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*The Theo-Logic of Paul's Ethics in Recent Research: Crosscurrents and Future Directions in Scholarship in the Last Forty Years**

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ABSTRACT

This essay presents a survey of scholarship on the theology or logic (hence 'theo-logic') of Paul's ethics in the last forty years. Exploring the work of such prominent Pauline scholars as V.P. Furnish, P. Sampley, W. Schrager, R. Hays and D. Horrell, attention will be drawn to their contributions as well as future desiderata in this field. An important conclusion drawn from this study is that Furnish's work is a milestone in Paul's theo-logic of ethics especially with regard to eschatological, Christological and sociological dimensions, and subsequent Pauline interpreters have largely expanded on his work. Such elaborations, though, have often been necessary and welcome as new trends in scholarship have yielded great insights not possible in the late 1960s when Furnish penned his tome.

Keywords: apostle Paul, ethics, hermeneutics, V.P. Furnish

For much of the history of western New Testament scholarship, ethics has been a neglected topic. It was not until the last four decades or so that we began to see treatments of the New Testament, let alone the apostle Paul. But, probably beginning in the 1960s, the tides started to turn and now, in fact, libraries have swelled with engagements in this subject (see recent

* I wish to dedicate this article to Stephen C. Barton, mentor and friend, who has taught me much about biblical ethics in theory and in practice. I also wish to acknowledge both Prof. David Horrell and Dr Richard Hays for helpful conversations that aided in the explication of their work.

works on New Testament ethics by H.-D. Wendland [1970], W. Schrage [1982; ET 1988], A. Verhey [1984], S. Shulz [1987], E. Lohse [1988; ET 1991], R. Hays [1996] and F. Matera [1996]). In Pauline studies, as well, the landmark work of V.P. Furnish (1968) signalled a new interest in the inviolable relationship between Paul's theology and his ethical commitments. Beginning with Furnish's work, this article seeks to explore how recent scholarship on Paul has dealt with the question of the theology or logic (hence 'theo-logic') of the apostle's attitude towards Christian behaviour. Because we will be dealing with such a broad topic, our focus will only be on the rationale behind Paul's ethics and not other issues like Paul's use of traditional material or his perspective on practical ethical matters (such as sexual ethics or politics), though an occasional interaction with these matters will be necessary as they relate to the main topic at hand.

First we will briefly consider the state of interest and the reasons for disinterest in this subject especially in the early twentieth century. Secondly we will survey the contributions to the topic made by scholars beginning with Furnish, and also including P. Sampley (1991), W. Schrage (1988), R. Hays (1996) and D. Horrell (2005). These particular scholars were chosen because they have all spent a major part of their careers focused on Paul, and the texts we will survey have figured prominently in specifically Pauline research. Thirdly we will summarize and analyse how these scholars have converged and diverged on various issues. Finally, we will consider how a host of other contemporary scholars have taken some of these main issues in new directions, especially with a view towards profitable trends, the application of interesting literary and social-scientific models and theories, and also areas in need of future study. In many ways, this article is a reflection on what has been accomplished in the investigation of Paul's moral logic, as well as a stimulus for further research in still un- or under-explored areas.

*Early Twentieth-Century Neglect and Disinterest in
Paul's Theo-logical Ethics (Dibelius, Dodd and Bultmann)*

If you were to hand Frank Matera's 1996 *New Testament Ethics*—a modern example of a theologically-oriented, exegetically-centred, synthetic approach to ethics—to a New Testament scholar in the 1920s or 1930s, he or she probably would have been perplexed by many of the methodological and theological assumptions in the book. So much has changed in the last three-quarters of a century or so that many of the prevailing critical stances against constructing a 'theology' or ideology of the New Testament, or of

Paul, are quite easily dismissed or ignored. Nevertheless, a brief highlight of prominent attitudes towards Paul and his ethics in the early twentieth century will aid in understanding the environment out of which newer interests have grown and against which they have reacted.

