Chapter 5

Partnership and Equality: Paul's Economic Theory

> Every state (*polis*) is as we see a sort of partnership (*koinōnia*), and every partnership is formed with a view to some good (since all the actions of all mankind are done with a view to what they think to be good). It is therefore evident that, while all partnerships aim at some good, the partnership that is the most supreme of all and includes all the others does so most of all, and aims at the most supreme of all goods; and this is entitled the state (*polis*), the political partnership (*koinōnia politikē*). (Aristotle, *Politics* 1.1252a; trans. H. Rackham)

> Be in partnership (*koinōneō*) with the needs of the saints. . . Be in association with the lowly. (Rom 12:13, 16)

The theme of the "commons" or "that in which one partners or shares" (*koinōnia*) is central to the political philosophies of both Plato and Aristotle.[1] So also, *koinōnia* is a central feature of Paul's Messianic politics, the polity of Christ's community. But whereas Plato, Aristotle, and other Greco-Roman thinkers limited that notion to some kind of proportionality that favoured some members of the *polis* (city-state) over others, Paul radicalizes the notion. Paul envisions the Messianic polity as a global partnership, committed to a redistributive program that moves toward "equality" (*isotēs*), against the redistributive, tributary machinery of the Roman imperium that moves toward ever greater inequality. As Lawrence Welborn has shown, whereas thinkers in antiquity applied notions of equality mainly to the spheres of friendship,

the cosmos, or politics (e.g. *isonomia*, *isopoliteia*; equality of legal, political rights), Paul is the first author in antiquity to use the term "equality" in a specifically economic sense. And whereas prevailing thinking stressed a proportional equality among those of varying degrees of friendship or status, Paul proclaimed the goal of working toward a real economic "equality" between the haves and have-nots.[2]

This chapter will begin by reviewing Paul's most ambitious project of *koinōnia*—the "collection" for the poor of Judea as a measure of global redistribution. Following this, we will consider Paul's understanding of how economic mutuality operates within local assembly settings, and then observe his perspective on his own economic relationships with various assemblies. We will find that in all of these settings, the language of "partnership" is consistently applied. Space will not permit a review of the related matter of profiling the actual economic level or status of members of the Pauline communities.[3]

"Remembering the Poor": Paul's Global Redistributive Endeavour[4]

It is not often recognized that Paul spent a large portion of his waking energy organizing among urban Messianic loyalists in the Gentile world a relief fund for his fellow Messianic compatriots of Judea, impoverished by food shortages caused by both famine and the Roman empire's tributary system of economic extraction from conquered territories. But Paul does not promote just charity and benevolence; rather, in this project he champions in concrete terms the goal of mutualism, partnership, and equality with the lowly and poor.

From isolated passages in Paul's writings and the Book of Acts, the main contours of this venture can be discerned.

(1) The Commitment to Partnership: Around the year 48 CE, at the end of his visit with the "pillars" of the mother community in Jerusalem, during which he sought endorsement for his version of the gospel and a clarification of his sphere of missionary operations, a "partnership" was solemnized "with the right hand":[5] Paul and Barnabas would go to the Gentiles and they would go to the circumcised (Gal 2:1-9). But included in the terms of this "partnership" was a specific commitment requested by the Jerusalem leaders that Paul and Barnabas "remember the poor." For his part, Paul claims that he was in fact "eager to do this very thing" (Gal 1:10). This request was not at all a burdensome imposition balancing their concession that Paul was free to preach his Torah-free gospel to the non-Jews.[6] In fact, his Galatian readers (to whom he is writing a few years later) had already heard Paul make

appeals for contributing to a fund earmarked for the poor (1 Cor 16:1).

But, who are the "poor" here, and what is meant by "remembering" them? And why did the Jerusalem leaders ask for this specific commitment?[7] Two sides of an answer can be embraced. On the one hand, it appears that "poor" refers to the destitute anywhere, and that the leaders wished to ensure that the economic mandate of the gospel not be forgotten or compromised as Paul preached the gospel to the relatively wealthy urbanites of the Greco-Roman world. After all, a commitment to economic partnership, as a way to ensure no one among them was destitute, appears to have been a feature of the Jerusalem community from the very beginning (Acts 2:43-47; 4:32-5:11; 6:1-6).[8] On the other hand, it is appears that the "poor" referred in some way to the needy specifically in impoverished Judea, whether the destitute of the region in general,[9] or the specifically "poor" congregations of Judea and Jerusalem.[10] Indeed, some have thought that the term "poor" is especially an honourific self-designation of the assembly of Jerusalem, and that the leaders wished Paul simply not to forget about them, the mother community. In either case, the emphasis is on a broader relationship of partnership between Paul's increasingly Gentile assemblies, and the predominantly Judaic assemblies in Judea.[11] Even if the "poor" was a sort of label for the assembly, its economic aspect was not lost on Paul.

(2) After this initial commitment around 48 CE to "remember the poor" as part of the establishment of a "partnership," we are in the dark as to whether and how Paul worked toward mutual aid in particular local settings or with global relationships.[12] The first certain evidence for a collection specifically designed for distribution to Jerusalem is from 1 Corinthians (ca. 52-54 CE), where he assumes that his readers already know about plans, and where he indicates that the assemblies of Galatia are also already participating (16:1-4). But we should not assume that activities were limited to only these locations. At various times during the years 52-54, for instance, Paul probably informs believers in Galatia, Macedonia, Greece, and perhaps elsewhere about plans for such an endeavour, likely receiving pledges of support from various congregations (1 Cor 16:1-4; Rom 15:25-33; 2 Cor 8–9). It may well be that funds collected in different localities during these years were delivered to Jerusalem at various times.[13]

(3) Final preparations, ca. 55-56 CE: Eventually, Paul resolved to make a pilgrimage back to Jerusalem (Acts 19:21), and began to work more energetically to assemble a sizable fund that he could deliver himself. We know of specific appeals directed to the Macedonians (2 Cor 8:1-5; 9:2-4) and the Corinthians (2 Cor 8–9). Meanwhile, Paul made specific plans to secure, audit,[14] and transport the fund to Judea (2 Cor 8:16–9:5; Rom

15:25-33). And we observe Paul using classic "fund-raising" techniques: (1) first securing a pledge, then asking for completion (2 Cor 8:10-12; 9:5); (2) ensuring that the finances are properly secured and audited by trustworthy individuals (1 Cor 16:3; 2 Cor 8:16-23); and (3) playing the "honour" of one group off another, exhorting one group to match the giving of another group (e.g. 1 Cor 16:1; 2 Cor 8:1-7; 9:1-5).

This project was politically volatile, and no doubt care was taken to keep any knowledge of this from the authorities. Writing in the 90s, Josephus implies that many civic authorities were opposed the practice of Jewish synagogue communities in collecting and then transporting to Jerusalem the annual two-drachma temple tax on all adult males; some cities had expropriated the money for their own civic projects. The practice of collecting funds for a foreign nation was no doubt perceived as an act of disloyalty to the civic and imperial regimes, and a net economic loss.[15] (After the destruction of Jerusalem and its temple in 70 CE, Rome redirected the temple tax, renamed the *fiscus Judaicus*, to go toward the rebuilding of the Capitoline temple of Jupiter in Rome, a major affront to the already devastated Judean people.)[16] Paul may well have sought to legitimize this collection, if confronted, by claiming that it too was part of the annual temple tax (cf. Acts 24:17), offered on the part of his Messianic sympathizers with Judea. Conceptually, therefore, Paul perhaps thought of this as a sort of parallel endeavor to the temple tax, this one directed specifically to the needy community as "the temple of Messiah" (cf. 1 Cor 3:16-17).[17]

