not well formed (1 Cor. 8:8-9). Could not the same argument be used to uphold Peter’s decision to refrain from eating with Gentiles in a situation of turmoil, when certain ‘men from James’ arrived creating confusion in the minds of the Antiochene Christians? (Gal. 2:13).

It is our view that Paul is being honest with regard to a particular decision and action. Yet, what is important is that despite *a difference of opinion*, Paul remained united to the Jerusalem Church as seen from his concern to complete the ‘collection for the poor in Jerusalem.’ This was his final effort to manifest his solidarity with the Church of Jerusalem.

Acts of the Apostles documents five visits of Paul to Jerusalem

- 1st visit - Acts 9:26-28 – after escape from Damascus
- 2nd visit - Acts 11:30 – visit bringing famine relief
Acts 12:25 – return after the service visit (doublet)
- 3rd visit - Acts 15:4 – Antiochene Church send delegation to Council
- 4th visit – Acts 18:22 – To greet the Jerusalem Church after the
Second Missionary Journey.
- 5th visit – Acts 21:17 – visit to James at the end of the Third
Missionary Journey

This also consolidates the argument that Paul remained in communion with the Jerusalem church despite differences of opinion. Herein lies the Christian maturity and indeed the sanctity of Paul. He respected and therefore worked for '*koinonia*' even when he failed to perceive the possibility of Peter acting on precepts advocated by him and documented in his own letter (1 Cor. 8:13). At the same time, it would be most uncharitable and unwise if one were to neglect the significance of the absence of any mention of Peter's reaction to Paul's provocation. The incident is not mentioned elsewhere in the NT. Peter too, contributed to '*koinonia*' by his decorum. 2 Pet. 3:15-16, which we have quoted at the beginning of this article testifies to Peter's respect for the Pauline apocalyptic. Thus, Peter demonstrates that he himself has experienced an apocalyptic – a new way to salvation - not withstanding his three denials of Jesus. He is able to respect the God experience of another 'unbeliever' who was converted by the Risen Lord Himself (cf. Jn. 21:15-17; Gal. 1:11-17).

The ministry of reconciliation consists of,

- fostering communion notwithstanding human difficulties by understanding the manner in which individuals respond to God's initiative of salvation.

Note Paul's comment Col. 4:10-11 – 'Aristarchus my fellow prisoner greets you, and Mark the cousin of Barnabas (concerning whom you have received instructions -- if he comes to you, receive him), and Jesus who is called Justus. These are the only men of the circumcision among my fellow workers for the kingdom of God, and they have been a comfort to me.'

As we know from Acts 13:13, John Mark abandoned Paul at Pamphylia because of which Paul refused to accommodate him in the Second Missionary Journey leading a the separation between Barnabas who was John Mark's cousin, and himself (Col. 4:10; 15:37-39). Yet, Paul writes to the Colossians asking them to be hospitable to John Mark. Paul remains in communion. The same attitude is seen with regard to Apollos (cf. 1 Cor. 1:12-13; 3:5-6).

1 Cor. 1:12-13 What I mean is that each one of you says, "I belong to Paul," or "I belong to Apollos," or "I belong to Cephas," or "I belong to Christ." Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul?

Despite the factionalism that prevailed in the Corinthian community, Paul did not view Apollos as a competitor or rival but as a collaborator and co-worker.

1 Cor. 3:5-6 What then is Apollos? What is Paul? Servants through whom you believed, as the Lord assigned to each. I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth.

1 Cor. 16:12, is testimony that Paul has urged Apollos to visit Corinth again.

1 Cor. 16:12 As for our brother Apollos, I strongly urged him to visit you with other brethren, but it was not at all his will to come now. He will come when he has opportunity.

Titus 3:13 shows how Paul remained concerned about the welfare of Apollos: ‘Do your best to speed Zenas the lawyer and Apollos on their way; see that they lack nothing.’

Paul remained in communion with the Jerusalem Church despite the tensions that arose on account of the baptism of uncircumcised Gentiles. We have already noted the five visits that Paul made to Jerusalem, and his concern for taking up a collection for the poor of Jerusalem as a sign of his solidarity with the Jerusalem Church. Peter too remained appreciative of Paul’s call to be apostle to the Gentiles and the Pauline apocalyptic which mapped out a new way to salvation.

2 Pet. 3:15-16 And count the forbearance of our Lord as salvation. So also our beloved brother Paul wrote to you according to the wisdom given him, speaking of this as he does in all his letters. There are some things in them hard to understand, which the ignorant and unstable twist to their own destruction, as they do the other scriptures.

That thirteen of his letters have been incorporated into the NT testifies to his standing within the Christian Community. Despite ‘personal differences’ as evidenced by the Antioch Incident (Gal. 2:11), both Peter and Paul demonstrate that they are men of ‘*koinonia*.’

- **Against the background of the entire Pauline corpus, one could well argue that the Pauline notion of the ‘ministry of reconciliation’ was the merging of Jew and Gentile into one believing community.**

- Paul's insistence that God could have been perceived in creation is the basis for his indictment of Gentiles for disbelief in the Creator. This he sets the stage for worship of the Creator apart from 'Jewish Cult.' In this Paul fosters *'koinonia'* apart from sacrificial cult and allied doctrinal beliefs. Paul was an ecumenist, and Peter respected his efforts. No doubt both paid a heavy price!