One scholar who would have been particularly concerned with attempting to ascertain the theo-logic of Paul's ethics is Martin Dibelius (see 1928) who felt that looking for a determinative moral rationale was futile. Dibelius held that Paul was so driven by an imminent expectation of the *Parousia* that he never intended to develop a distinctly Christian basis for ethics in his churches. As hopes for the return of Christ waned, the Church naturally co-opted the ethical traditions of its Jewish and Hellenistic neighbours and predecessors. Dibelius was not just interested in form-critical issues in Paul's letters, but also genre-critical problems. Dibelius classified certain portions of epistolary texts as 'paraenesis' and concluded that they 'have nothing to do with the theoretical foundation of the ethics of the Apostle, and very little with other ideas peculiar to him' (1934: 239; a concentrated refutation of Dibelius' work, especially with a view towards Galatians, can be found in Barclay 1988). The conclusion arising from such a theory is that Paul's moral exhortation is 'traditional', that is, borrowed and uncontextualized, and has no relationship to the theology of the letters.

Perhaps less radical, but certainly still dichotomous in orientation, is C.H. Dodd who kept Paul's theology (kerygma) distinct from his ethics (didache) (see 1944: 7-8). Paul's letters were reflective of his instruction to Christians, not preaching to unbelievers, and so were more catechetical in nature. Though Dodd did admit that it was not possible to comprehend the ethical component of Christian discourse without the 'religious content' and vice versa (1963: 3-4), he did continue to maintain a clear distinction between the theological part of the Pauline letter and the hortatory part (1963: 5).

This theology/ethics divide found a new way of being understood in the work of Rudolph Bultmann who put the matter in terms of indicative and imperative (see especially 1967: 36-54). Following from his existential interpretation of theology, the indicative leads to the imperative, and, somehow, the indicative is only really actualized in the imperative. M. Parsons aptly summarizes Bultmann's particular view this way: 'For [Bultmann]...the indicative and imperative have become one in the moment of decision' (1995: 222).

The groundwork for refuting Dibelius's source-critical and eschatological arguments and Dodd's form-critical concerns was laid by Bultmann who was able to blur the lines between theology and ethics, though his

existential interpretation was not satisfactory to many. Other factors led to new interest in the New Testament and Paul's theo-logic of ethics. Some scholars became sceptical about reducing ethical teachings down to their 'sources'. Others felt that, in terms of form-criticism, Paul's letters could not be neatly divided into theology and exhortation. Finally, we may detect a trend historically and ideologically that was driven by post-war theology (such as neo-orthodoxy) that showed new interest in the theological foundations for ethics that would demonstrate the moral demands of Scripture from God and not humanistic social readings of the text. This short sampling of earlier attitudes towards Paul's ethics demonstrates a number of factors that may have provided fertile ground for the milestone work of V.P. Furnish.

Four Modern Works on Paul's Theo-Logical Ethics

V.P. Furnish

V.P. Furnish, Emeritus Distinguished Professor of New Testament at Southern Methodist University, set out, in the late 1960s, to determine 'the essential character and structure of the Pauline ethic' (1968: 8). This required an investigation into the structure of his ethical thought and its foundations. He later puts the question, 'What is regarded as the touchstone of his ethic?' (1968: 11). One senses Furnish's conclusion even from the introduction as he makes quite clear that Paul's theology and ethics are so closely related that one struggles, even heuristically, to determine how the former influences the latter. Indeed, Furnish eventually argues that even Paul's gospel proclamation was not 'theological' if that meant that it wasn't also ethically-driven. In terms of the *sources* for Paul's ethics, Furnish surveys a number of possible wells from which Paul probably drank (early Jewish literature, Hellenistic moral philosophy, Rabbinic thought), though he, unsurprisingly, found that only two seemed to be heavily impactful: the Old Testament and early Christian materials. But, regarding the former, Furnish does conclude that Paul neither interpreted the Old Testament commands casuistically nor did he elaborate on them (1968: 33-34). Thus, 'There is no evidence which indicates that the apostle regarded it as in any sense a source book for detailed moral instruction or even a manual of ethical norms' (1968: 33).