Eventually, the Macedonians (2 Cor 8:1-5), Corinthians (Rom 15:26), and probably other congregations contribute generously to the fund. By this time, Paul emphasizes the collection not as a charitable contribution, but as a token of a broad poor-rich and Jew-Gentile "partnership," if not also as a peace-offering to mend the growing tensions between the poorer Judean Messiah-loyalists and the increasingly Gentile-dominated, richer assemblies outside of Judea (e.g. Acts 21:18-25). Moreover, Paul begins to understand the project eschatologically, in fulfilment of biblical prophecy,[18] with himself as crucial agent: as the enactment of the reversal of tributary flow out of Judea, as accompanying the in-gathering and pilgrimage of the Gentiles to Jerusalem, and as marking promised Gentile sacrifice in the temple.[19]

(4) The delivery and debacle in Jerusalem, ca. 56 CE: Acts narrates the final trip to Jerusalem, including the names of those who were presumably part of the protective, auditing entourage (Acts 20:1-21:16), while not referring specifically to the relief fund. But the fund is alluded to, first in the way Paul is invited to become a financial patron for temple sacrifices, as a good-faith demonstration of his character (Acts 21:17-36), and then when Paul claims in his self-defence speech that he is in

Jerusalem to bring "alms [Gk. "an act of mercy"] for my nation and to offer sacrifices" (Acts 24:17).[20] Acts actually leaves us in the dark as to what actually happened to this relief fund, but implies that it was marked by disaster. Paul himself had expressed considerable anxiety around his arrival in Jerusalem: both over whether or not the Jerusalem assembly would in fact find the contribution "acceptable," and over his safety in light of opposition from non-believing sectors (Rom 15:30-32).

We can infer that the leaders in Jerusalem initially refused to accept it because it was thought by some as tainted money, given Paul's tarnished reputation among Torah-observant Messianists (Acts 21:20-21). A deal was eventually made by which Paul would pay a large sum for a sacrificial vow of purification in the temple (Acts 21:22-24). But following Paul's arrest, we have no hint as to what happened. We might assume, however, that his companions (e.g. Acts 20:4) were finally able to hand over what must have been a very sizable amount of coins (physically and financially).

For our purposes, most crucial is how Paul thinks of "this undertaking" (*hypostasis*, 2 Cor 9:4) theologically and economically. The two main sources for this are Paul's fund-raising appeal in 2 Corinthians 8–9, and his reflection on the meaning of this endeavour for the global unity of the Messianic assembly in Romans 15:25-28. At the most basic level, Paul calls the fund a "collection (*logeia*) for the saints" (1 Cor 16:1, 4) and a "harvesting" (*karpos*, fruit) that will be properly "sealed" (Rom 15:28),[21] and he describes its function as a "service-ministry" (*diakonia*) that will "replenish a lack" (*hysterēma*; Rom 15:25, 31; 2 Cor 8:4; 9:12; cf. 8:13-14)[22] and as a "giving to the poor" (2 Cor 9:9).

Paul's explanation indicates, however, a kind of two-sidedness to the project and any individual participation in it. On the one hand, it is simply an "act of generous favour" (*charis*; 1 Cor 16:3; 2 Cor 8:4, 6, 7, 9, 19; 9:8), based on God's prior "act of generous favour" (*charis*, grace; 2 Cor 8:1, 9; 9:14). It expresses "goodwill-eagerness" (*prothymia*; 2 Cor 8:11, 12, 19; 9:2), an "abundant liberality" (*hadrotēs*; 2 Cor 8:20), and "generosity" (*haplotēs*; 2 Cor 8:2; 9:11, 13).[23] Accordingly, it flows from "eagerness" (*spoudē*; 2 Cor 8:7, 8, 11, 16, 17, 22),[24] "zeal" (*zēlos*, 2 Cor 9:2), "willingness" (*thelein*; 2 Cor 8:10-11), "good pleasure" (*eudokia*, Rom 15:26-27), "cheerfulness" (*hilarotēs*, 2 Cor 9:7),[25] and "joy" (2 Cor 8:2)—an act of the "heart" not under any duress or necessity (2 Cor 9:7). Those who contribute do so "voluntarily" (*authairetoi*; 2 Cor 8:3), as appropriate to a "voluntary gift" (*eulogia*) that is "promised" as opposed to an "extortion" (2 Cor 9:5) by which redistributive tributes and usurious interests are assessed. Thus, it is a "sign-display of love" (2 Cor 8:8, 24).[26]

On the other side, however, is a complementary perspective. While Paul stresses that his appeal is not to be taken as a "command" (2 Cor 8:8), he nevertheless argues that participation represents an "obedience to the

oath of loyalty to the gospel of Messiah" (2 Cor 9:13). Thus it is a "testing of the genuineness of love" (2 Cor 8:8), a "testing of service" (2 Cor 9:13), an "overflowing of good work" (2 Cor 9:8), and "that which emerges from righteousness-justice" (2 Cor 9:9-10).[27] Accordingly, participation is first a matter of "giving of the self" (first to the Lord and then to others; 2 Cor 8:5), and it is a way to "glorify God" (2 Cor 8:19; 9:13).

Most importantly, then, the entire project expresses a "partnership" (*koinōnia*; Rom 15:26-27; 2 Cor 8:4, 23; 9:13), and the "obligation" (*opheilēma*) and expected "public service" (*leitourgia*, benefactions; 2 Cor 9:12; Rom 15:27) appropriate to a reciprocal partnership:

> They [the Macedonians and Greeks] were well-pleased (to contribute), but they are also obligated [in debt] to them: for if the nations came to be co-partners with them in spiritual things [cf. Rom 11:17], they are (in turn) obligated [indebted] to offer public service [perform benefactions] in fleshly [material] things. (Rom 15:27)[28]

It is through a new partnership of mutual interdependence, moreover, that one is "enriched" through mutual participation: involvement will result in an "overflowing of thanksgiving to God" from the recipients (2 Cor 9:11-12), and it will result in new bonds of "longing" and prayer between Messiah's adherents in geographically far-flung regions (2 Cor 9:13-14).[29] A "partnership" of mutual aid, Paul says, reaches beyond merely the poor of Jerusalem, and extends potentially to "all people" (2 Cor 9:13).[30]

Founded on and motivated by God's prior "generosity" (*charis*, grace; 2 Cor 8:1; 9:14-15), and made possible by God's own provision both for "adequacy" and for "scattering seed" to the poor (2 Cor 9:8-10),[31] participation enacts the radical orientation to the other evident in Messiah himself, to the point of inversion: "for you know the generous act of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor" (2 Cor 8:9). When unpacking the implications of this model, Paul adds that the pledge can be fulfilled "out of what one has" (*ek tou echein*; 2 Cor 8:11), and that the "eagerness" can become "acceptable (*euprosdektos*)[32] according to what one might have, not according to what one does not have" (2 Cor 8:12). This accords with what Paul says earlier, that giving is "according to ability" (lit. *dynamis*, "power," that is, economic power)"[33] and sometimes "beyond ability" (2 Cor 8:3)—it should be based on putting aside on a regular basis "whatever one has prospered" (1 Cor 16:2).[34] In other words, Paul assumed there would not be a flat head-tax levy (as the temple tax), but a graduated (even if voluntary)

contribution by which the wealthier would contribute a greater level of their assets. (Herein is the disproportionality of Paul's redistributive project.) At the same time, this project is not one in which a handful of the wealthy individuals or assemblies are invited to contribute as part of their expected patronage. It is neither individual nor unilateral. Rather, Paul perceives the endeavour as involving all the members of the community and all assemblies in a region (1 Cor 16:2; 2 Cor 8:1-5; 9:1-4, 7; Rom 12:13; 15:26).[35]