7. Immanence and the Cosmic Presence of Jesus

The theology of Colossians and Ephesians reveal the Pauline notion of immanence and the Cosmic Lordship of the Risen Christ. However, we begin by setting forth a basic working hypothesis: The operating assumption is that the author of Ephesians reproduced much of Colossians because its language and concepts were of particular relevance to the community. Colossians and Ephesians disclose a similar world view, reflect some of the same community concerns and represent a similar stage of development in Pauline Christianity. This particular stage of development in Pauline Christianity is seen in the use of the Greek word *'pleroma'* (fullness) which is the key in understanding the distinctive theological vision of Colossians and Ephesians, which speaks of the expansion and filling up of the universe with divinity (Col. 1:9; 2:9; Eph. 1:10, 23; 3:19; 4:13). Both Colossians and Ephesians carry Paul's notion of Christ as ruler of the cosmos (Phil. 2:6-11), to new heights. The cosmological significance of Christ as the image of the invisible God and mediator of creation, who is above all powers, and who alone guarantees salvation, is underlined in the hymn of Col. 1:15-20 (cf. Eph. 1:20-23). One passage in Ephesians in particular suggests that the author had access to a written copy of Colossians. There is verbatim agreement between the recommendation of Tychicus in Eph. 6:21-22 and Col. 4:7-8.

Ephesians develops the familiar Pauline theme of the unity of Gentile and Jew, but leaves historical relations behind in favour of a cosmic depiction of the reconciliation between the two groups (Eph. 2:11-22). In comparison to the undisputed letters of Paul, the symbol of the body of Christ appears transformed in Colossians and Ephesians (cf. Col 1:18-20, 21-22; 2:9-10, 19; 3:15; Eph. 1:22-23; 4:14-16; 5:23, 30). The symbol of the body of Christ becomes the vehicle for describing the cosmic reconciliation that has taken place through Christ. Now, explicitly called the Church, the symbol is also articulated in a new way: Christ is the head and the community makes up his body.

But the cosmological significance assigned to the Christ event (Col. 1:15-20) exceeds what is found in the undisputed letters and Colossians concentrates exclusively on the present salvation of believers (Col. 3:1-3). Margaret Y MacDonald argues when taken together, Col. 1:6-8 and 4:7-18 serves to reinforce the authority of Paul's co-

workers (Especially Epaphras and Tichychus), and to emphasize their connections with the apostle in his absence, in order to secure the survival of the community. A crisis has been caused by the absence of the charismatic leader. Therefore, while the authority of Paul's co-workers is being emphasized, authority in community must be exercised in a new way. The strongest evidence of the need to exercise authority in community life in a new way is seen in the use of the household code in Col. 3:18-4:1. The household code teaching is not completely incompatible with Paul's earlier teaching on marriage and slavery (1 Cor. 7; 11:2-16; Phlm). The household code is unique to Colossians and Ephesians. These rules seem intent on quieting the desire for a marriage free life that was typical of Paul, the Corinthians, and many other early Christians who were awaiting an 'immediate Parousia.' Both the household code of Col. 3:18-4:1, Ephesians 5:22 ff., and the response to the ascetic false teaching in Col. 2:8-23 offer indications that the author of Colossians stands at some distance from the Paul of 1 Cor. 7 who preferred celibacy – the ultimate sign that the world was passing away.

MacDonald argues that the household code is an integral part of the author's response to a type of false teaching that threatened to undermine the relations between Christians and the outside world. The household code recommends a way of life that allows believers to be physically integrated with urban centers of the Greco-Roman world, but the symbolism of Colossians replete with images of a cosmic Christ, and the heavenly reign of believers, reminds the recipients that they ultimately belong to another world. The household code of Colossians (3:18-4:1) and Ephesians (5:22-33), including texts from 1 Tim 5:17; 6:1-2; Titus 3:1-2, demonstrate the manner in which believers testify to the Cosmic Lordship of Christ by a new way of exercising authority in the community in a way that is 'not conformed to the world' (Eph. 5:23-24 cf. Rom. 12:2) Further, because in Colossians and Ephesians the symbol of the body of Christ becomes the vehicle for describing the cosmic reconciliation that has taken place through Christ, the internal relationships within the body of Christ the members of which are many take up a new significance. The new significance is expressed differently by the phrase - ἐν κυρίῳ - meaning in the Lord (Col. 3:18) and - ὡς τῷ κυρίῳ - meaning as to the Lord (Eph. 5:22). Because the Risen Christ is now the Cosmic Lord, he who is the 'head' of the body, transforms the relationship among the members so that the household code becomes a manifestation of the cosmic reconciliation taking place through the cosmic lordship of Christ. Hence, the household code proposes a new way of communion with the Cosmic Lord.

8. Conclusion

The Pauline perspective of formative spirituality insists on an initial God Experience of personal conversion that provides the impetus for the quest of a particular, personalized and pragmatic approach to daily communion with God in a

changing socio-cultural milieu immersed in suffering. It is a spirituality centered on the cross, because of the conviction that it is the 'divinely chosen instrument' that leads to the resurrection. It stresses the necessity of not being conformed to the world, and involves an ascetical theology. It insists on the importance of being transformed in mind in the sense of taking on the mind of Christ, and is therefore, a Christocentric spirituality. It advocates transformation through a process of osmosis whereby gospel values are assimilated by participation in the sufferings of Christ. Authentic '*koinonia*' becomes more than sharing resources. '*Koinonia*' is a sharing in the sufferings of Christ; it is collaborating in mission and ministry with other chosen agents of God; it is communion of Christ and communion of the Holy Spirit, and therefore, involves a mystical theology. It is a spirituality that proclaims the immanence of God's cosmic conquest and cosmic reconciliation, principally through the death and resurrection of Christ whereby the Cosmic Lordship of Christ is proclaimed. The Christian by his or her fidelity to a particular lifestyle either through the household code, or the code of conduct for elders of the church, witnesses to the Cosmic Lordship of Christ through whom God has conquered the world and is reconciling the universe to Himself.