But, Furnish admits, Paul did apply Old Testament moral lessons with a view towards the edification of his churches. And Paul could look back on the history of Israel, in the light of Christ, and see moral truths especially in the narratives of Scripture (1968: 43). Furnish also recognizes that some

Hellenistic Jewish literature seems to come close to Paul's paraenetic style and ethos (such as the Wisdom of Solomon and Pseudo-Phocylides). When all is considered, Furnish is intent on arguing for the complexity of influences on Paul, both Hellenistic and Jewish. He writes, 'A one-sided decision about Paul's background, whether in favour of his Jewish or Greek heritage, is bound to result in a one-sided interpretation of his ethic. This ethic can be brought into sharper focus when it is acknowledged that Paul was a Jew of the Diaspora—of the Hellenistic world' (1968: 50). Furnish, perhaps tired of the source-critical approaches of his predecessors, ultimately argues that Paul's ethics must be appreciated in terms of his revelation of Christ and the new reality following the death and resurrection of the Messiah. So, 'He writes always as an apostle, as a man in Christ. The structure of the Pauline ethic is not yet laid bare when only its several specific "sources" are uncovered' (1968: 66).

In a chapter on the nature of Paul's exhortations, Furnish points out that the ethical instruction he supplies is always 'concrete and relevant'—he is ministering to specific people in particular circumstances. Paul is not a moral philosopher. But there is a tension in this concreteness, for Paul does not just limit ethics to specific behaviours and particular areas of one's life. Paul's exhortations are also 'inclusive' insofar as they apply to all aspects of one's life (inner and outer, present actions and future actions). It is critical for Furnish, then, to observe how relational Paul's ethical language is—as in his use of familial metaphors—instructing as father to his spiritual children, encouraging as a brother in the Lord.

Furnish elaborates on the manner of Paul's ethics as observable in the variety of expression of his ethical demands. Aside from direct appeal, Paul uses stories to encourage reflection on moral problems. This Furnish calls 'hortatory narrative' (1968: 95). Also, Paul can draw out important ethical implications based on declarative statements: the 'imperative indicative' (1968: 97). Such variations demonstrate the organic nature of Paul's ethics.

When Furnish finally comes to the matter of the logic of Paul's ethics, he expresses it in a tri-fold manner. It involves 'a compound of Paul's *theological*, *eschatological*, and *Christological* convictions' (1968: 213). Furnish dwells most on the eschatological component. He sees Paul's eschatology as the 'heuristic key to Pauline theology' (1968: 114) which has far-reaching implications for his ethics. Though Furnish is reluctant to use the word 'apocalyptic', it seems more appropriate for his reasoning as he finds central to this eschatology the presence of enslaving powers and the hegemonic domination of flesh and sin in the present evil age.

Paul believes man's bondage to the powers of this age is so complete and complex that only the transcendent power of God can suffice to effect his release. In the death and resurrection of Christ this redeeming, reconciling, rightwising power of the coming age has already broken in and through the Spirit is even now at work for man's salvation... By his obedience unto death the 'Lord of glory' enters into the enemy kingdom of sin and death, and by his resurrection from the dead shows that those alien rulers are ultimately subject to God (1968: 180).

Furnish is attentive, then, to the already/not yet nature of Paul's eschatology. The ages are, as it were, overlapping such that God's power is already effective in Christ. But, because the new age has not come in its fullness, 'the powers of this age stand over against the power of God' (1968: 135). The decision to obey the truth of the gospel of Christ, then, is an act of allegiance to the power and authority of Christ: 'The total claim which Christ's lordship lays upon the believer is a basic and pervasive element of Pauline thought' (1968: 169).

Furnish explicates this in terms of participation; as the believer participates in the death and resurrection of Christ, 'Christ's death is the actualization of God's power and puts an effective check on sin's tyrannical hold' (1968: 172). This perspective, of allegiance and union, is built on the assumption that Christian faith enacts a change of lordship: from slavery to sin to slavery to the Lord. Thus, Christian ethics is not the actions of a totally 'free' and independent human, but an act of obedience to a good and powerful lord. Furnish explains, 'In [Paul's] view man does not live apart from commitments; his life is never finally his "own," and so the question only is *to whom* it should be given, *to whom* it should belong: to sin or to righteousness' (1968: 177; original emphasis). Furnish, thus, describes participation as 'belonging' (see 1968: 178-79). This can explain the inherent link in Paul between suffering and ethics. Both demonstrate where one's allegiances lie: 'Paul regards faith's obedience as a radical surrender of one's self to God, a giving of one's self to belong to him as a slave belongs to his master' (1968: 204).