To assuage possible fears by Paul's wealthy listeners over the suggestion of a graduated contribution, buttressed by the model of Christ's divestment from riches to embrace poverty (2 Cor 8:9; cf. Phil 2:5-8), Paul clarifies that he is not promoting an inversion of fortunes such that there should now be "relief for others" and "pressure for you," but rather that he is administering a project that flows "out of (the pursuit of) equality" (*isotēs*; 2 Cor 8:13).[36] He explains: "at the present time, your abundance is for their lack, so that their abundance might someday be for your lack, that there may be equality" (*isotēs*; 2 Cor 8:14). This double use of *isotēs* (equality/equity) for economic relationships resounds through the rest of Paul's appeal in 2 Corinthians 8–9. The paradigm for global economic relations among the diverse assemblies is one of mutual assistance typical of "general reciprocity"[37] among subsistence villagers, whereby the exchange of goods and services need not be accounted with any exact value, because it is understood that they will balance out over time.[38]

The clinching text comes from the manna subsistence of Israel in the wilderness: "the one gathering much did not have more (make more, have an excess),[39] and the one gathering little did not have less (2 Cor 8:15, citing Exod 16:18). English translations often suggest that one did "not have too much" and the other did "not have too little."[40] But this changes and softens the meaning considerably. The radical point Paul makes (in accordance with both the original Hebrew and the LXX) is that things equaled out: there was neither "having more" nor "having less." Whereas the philosopher Philo cited this text to dramatize the "proportional equality" of manna as divine wisdom distributed in creation,[41] Paul uses this text to promote a kind of disproportionate equality. And while the economically privileged Philo "dematerializes manna" and spiritualizes the text, Paul "materializes grace" and finds a concrete economic meaning in the manna text.[42] Paul not only engages in a specifically economic analysis that invokes the notion of the haves and have-nots, but also assumes that equality is a proper human pursuit through redistributive work, under the sign of God's Messiah voluntarily impoverishing himself (2 Cor 8:9). The ultimate goal is not a reversal of fortunes through some

kind of class warfare, but "equality" through the establishment of new economic relationships under the sign of Messiah's economic divestment for the sake of the other.

For Paul, this perspective undermines prevailing benefactor-beneficiary arrangements of reciprocity, and would have appeared perverse to many of his rich Corinthian readers.[43] In contrast to business as usual, this paradigm is premised on (a) the notion of God's faithful provision, in connection with (b) a consumptive posture of "adequacy" (2 Cor 9:8-10),[44] and (c) the mutuality of partnership by which needs and provisions will be supplied (2 Cor 9:13-14).[45]

In sum, Paul's ambitious collection undertaking for the poor in Jerusalem was infused with economic, social, eschatological, ecclesial (ecumenical), and Christological meaning.

Economic Mutualism in Local Assemblies

We turn, then, to consider whether and how Paul advised local assemblies to "remember the poor" (Gal 2:10) through measures of economic mutualism. Paul nowhere prescribes or describes measures for concrete mutual assistance, but from various comments it appears that this question was part of all assembly formation activities.[46]

Corinth. The first setting to consider is that of Corinth. First Corinthians commences with a lengthy challenge against the arrogant and sophistic elite of the Corinthian assembly, while emphasizing God's special concern for those of low degree. Repeatedly, Paul reminds his readers of the inversions that accompany the arrival of the reign of God. For instance, in 1 Corinthians 1:26-31 and 4:8-13 Paul ironically targets the few complacent rich:

> Not many of you are wise according to the flesh; not many of you are powerful, not many are of noble birth (*eugeneis*, well-born). But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise, and God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; and God chose the things [people] that are lowborn (*agenē*, lit. "non-born") and despised in the world, indeed the things that are not, to reduce to nothing things that are, so that no one might boast in the presence of God (1:27-28).

And Paul sarcastically ridicules their rich complacency compared to his own experience as marked by impoverishment and dishonour (4:8-13; cf. 2 Cor 4:3-12; 6:3-10; 11:7-11, 23-30; 12:7-10). And in 1 Corinthians 12:21-26 Paul advises his status-preoccupied members that

"God has so composed the body [of Christ], giving greater honour to the inferior part."

Some scholars, in fact, have proposed that almost every conflict that is referred to in 1 Corinthians stems in one way or another from economic disparity.[47] The most obvious example is evident in 1 Corinthians 11:17-34: the Corinthians are making a mockery out of the celebration of the "Lord's banquet." The difficulty, it seems, stems from the fact that in Corinth some of the most wealthy in society joined the Jesus-confessing movement, including the city treasurer (see e.g. Rom 16:23). These wealthier members became the patrons who hosted worship gatherings, which included the "Lord's banquet." What Paul has heard, though, is that these rich patrons are hosting the "Lord's banquet" the same way that they hosted regular social banquets in which they wined and dined their business partners and clients. Such banquets were common, and it was customary to leave women, slaves, and others of low status in the back rooms with food of lesser quantity and quality. Paul argues that by such a practice they are "showing contempt for the assembly of God and humiliating the have-nots [those who have nothing]" (11:22) and he considers it to be equivalent to "eating and drinking without discerning the body" (i.e., the mutuality of the community), a serious taboo for which some are now ill or have died. For Paul, this practice is a major affront to the fact that in Christ, social distinctions of class, gender, and ethnicity have been cancelled (e.g. Gal 3:28; 1 Cor 12:13). In this text we see Paul arguing that the suspension of divisions must be extended to the economic sphere: the "Lord's banquet" was the place above all where the equality of the assembly was to be demonstrated and ritualized.

Paul also warns the Corinthians about taking fellow believers to the civil courts for lawsuits (1 Cor 6:1-8). While we do not know the precise issues over which such lawsuits were initiated, many scholars suppose that it was largely the richer members (who had the financial means to do so) who were taking weaker members before the magistrates to claim what was legally (but not always rightfully) theirs, as was the common pattern in that society. And Paul warns the Corinthians twice about the immorality of the "greedy," who will be excluded from the kingdom of God (1 Cor 5:11; 6:10).[48]

Not surprisingly, it is also in 1 Corinthians that the proclamation of Messianic time earmarks a radically new orientation because "the present structures of the world are passing away" (1 Cor 7:29-31). Under this new reality "let those who do business live as not holding fast (to possessions), and let those who are bound up in dealings with this world live as not engaged in dealings with the world" (1 Cor 7:30-31). In other words, let the haves live as have-nots. All of this would suggest that in

Corinth a regular part of gatherings was a collection not just for the needy of Jerusalem (1 Cor 16:1-4) but also for the destitute locally.

Thessalonica. Whereas Paul's cautionary words in the Corinthian letters are directed especially to the rich of Corinth, in Thessalonians the words of caution are especially targeted toward the "disorderly" who refuse to work and who are becoming a burden on communal resources. It is evident that some sort of practice of supporting the economically poor had been introduced into the fabric of the Thessalonian assembly from the start. While Paul makes no direct reference to this, his remarks presume some such structure, especially in his concern that some "disorderly" members are becoming a burden to the community (1 Thess 4:9-12; 5:14; 2 Thess 3:6-13; cf. 1 Thess 2:5-12). This pattern of economic mutual aid is especially what is under review when Paul discusses their *philadelphia* (love for brothers and sisters).[49] Paul congratulates them for their performance in this area (both in their own assembly, and elsewhere in Macedonia) and invites them to excel even more in practical *philadelphia* (1 Thess 4:9-10). But he qualifies this by inviting them "to aspire" (literally, "love honour," *philotimeisthai*)[50] in three further ways: to live quietly, to manage your own (personal) affairs,[51] and to work with your [own] hands (4:11).

The purpose of all these directives—toward both *philadelphia* (4:9-10) and personal propriety in living and working (4:11)—is so that (a) one might walk with decorum before outsiders, and (b) so that no one "might have need of anything/anyone" (4:12).[52] Earlier, Paul had insinuated, by reference to himself, that those who do not work are likely "to become a burden" on certain people (2:9).[53] Thus, at the close of the letter, Paul exhorts on two sides: on the one hand, "admonish the disorderly"; and on the other hand, "encourage the fainthearted, keep close to the (economically) weak" (5:14).[54] The term "disorderly" (*ataktoi*) seems to be a general reference back to those who do not live quietly in decorum,[55] who do not manage their own affairs, and who do not work with their hands. Similarly, the closing of 2 Thessalonians emphasizes both of these sides: (a) a warning against the "disorderly" who refuse to work, such that they should not be given bread (3:6-12), and (b) an exhortation to "not grow weary in doing good," that is, in practical mutual assistance (3:13).[56] Paul assumes that in Messiah's manna economy, everyone should participate, even if they are able "to gather" and to contribute only a modest amount.

It is often supposed that these texts from 1 & 2 Thessalonians show that Paul simply preaches the morality of manual labour as the answer to economic hardship, communal welfare, and poverty—that Paul endorses a conservative, middle-class, or "bourgeois" economic ethic.

That interpretation, however, is surely in error. Paul is indeed opposing some sort of voluntary withdrawal from labour and work, for reasons not entirely clear. The motivation might have stemmed from an eschatological enthusiasm in connection with a sharp class analysis (the imminent dawn of the age of Messiah, in which the high and the low would be inverted).[57] Indeed, some in the Thessalonian assembly might have taken Paul at his word, had they heard statements such as those found in 1 Corinthians 7:29-31 (cited above). In any event, his concern is that this "disorderly" practice excessively burdens the system of mutualism, not that this system of communal welfare should be discontinued because of this burden. Moreover, Paul is not addressing the problem of those who are unemployed by circumstances outside their control. Paul nowhere suggests that certain people are poor because they are lazy—he only says that certain "disorderly" (and idle) people (because of end-time fanaticism) should not be allowed to be a burden on the community. Meanwhile, Paul exhorts the community to excel even more in the practice of mutual aid to support the poor (1 Thess 4:9-10; 5:14; 2 Thess 3:13). The Book of Acts confirms that Paul promotes manual labour by the able-bodied precisely as a way to "support the weak, remembering the words of the Lord Jesus, for he himself said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive'" (Acts 20:34-35).

Romans. The assemblies of Thessalonica and Corinth are among those that Paul actually founded and organized. The varieties of house assemblies in Rome, however, were known to Paul only through multiple relationship connections (Rom 16). There is no way to ascertain whether or not there was any structure of mutual assistance binding these groups together. Nevertheless, it is remarkable how much attention is given to promote economic mutualism in Paul's letter to the many "beloved of God" in Rome (Rom 1:7), split into the factions (at least) of the "weak in conviction" and "the strong" (Rom 14–15).[58] In the summary of the varied functions that make up the one body (12:3-8), three of the seven involve some kind of economic component: "ministry-service" (*diakonia*; including but not limited to economic ministry), "the donor in generosity,"[59] and "the one showing mercy in cheerfulness."[60] In the subsequent section of exhortation, alongside themes of non-retaliation and peace (12:14, 17-21) and practical devotion (12:9, 11-12), Paul similarly highlights economic and status dimensions of general mutuality (12:10, 13, 15-16):

> Be affectionate in friendship love (*philadelphia*) for one-another;
> Lead ahead in showing honour for one-another. . . .
> Be in partnership with the needs of the saints;
> Pursue love of the stranger (*philoxenia*, hospitality). . . .

Mind each other according to the same rank;
Do not put your mind toward things that are high;[61]
But be in association with the lowly;
Do not be mindful beyond yourselves.[62]

Finally, we should observe that Paul closes out his entire argument in Romans by highlighting the relief collection that he is about to deliver to the poor among the assemblies of Jerusalem (Rom 15:25-32). This is not just for information, and not just a way to emphasize the global unity of Jews and Gentiles in Christ. Rather, it is also a way to stress the importance of Messiah's community as a mutual partnership (Rom 11:17; 12:13; 15:27) through which material needs and spiritual benefit are interdependently and mutually shared.

Galatians. In Galatians 6:2-10 we find the same two-sided exhortation as in 1 & 2 Thessalonians, namely mutual interdependence (even in economic matters), balanced by individual responsibility (for one's own livelihood). While this text is often spiritualized to refer only to spiritual or interpersonal interdependence (based on the topic of Gal 6:1), it is clear that the entire text has a strongly economic component (at the very least in 6:6, 10), drawing on the emphasis on "kindness" (*chrēstōtēs*) and "goodness-generosity" (*agathōsynē*) from the forgoing text on the fruit of the Spirit (5:22-23). Both of these words have a decisively economic nuance as involving practical aid for the poor.[63] Moreover, this closing exhortation before his final hand-written words coheres closely with Paul's earlier rhetorical claim to "remember the poor" (Gal 2:10). The exhortation, "bear one another's burdens," accordingly addresses mutual support in all ways, especially in economic terms. The language of "burden" is consistently used in Paul's writings of economic burdens.[64] And, just as in 2 Corinthians 8:9, the paradigm is based on the pattern of Christ: to offer mutual support to one another is to "fulfil the law of Messiah," that is, the law of neighbourly love (Gal 5:6, 14; Rom 12:9-10; 13:8-10; cf. Acts 20:34-35). Paul had already reminded his readers that "the only thing that counts is fidelity working through love" (5:6), and had exhorted them: "through love become slaves to one another" (5:13). And significantly, the exhortation to bear one another's burdens is followed by a challenge to any "high-minded" attitudes coming from those of high degree (Gal 6:3-4), similar to Paul's exhortation in Romans (12:10, 13, 16; above). And then, as a counterpart to the exhortation toward mutual aid, Paul emphasizes responsibility on the part of all "to carry their own loads" (6:5), recalling Paul's warning against those in Thessalonica who are "disorderly" and becoming a needless financial "burden" to others.

Paul then moves to remind the Galatian congregations that they are to support "teachers of the word" financially, using the language of "partnership": "Let the one who is taught the word be in partnership in all good things with the one who is teaching" (6:6). Finally, Paul uses the language of "sowing" as a way to speak of financial conduct (Gal 6:7-10), as he does in 2 Corinthians 9:6-11 (cf. Phil 1:11) and as was common in his environment (e.g. "fruit-harvest" is the regular word for financial return on labour or investment). He cautions against "sowing to your own flesh," a metaphor of financial self-aggrandizement, and encourages "sowing to the Spirit," recalling the emphasis on the "fruit of the Spirit" (Gal 5:22-23) in its multiple dimensions, but here especially in financial terms. Paul's language conjures up themes of the Sermon on the Mount (giving to the poor as laying up treasures in heaven; Matt 5:19-34); he refers to the final "reaping" at harvest time in the Messianic kingdom. Thus he exhorts his readers in conclusion:

> Let us not grow weary in doing good. . . . So then, whenever we have the opportune time (*kairos*), let us work for the good toward all people,[65] but especially toward the household of loyal faith. (Gal 6:9-10)

While the emphasis is again on mutual aid within the Messianic community, significant as well is the extension of financial good work to all people, echoing Paul's exhortation in Romans "to pursue love of the stranger" (hospitality), as the counterpart to "being in partnership with the needs of the saints" (Rom 12:13).[66]

This consistent emphasis in Paul's writings suggests that some sort of measures for mutual aid existed in Paul's assemblies from their inception. Undoubtedly, the particular form in which this took place varied from one location to the next. Later evidence also indicates the presence of some kind of mutual aid system, suggesting the persistence of earlier practices: The Pastoral Epistles (written anywhere between 80-120 CE) attempt to reduce the number of widows who are eligible for communal assistance (1 Tim 5:3-16; cf. the controversy in Acts 6:1-6);[67] Ignatius, the bishop of Antioch, urges (ca. 110s) that slaves "not desire to be set free from the communal fund (*to koinon*)" (*Letter to Polycarp* 4.3); and Justin Martyr (ca. 150 CE) explains that collections were taken at regular meetings to support the needy (*First Apology* 66-67).