This leads Furnish to infer that Paul's ethic is more about obedience or imitation than determining 'right' and 'wrong' as if from a rule book. The believer, for Paul, must discern the will of God which is 'ever newly sought and found' (1968: 188-89). Of course the believer is not left to his own conscience. The Holy Spirit acts as a 'guide for the believer in practical matters of conduct' (1968: 231). Indeed, the community of faith protects, nurtures and aids believers as well (1968: 233).

The second and third components of Paul's ethic (theological and Christological) are naturally intertwined with Paul's eschatology. The 'theological' element is a conviction that humanity is completely dependent on God's sovereign power and owes service and obedience to him alone. The christological part centres on the Christ event, his paradigmatic and cataclysmic act of obedience to God such that others can participate 'in his body' and experience freedom from sin's power in order to come under the 'dominion of God' (1968: 218). Christ also becomes a model (see Phil. 2.5-11) of obedience and proper service to God.

In every page Furnish's analysis is marked by careful exegesis of Pauline texts and balanced, fair conclusions. The approach to Paul's ethics is chary and nuanced. He rightly concludes that 'ethics' is not the ideal term for how Paul understands appropriate human behaviour in Christ. For Furnish, Paul is better understood when the eschatological (or apocalyptic) dimensions of human existence are understood. Though God has conquered the evil powers of sin and death through Christ, they still vie for human enslavement. God, says Furnish, is the only one worthy of worship, and human obedience is expected by him and empowered by Christ through the Spirit. The already/not yet dimensions of the overlapping of the ages mean that believers have new empowerment, but also unrelenting foes that seek to delude, confuse, distort and sully the theological imaginations of God's holy people. One is most prepared to follow God when he or she understands what it means to belong to Christ (cf. a similar approach to Pauline ethics/Christian life carried out by G.E. Ladd only a handful of years after Furnish; 1993 [1st edition 1974]: 558-72). Furnish's lasting contributions to the matter of Pauline ethics seems to include his attention given to eschatological aspects of his framework and also the relational dimension—the new social orientation that humans have with God and also between one another.

W. Schrage (1982)

Well over a decade after Furnish's tome was written, Wolfgang Schrage, Emeritus Professor of New Testament at University of Bonn, penned his *Ethik des Neuen Testaments* (1982; ET 1988). Though the book technically spans the entire New Testament, it takes a major interest in Paul's ethics (1988: 163-240) and is especially concerned with 'how life was lived in the earliest Christian communities' (1988: 1). In terms of a 'theological ethic' of the New Testament, Schrage is focused on 'the foundations, the support for, and the criteria and principles for [their] way of acting and living' (1988: 1). Schrage, first of all, considers the ethic of the New Testa-

ment to be dynamic and not static insofar as there is no systematic rulebook of conduct. Rather, the New Testament demonstrates an organic ethic that contains a dialectic of 'freedom and constraint' (1988: 10). Indeed, much of the moral exhortation was focused on issues that came up in the life of the church and thus we may refer to this as 'contextual ethics' (1988: 5).

In terms of the central theological foundations for New Testament ethics, Schrage seems to support Furnish's first two core concepts: eschatology and Christology. As for the latter of these two, Schrage is keen on demonstrating that the basis for New Testament ethics is 'God's saving act in Jesus Christ' (1988: 8). Also, concerning the foundations for ethics, he discusses the critical 'indicative-imperative' issue. He draws special attention to the paradoxical situation in Paul where 'statements with the same content are sometimes formulated in the indicative, sometimes in the imperative... [H]ow can exactly the same statements appear in both indicative and imperative?' (1988: 168). He rejects Bultmann's appeal to Pindar's pithy statement: 'Become what you are'. Rather, Schrage reads these statements in terms of Christ's kingship and power. He glosses Paul's indicative-imperative conception as follows: 'Stay with the Lord who has been given you and in his kingdom' (1988: 171). Therefore, 'When the imperative is not heard, the indicative has no power' (1988: 171). Schrage's indicative, then, is thoroughly Christocentric as 'The death of Christ establishes the new life and the obedience of Christians, not just as an ethical duty, but as a reality' (1988: 172). But his appeal to Paul's Christology goes further than grounding his ethics; it is also the primary model for believers such that the 'saving way of Christ' is, for Paul's ethics, its 'guiding principle' (1988: 173).