Economic Partnership between Paul and Local Assemblies

In both the Thessalonian and Corinthian letters, Paul emphasizes that it was his right, as it was for any other apostle and teacher, to receive financial support for his ministry (1 Cor 9: 4-12, 16-18, 23; 2 Thess 3:9). In principle, he suggests to the Galatians, it is obligatory for assemblies "to be in partnership with" (financially support) teachers and apostles (Gal 6:6). And to the Corinthians he claims that the one who sows a spiritual good should reap a material harvest from those they serve (1 Cor 9:11). But in both Thessalonica and Corinth he refused any subsidy, and repeatedly emphasized that he worked with his own hands to support himself, so as not to be a burden and so as to preach the gospel "free of charge" (1 Cor 9:18; 2 Cor 11:7; cf. 1 Thess 2:8, "donating" himself).[68] What are the reasons Paul offers for this practice, contrary to the established norm of other apostolic itinerants (cf. 1 Cor 9:5)? And, why did Paul make exceptions to what he claims was his own practice (2 Cor 11:8-9; Phil 4:10-20)?

The reasons appear complex, and Paul explains his practice somewhat differently in different settings. In the Thessalonian context Paul explains his practice (a) in connection with his interest in maintaining a spotless reputation, in particular not to be associated with any greed (1 Thess 2:5-6, 10), (b) as a way to avoid becoming a burden, especially on a few key patrons (1 Thess 2:9; 2 Thess 3:8), and (c) as a model showing that all members ought to work to ensure their own livelihood and to contribute to the general welfare of the community (2 Thess 3:6-13; implicitly in 1 Thess 2:4-12; 4:9-12; 5:14).[69] Paul's explanation in 1 Corinthians 9 is more complex, since it serves rhetorically both to illustrate the way of not demanding one's own freedoms and rights, the path of accommodation so as to avoid causing someone to stumble (1 Cor 8–10, esp. 8:9, 13; 10:29-11:1), and to provide a self-defence (9:3) while continuing to shame (certain members of) the congregation. Paul's refusal of subsidy and commitment to work with his own hands, in fact, became a core part of the protracted dispute between Paul and the Corinthian congregation, prompting Paul to claim this practice of his as a very specific "ground of boasting" that will not be silenced in the entire region of Greece (1 Cor 9:15-16; 2 Cor 11:10).

On the one hand, then, Paul stresses that while he is indeed "free" (9:1, 19), presumably both in Christ and in the flesh, and can rightly claim certain rights to financial remuneration (9:4-14), he chose not to claim these "rights" (9:18) nor to magnify his "freedoms" (9:19; 10:29). This

argument seems designed especially to meet the slogan of some in the congregation that "all things are lawful" (6:12; 10:23), and that "liberty" is ultimate (8:9; 10:29). Accordingly, he asserts that he refuses to be the cause of any one's stumbling as an obstacle to the weak or the gospel (9:12; cf. 8:9, 13; 10:32), that he has made himself "a slave to all people" to win them for the gospel (9:19-23), and that he is motivated entirely by the desire to please the other for the glory of God (10:29-11:1). In connection with this, he claims that this pattern also demonstrates a commitment to a life of self-control and self-discipline (9:24-27) quite in contrast (implicitly) with the Corinthian tendency toward greed (1 Cor 5:11; 6:10) and self-indulgent licentiousness (1 Cor 5–6). His rhetoric in this area thus contributes to his repeated contrast between his own impoverishment and their riches, designed in part to shame some of his readers into embracing a different pattern (1 Cor 4:14), that of cruciform lowliness (1 Cor 1:10-2:5):

> For who sees anything different [distinctively special] in you? What do you have that you did not receive? And if you received it, why do you boast as if it were not a gift?
> Already you have all you want! Already you have become rich! Quite apart from us you have become kings! Indeed, I wish that you had become kings, so that we might be kings with you! For I think that God has exhibited us apostles as last of all, as though sentenced to death, because we have become a spectacle to the world, to angels and to mortals. We are fools for the sake of Christ, but you are wise in Christ. We are weak, but you are strong. You are held in honor, but we in disrepute. To the present hour we are hungry and thirsty, we are poorly clothed and beaten and homeless, and we grow weary from the work of our own hands… We have become like the rubbish of the world, the dregs of all things, to this very day. (1 Cor 4:7-13, NRSV)

This rhetoric of his own abasement relative to Corinthian comfort continues into 2 Corinthians: Paul and his companions minister "as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing everything" (2 Cor 6:10). And whereas some have apparently seen his refusal of subsidy as an affront to them, or as a manipulative tactic (2 Cor 12:16-18), Paul does not hold back with the shaming sarcasm:

> Did I commit a sin by humbling myself so that you might be exalted, because I proclaimed the good news of God free of charge? I robbed other churches by accepting support from them in order to serve you. (2 Cor 11:7, NRSV)

> How have you been worse off than the other churches, except that I myself did not burden you? Forgive me this wrong! (2 Cor 12:13, NRSV)

Paul, then, stresses his pattern of "working with his hands" as part of his cruciform divestment of assets, and choosing the downward path of Messianic solidarity with the weak and poor (2 Cor 12:9-10; 13:3-4; cf. 1 Cor 1:29-31; 2 Cor 8:9).[70] But precisely on this point, Paul apparently has been attacked by some within the Corinthian assembly, and especially his apostolic rivals (2 Cor 11:5-13; 12:11-18); and in turn he ridicules the Corinthian response of slavishly giving into the demands of these apostles, presumably including that of financial remuneration (2 Cor 2:17; 11:19-21). The most likely explanation for Paul's refusal in the Corinthian context, then, is two-fold. On the one hand, he wished to avoid any patron-client relationship, precluding any dependency on and thus accountability to any rich patron. Indeed, he turns the table, by reminding them that he is the parent, and that they are the children in this relationship:

> I will not be a burden, because I do not want what is yours but you; for children ought not to lay up for their parents, but parents for their children. I will most gladly spend and be spent for you. If I love you more, am I to be loved less? (2 Cor 12:14-15, NRSV)

On the other hand, Paul sought, it seems, to dissociate himself from the lavish lifestyle of the rich, and to demonstrate the path of lowliness. But some in Corinth took the former reason as an insult, while many were not impressed by the austerity and downward mobility that he preached as central to the gospel.

But one last crucial element of Paul's practice becomes clear in the Corinthian correspondence: his primary motivation is as a "partner in the gospel" (1 Cor 9:23). He is thus not motivated by any immediate financial remuneration (9:17-18), but only by the enhancement of the gospel's broader equity.[71] Paul explains: "necessity is laid on me. . . I do not do this of my own will; I am entrusted with an administration" (*oikonomia*; 1 Cor 9:16-17), likening himself to someone compelled to enter public service so as to manage the affairs of a city-state. As such he can similarly disclaim any association with being a "retailer (peddler) of God's word like the others [namely, his Corinthian rivals]" (2 Cor 2:17).

This last outlook is central also to the economic "partnership" that was established between Paul and the Philippian assembly. Paul claims that this was an exceptional relationship: "in the early days of the gospel,

when I left Macedonia, no assembly partnered (*koinōneō*) with me in a formal accounting (*logos*)[72] of giving and receiving except you alone" (Phil 4:15), providing support while he was in Thessalonica more than once.[73] Paul explicitly uses the typical language of commercial and business partnerships, rendered by the term *koinōnia*. While the "partnership" had become practically dormant for lack of "opportunity" (4:10), even though close communication between Paul and the congregation had not lapsed, now five years later the Philippians had again provided for Paul's needs during his imprisonment in Ephesus, both in the form of a financial contribution and through the services of one of their members (2:25-30; 4:10-18). What is remarkable is that Paul quite specifically avoids referring to this as a "gift" (despite English translations) and dodges offering a specific "thank-you" (while giving thanks to God for their participation). Instead, Paul emphasizes that their contribution proceeds from their "partnership in the gospel" (1:5), and that as a result they are "all partners in generous giving" (*charis*)—emphasizing that the support has come from the entire community not just a few able patrons, and that "generous giving" (*charis*) is the work of all, not just a few. The entire assembly became "partners in his distress" (4:14). As a result, their contribution represents the (reciprocal and obligatory) "arrears" in their "public service" (*leitourgia*) toward him.[74] Accordingly, Paul says that what he really desires is the "profit" that thereby accrues to their equity in the partnership (4:17). At the same time he stresses that this is not something he demands, expects, or needs, given his learning of the path of sufficiency through dependence on the ultimate supplier (4:11-13, 19), and that their contribution is most importantly "an aroma of fragrance, a sacrifice acceptable and pleasing to God" (4:18). Modern commentators have struggled over Paul's reticence to properly receive the Philippian assembly's contribution. But what seems to be most crucial for Paul is ensuring that the relationship between himself and the assembly not descend to that of an asymmetrical client-patron dependency dynamic, but that it be perceived as a reinvigorated "partnership."[75] And as a contrast to this relationship of mutual aid, Paul expresses in Philippians his disdain for those "whose minds are set on earthly things" and "whose god is their belly" (3:19-20), a common image for avarice and a consumptive lifestyle in the Roman world.

In the very same way, Paul carefully frames his relationship with his patron Philemon as that of being "brothers" (1:1, 7, 16, 20) and "partners" (1:6, 17). Practically, Paul is in the role of client in need, both because (as is most likely) Philemon sent his slave Onesimus to provide for Paul during his imprisonment (Phlm 13), and because Paul is asking even more of him, that he give Onesimus his full freedom so that he can be an

even more fruitful co-worker in the ministry (Phlm 8-21). And in this most delicate request to an actual patron, Paul reminds Philemon that he himself is indebted to Paul at another level—having to do with his very life —and that if there are any financial losses to be considered that they should in effect be charged to Paul's account (1:18-19). In this setting again, therefore, we find expressed the notion that the one who receives spiritual ministry should "partner" in return in concrete, material terms (Gal 6:6; 1 Cor 9:11; Rom 15:26-27).

Conclusion: Mutualism as a Survival Strategy and Visionary Project

Urban centres during the early Roman empire experienced remarkable affluence. But this affluence was very unequally distributed, with those displaying lavish lifestyles of conspicuous consumption living side by side with those experiencing abject poverty. The life of the urban poor of the early Roman empire, easily a majority of the urban population, was nothing but precarious.[76] As Justin Meggitt summarizes:

> The underdeveloped, pre-industrial economy of the Graeco-Roman world created enormous disparities of wealth, and within this inequitable, rigid system the non-élite of the cities lived brutal and frugal lives, characterized by struggle and impoverishment.[77]

Vertical support systems for aiding the working or non-working poor in Greco-Roman cities (whether from imperial or local governments, or from elite benefactors) were either non-existent or very limited in value, and horizontal interpersonal support networks were also of limited effect.[78] Survival strategies by the poor through direct action could also provide little security.[79]

It is in this context that Paul's economic mutualism must be understood, with its vision firmly based on his Judaic heritage and the ideals and practices of the earliest Jesus movement.[80] But while it can be understood as a survival strategy to meet very real need, it is also bound up and motivated by the vision of a redemptive process established in and through Lord Messiah Jesus—that is, it assumes a participationist, corporate, and eschatological Christology. Adherents of this Messianic polity are not just bound in "partnership" (communion) with their Lord,[81] but at the same time established in "partnership" with each other.[82] And that emergent mutualism in Christ that aims toward equality both signs and anticipates the redemption of the world.

subversive to "Jewish-Christian" sensibilities.

31. Paul pleads for the almost impossible. And ironically, that community of Judaic, Torah-observant believers with whom Paul sought rapprochement, was a hundred years later denounced and eventually excluded as heretics by the majority "great church" of Gentile believers.

32. Article 4 of *Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective* (Scottdale, PA, and Waterloo, ON: Herald Press, 1995) similarly distinguishes between the "living Word" and "the Word of God written."

Chapter 5

1. Plato, *Republic* 333a, 423e-424a, 449d-450c, 453a, 457a, 461e,-462c, 464a, 466c-d, 470e; Aristotle, *Politics* 1.1252a (cited in the epigram above).

2. Lawrence Welborn, "That There May Be Equality" (paper delivered at the SBL Annual Meeting, San Francisco, November 20, 2011).

3. See Justin Meggitt, *Paul, Poverty, and Survival* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1998); Todd Still and David Horrell, eds., *After the First Urban Christians: The Social-Scientific Study of Pauline Christianity Twenty-Five Years Later* (London: T & T Clark, 2009); Bruce Longenecker, *Remember the Poor: Paul, Poverty, and the Greco-Roman World* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010).

4. See Keith Nickle, *The Collection: A Study in Paul's Strategy* (London: SCM Press, 1966; Dieter Georgi, *Remembering the Poor: The History of Paul's Collection for Jerusalem* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1992); David Horrell, "Paul's Collection: Resources for a Materialist Theology," *Epworth Review* 22 (1995): 74-93; Meggitt, *Paul, Poverty, and Survival*, 155-61.

5. "Those distinguished as the pillars gave to me and Barnabas the right hand of partnership," Gal 2:9.

6. Paul says that they "did not add anything to me," Gal 2:6, perhaps in the sense of not demanding any concessions.

7. For a detailed discussion, see Longenecker, *Remember the Poor*, 157-206.

8. Brian J. Capper, "The Palestinian Cultural Context of Earliest Community of Goods," in *The Book of Acts in Its Palestinian Setting*, ed. R. Bauckham (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 323-56.

9. Cf. Paul's claim in Acts 24:17 to have delivered "alms for his nation/people" in general.

10. Cf. "collection for the saints," "to Jerusalem," 1 Cor 16:1; either "the poor among the saints in Jerusalem," or "the poor who are the saints in Jerusalem," Rom 15:26.

11. Cf. Rom 15:27: "[The Gentiles] owe it to [the poor of Jerusalem]—for if the Gentiles have partnered [come to share] in their [the Judeans'] spiritual blessings, they [in return] ought also to be of service to them in material things."

12. We also cannot be certain that measures toward a collection for the poor had ceased. See Georgi, *Remembering the Poor*, 43-46.

13. Thus, it may be that funds collected in Galatia (1 Cor 16:1; cf. Gal 6:6-10) were delivered directly to Judea, perhaps via Antioch, given Paul's admission that the donors for the fund he is delivering to Jerusalem are limited to Macedonia

and Greece (Rom 15:26). The reference to a donation from Antioch in which Paul figured (11:27-30), which cannot be accounted for in Paul's own itinerary of visits to Jerusalem, may reflect such a delivery.

14. Paul's concern for proper audit is evident in how the final delivery and completion of the fund will be "sealed" (that is, receipted; Rom 15:28), and in how its multiple administrators are confirmed as trustworthy and well-commended (cf. 1 Cor 16:3-4) such that there should be no innuendo of "blame" attached to it (2 Cor 8:18-23).

15. Josephus is careful to document how this privilege was granted during the early days of the Roman domination of Judea. See Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities* 14.213; 16.162, 166-67, 171-72. For further passages, see Nickle, *Collection*, 82-84.

16. Josephus, *Jewish War* 7.218. For discussion, see Nickle, *Collection*, 144-45.

17. On the temple tax and its administration, and as a possible model for Paul's collection, see Nickle, *Collection*, 74-93.

18. Paul's extensive use of Isaiah in Romans confirms this, in connection with the eschatological perspective of Rom 11:25-32 and 15:7-32. For key passages in Isaiah that Paul must have drawn upon, see Isa 2:1-4; 11:12 (cited in Rom 15:12); 24:14-16; 25:6-10; 56:1-8; 59:20-21 (cited in Rom 11:25-26); 60:3-18 (esp. 60:3, 5); 61:5-6, 11; 62:10; 66:12-23.

19. See Nickle, *Collection*, 111-33; Horrell, "Paul's Collection," 74-93.

20. The Book of Acts also presents Paul as centrally involved in bringing charitable relief funds for Judea when he resided in Antioch (Acts 11:27-30), which would date to ca. 44 CE. But this visit to Jerusalem does not fit into Paul's own review of his Jerusalem visits in Gal 1–2.

21. For "fruit" as "harvest, profit, or returns" pertaining to charitable giving, see also Phil 4:17.

22. For this phrase, see also 2 Cor 11:9; cf. the language of supplying "need" (*chreia*), Rom 12:13; 1 Cor 12:21, 24; Phil 2:25; 4:16, 19.

23. For the "generosity" of a donor, see also Rom 12:8.

24. For the same word, see also Gal 2:10.

25. For the "cheerfulness" of the one showing mercy, see also Rom 12:8.

26. For the flip side of this, that is, the attempt to prove virtue through sacrificial giving but without love, see 1 Cor 13:3. For calls to "love" as implying some form of mutual aid, see e.g. Rom 12:9-16; 13:8-10; 1 Thess 4:9-12.

27. Cf. Paul's prayer that the Philippians continue to exhibit the "fruit [harvest] of righteousness-justice, the fruit that emerges through Messiah Jesus" (Phil 1:11), where righteousness-justice is either the fruit itself, or the motivating ground of the fruit.

28. For a similar assumption of reciprocity, see 1 Cor 9:11: "If we have sown spiritual good among you, is it too much if we reap your material benefits?"

29. For a close correlation between the ideas, language and assumptions of Paul's partnership with the Philippians, see Phil 1:5, 7; 2:25; 4:10-20.

30. Cf. the call to "love" not only "one another," but also "all people" in 1 Thess 3:12. For a broader horizon, see also Rom 12:13; Gal 6:10. On the question of attending to the poor beyond the Messianic community, see Longenecker, *Remember the Poor*, 291-94.

31. For the image of sowing for charitable giving, see 2 Cor 9:6-15; Rom

15:28; Gal 6:7-8. For the "harvest of righteousness-justice," see also Phil 1:11.

32. The same word is used to refer to his concern that the fund will be "acceptable" (*euprosdektos*) to the targeted recipients; Rom 15:31.

33. The notion of loving God with one's "strength" or "power" (Deut 6:4-6) was proverbial in Early Judaism for giving financial assistance to the poor, and central to the practice of community of goods in the Rule of the Community (1QS) of the Qumranic Essenes. See Gordon Zerbe, "Economic Justice and Non-retaliation in the Dead Sea Scrolls: Implications for New Testament Interpretation," in *Jesus and the Origins of Christianity*, ed. J. H. Charlesworth (The Bible and the Dead Sea Scrolls, Vol. 3; Waco: Baylor University Press, 2006), 319-355.

34. Similar is the language of Acts 11:27-30.

35. Paul similarly emphasizes that the contribution that enacted a partnership between himself and the Philippians emphatically involved "all" in the assembly (Phil 1:1, 4, 3, 7, 8).

36. This phrase has been the subject of considerable debate, whether it refers to the collection's measure, purpose, or ground. Georgi, for instance, argues that it refers to a divine force (following Philo) as the ground of the endeavor, not to notions of Greek judicial equality; Georgi, *Remembering the Poor*, 84-93. Given the parallel with 2 Cor 8:14, and the implications of citation of Exod 16:18 in 8:15, however, it seems best to understand it to refer primarily to the goal and motivating framework of the collection. See Welborn, "That There May be Equality."

37. "General" or "generalized reciprocity" in cultural anthropology is the notion that the exchange of goods and services need not be accounted with any exact value, since the give and take of mutual assistance will balance out over time. By contrast "balanced" or "symmetrical reciprocity" assumes a fair and tangible return, at a specified amount, time, and place. See Marshall Sahlins, *Stone Age Economics* (Chicago: Aldine-Atherton, 1972).

38. While the phrase "in the now time" might conjure up a particular notion of Messianic time (cf. the other uses of the phrase in Rom 3:26; 8:18; 11:5), here the phrase seems to stress the opportunity of the present moment, in contrast with what "might become" (*genētai*) in the near or longer future. For an emphasis on the assumption of mutual interdependence in this text, see Meggitt, *Paul, Poverty, and Survival*, 158-59.

39. The verb *pleonazō* is regularly used in Greek literature for the "amassing" of wealth, or for "getting ahead" of the next person, e.g. Plato, *Republic* 344a, 349b-350c, 359c, 362b, 365d, 565a, 574a, 586b.

40. E.g. NRSV, TNIV; cf. NAB, "had no excess" and "had no lack"; KJV, "had nothing over" and "had no lack."

41. Philo, *Who is the Heir* 141-236, esp. 191. On Philo's discussion on *isotēs*, see Georgi, *Remembering the Poor*, 85-86, 138-40. For a rejoinder to Georgi, see Welborn, "That There May be Equality."

42. See Jacob Cherian, "Paul, Poverty, and Equality: A Plutocritical Reading of 2 Corinthians 8:1-15" (paper presented at the SBL Annual Meeting, Paul and Politics Group, San Diego, November 19, 2007, based on his dissertation, "Toward a Commonwealth of Grace: A Plutocritical Reading of Grace and Equality in

Second Corinthians 8:1-15" [Princeton Theological Seminary, 2007]).

43. J. K. Chow, "Patronage in Roman Corinth," in *Paul and Empire: Religion and Paul in Roman Imperial* Society, ed. R. Horsley (Harrisburg: Trinity Press International, 1997), 105-125.

44. "God is able to make every grace (*charis*, blessing of generosity) overflow in/among you, so that, as you have every (self)sufficiency always in everything, you may overflow in every good work." Cf. Phil 4:10-20.

45. Cf. Phil 4:10-20. Similar, therefore, is the exhortation in the Gospels on letting go of anxiety, such that needs are taken care of through new relations of mutuality as people commit to the framework of the kingdom (Matt 6:25-34; Luke 12:22-31).

46. See Longenecker, *Remember the Poor*, 135-56.

47. Gerd Theissen, *The Social Setting of Pauline Christianity: Essays on Corinth*, ed. and trans. John H. Schütz (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1982).

48. On "greed" as a major vice, see also Rom 1:29; Col 3:5; Eph 5:5.

49. The counterpart of *philadephia* (Rom 12:10) is *philoxenia* (love of the stranger, usually translated "hospitality," Rom 12:13); both have practical, economic connotations.

50. The play on the *phil-* (love) compound words is lost in translation.

51. NRSV: "mind your own affairs."

52. NRSV: "be dependent on no one."

53. Paul's text implies an interest in avoiding the patronage of just a few key people: "night and day I worked in order not to burden certain of you."

54. NRSV: help the weak. Paul's carefully chosen verb (*antechō*) has the strong connotation of "clinging to, holding close" someone, that is, being in close relationship with them, not that of "helping" per se.

55. Paul might be referring to those engaged in some sort of civic agitation, not just those who are "idle" (the usual translation).

56. For the same phrase, see Gal 6:9, where a reference to charitable ministries is also evident (Gal 6:6-10).

57. Cf. the economic aspect of eschatological themes in 1 Cor 7:29-31.

58. It is not impossible that this divide also reflected economic issues. The terms "weak" and "strong" are used by Paul to signal economic conditions (1 Cor 1:27-28). In Romans "the weak" are clearly those of a Judaic background, and thus among those who were expelled from Rome (along with all Jews) in 48 CE, having returned to Rome soon after the ending of the expulsion order in 54 CE, only a short while prior to Paul's letter (ca. 56 CE). We can assume that their financial assets were relatively diminished in comparison to the Gentile wing of the church in regard to any capital assets or livelihood from income during the same period.

59. Literally, "the one who imparts a share" (*metadidōmi*). "In generosity" recalls the language of 2 Cor 8:2; 9:11, 13.

60. "Acts of mercy" are especially measures of assistance to the poor in the Hebrew-Judaic tradition. "In cheerfulness" recalls 2 Cor 9:7.

61. Lit. do not be high in your thinking. It is unclear whether this negates thinking high in aspiration, in orientation (giving too much regard for those things that are high), or in character (e.g. NRSV: "do not be haughty").

62. Either in the sense of "do not claim to be wiser than you are" (NRSV), or in the sense of "regarding oneself to be of a status or rank beyond what is appropriate."

63. For an interpretation along these lines, see also Longenecker, *Remember the Poor*, 207-19.

64. E.g. using the language of "weight," 2 Cor 11:9; 12:13, 14, 16; 1 Thess 2:9; 2 Thess 3:8; cf. 1 Tim 5:16. Cf. 2 Cor 8:13, using the language of "pressure."

65. This phrase strikingly echoes Romans 8:28, with its synergistic involvement of "those who love God," alongside God (or the Spirit), in the "work toward the good" for the whole universe, precisely in the context of distress.

66. For the extension of the charitable work of love beyond the community, see also 2 Cor 9:13; 1 Thess 3:12.

67. In 1 Tim 6:6-10 the author, writing in Paul's name, encourages the lifestyle of "contentment" (*autarkeia*, [self]sufficiency; cf. Phil 4:11; 2 Cor 9:8) as opposed to acquisitiveness (and the desire to be rich), noting that "the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil" (6:9). The rich are advised not to be haughty, but to do good with their wealth through generosity (1 Tim 6:17-19). And in 2 Tim 3:2 the author warns of "lovers of money" in a list of immoral persons.

68. 1 Thess 2:4-11; 2 Thess 3:6-13; 1 Cor 4:12; 9:1-27; 2 Cor 11:7-12; 12:13-18. Cf. Acts 20:33-35. In 1 Thess 2:8, Paul refers to the "donating" of himself with the same verb to denote the "donor" in Rom 12:8.

69. Similarly Acts 20:33-35.

70. Similarly Phil 2:3-11; 3:4-21; 4:11-17; 1 Cor 4:8-13; 2 Cor 4:3-12; 6:3-10; 11:7-11, 23-30; 12:7-10.

71. The NRSV ("I do it all for the sake of the gospel, so that I may share in its blessings") is not quite to the point; Paul says more literally "I do all things for the sake of the gospel, in that I am its co-partner (*sygkoinōnos*, in effect, "shareholder"). See Gordon Zerbe, "Shareholders of the gospel," *The Marketplace* 30/5 (September/October 2000): 14.

72. Here, *logos* carries the sense of a "reckoning, computation, accounting" (cf. *logeia*, collection, 1 Cor 16:1; *eulogia*, good contribution, 2 Cor 9:5; from *logizomai*, to reckon, count); *logos* in this sense was regularly used for both public treasury accounts and private business accounts; see LSJ.

73. Nevertheless, Paul also says that he received support from multiple "assemblies" in Macedonia when he was in Corinth, and that his needs were met by the "brothers who came from Macedonia" (2 Cor 11:8-9). While either the Philippian's uniqueness or the multiplicity named in 2 Col 11 can be attributed to rhetorical excess, it is also possible that in Philippi things were formalized as a "partnership" in a way that was unique.

74. For *leitourgia* as obligatory in the context of "partnership," see also Rom 15:26-27.

75. See my forthcoming *Philippians* (Believers Church Bible Commentary; Herald Press).

76. See P. Garnsey, *Famine and Food-Supply in the Greco-Roman World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988); M. Atkins and R. Osborne, eds., *Poverty in the Roman World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006). For a survey of recent treatments, see Meggitt, *Paul, Poverty, and Survival*,

41-73. For a review of recent attempts at a "poverty scale" for the early Roman empire, see Longenecker, *Remember the Poor*, 36-59, 317-332.

77. Meggitt, *Paul, Poverty, and Survival*, 73.

78. For a more pessimistic conclusion, see Meggitt, *Paul, Poverty, and Survival*, 164-71; for a more optimistic, but still measured appraisal, see Longenecker, *Remember the Poor*, 60-107.

79. These could involve "the removal of dependants from the household (through exposure, ejection, or sale), emigration, begging, crime or asset stripping (which could take a number of forms, from the sale of clothing, household utensils, furniture, stock or tools)." See Meggitt, *Paul, Poverty, and Survival*, 165-66.

80. See Longenecker, *Remember the Poor*, 108-31.

81. 1 Cor 1:9; 9:23; 10:16-18; 2 Cor 1:7; 13:13; Phil 2:1; 3:10. Also crucial here would be Paul's "in Christ" and "body of Christ" ecclesiology (e.g. 1 Cor 6:15; 10:16; 12:27; Rom 12:4-6), tied to a corporate pneumatology (e.g. 1 Cor 12:13).

82. Rom 12:13; 15:27; 2 Cor 8:4, 23; 9:13; Gal 2:9-10; 6:6; Phil 1:5, 7; 4:14-15; Phlm 17; Gal 6:6.

Chapter 6

1. Neil Elliott, *Liberating Paul: The Justice of God and the Politics of the Apostle* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1994), 31-52; Justin Meggitt, *Paul, Poverty and Survival* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1998), Appendix 1, Paul's Social Conservatism: Slavery, Women and the State, 181-88.

2. On Paul's approach to the ruling authorities, and his rhetoric of submission or subordination to the political rulers, see Gordon Zerbe, "The Politics of Paul: His Supposed Social Conservatism and the Impact of Postcolonial Readings," *Conrad Grebel Review* 21/1 (Winter 2003): 82-103. Reprinted with minor revisions in *The Colonized Paul: Paul through Postcolonial Eyes*, ed. C. Stanley (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2011), 62-73.

3. For a review of research on slavery in Paul, and in the Greco-Roman world, see John Byron, *Recent Research on Paul and Slavery* (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2008). For a helpful survey, see S. Scott Bartchy, "Slavery (New Testament)," *ABD* I, 65-73.

4. Catherine Hezser, *Jewish Slavery in Antiquity* (Oxford/New York: Oxford University Press, 2005).

5. Social, political, and legal status in the cities of the empire was also graded according to whether one enjoyed citizen status as a Roman, Latin, Greek (e.g. citizens of city-states with varying levels of status), or finally any other conquered city or people (e.g. Judeans, Egyptians, etc.). Slaves owned by Romans could, upon manumission, become Roman freedpersons, and their children, common Roman citizens.

6. Strabo, *Geography* 14.5.2. See J. D. Crossan and J. L. Reed, *In Search of Paul: How Jesus's Apostle Opposed Rome's Empire with God's Kingdom* (New York: HarperSanFrancisco, 2004), 41-47.