Relating to Furnish's 'belonging' motif of participation, Schrage describes Paul's ethic vis-à-vis his sacramental theology where 'a sacrament is nothing other than the present reality of the Christ event' (1988: 174). Being incorporated in Christ through baptism frees the believer from the grip of sin. But as the believer dies to sin through baptism, he or she still awaits resurrection. The 'newness of life' (Rom. 6.4) 'manifests itself in their way of life' (1988: 175). Schrage subsumes Paul's ethical pneumatology under the heading of Christology because the Spirit is the 'Spirit of Christ' (Rom. 8.9; see 1988: 177). This Spirit is the empowering force behind and the principle of new life: 'it rules Christians in their very core' (1988: 178). Schrage does not presume that the Spirit's work is irresistible; each person must cooperate and actively participate in the action of moral discernment (1988: 179).

Schrage also dwells on the eschatological nature of living ethically. Here he underscores the urgency of living in the 'time remaining' as systems

and patterns of worldly power and authority are fading (see 1988: 182), especially in light of the *Parousia*: 'The perspective of the ultimate makes all else penultimate at best' (1988: 182). Despite the temporary nature of earthly existence, Schrage understood Paul to outline a number of key principles for living appropriately. He maintained love as the highest standard of morality (see Gal. 2.20): 'self-sacrificial love for others is not only the heart and core but also the fundamental criterion of Pauline ethics' (1988: 212). Paul also was very much interested in the role of the body (*sōma*) in ethical behaviour. Schrage understood Paul's theological conception of the body as the 'human being in their relationship to the world' (1988: 218). Unlike Bultmann, though, Schrage saw the *physical body* as a primary referent of the term (see 1988: 218). Therefore, 'Because the body is the primary place where Christ exercises dominion in the reality of the present world, it is here or nowhere that Christians encounter their Lord' (1988: 219).

Schrage owes a clear debt to Furnish's work in many ways, whether he was completely conscious of it or not. Indeed, he offers very little that is new in terms of eschatology or the problem of the indicative-imperative relationship. Nevertheless, his sacramental-ethical emphasis teases out the importance of participation-ontology in Paul and he also offers a fuller understanding of how the Spirit aids the Christian in moral reasoning.

J.P. Sampley (1991)

More than two decades after V.P. Furnish's *Theology and Ethics in Paul*, another Methodist scholar, J.P. Sampley, set out to write a book on Paul's moral logic (1991). This much shorter treatment (120 pp., compared to Furnish's 300+ pp.) has a clear focus as evidenced in the title, where *Walking Between the Times* refers to life lived in the period of theological history that is marked by the overlapping of the ages. Clearly Sampley shares an eschatological focus with Furnish, but he articulates its significance quite differently. Whereas Furnish seems to focus on apocalyptic eschatology—the destruction of hostile powers and the sole claim of God for possession of his people—Sampley's perspective takes more interest in chronological eschatology (or pure eschatology) where Paul's symbolic universe is marked by the two time-specific events: the death/resurrection of Christ and his return. Thus, 'Paul is concerned with how believers behave, or walk, between these two times' (1991: v).

Within this eschatological framework, Sampley is interested in the question of *how* Paul approached moral issues and 'what resources [he thought] were available to those who were in Christ' (1991: v). Of course, like Furnish, Sampley's view is *theocentric* in the sense that Paul is always con-

cerned with 'how the justified person is to discern what it means to walk properly before God' (1991: 3). Coming back to the issue of Paul's symbolic universe, Sampley reinforces the important social-scientific insight that how groups construct their 'thought world' affects how they behave. In that sense, it is clear that *Weltbild* affects *Weltanschauung* which drives behaviour. So, 'I presume that no genuine understanding of Paul's moral reasoning can be gotten to without seeing it consistently planted in the heart of Paul's symbolic universe' (1991: 2).

Sampley, as already noted, delineates the boundaries of this universe temporally in terms of two events. The first one, the Christ-event, is 'the primary reference point of Paul's thought world' (1991: 7). It is, as it were, a hermeneutical lens to re-conceive past, present and future. Regarding the past, Christ has enabled a new freedom from sin, law and death. But, in the between-times, there is still the threat of sin's deception. '[Paul] thinks of sin as if it were a power stalking about looking for a beachhead... from which to launch a campaign to take over someone's life' (1991: 13). Because of the Christ event, though, sin is weak and believers are empowered to overcome. Thus, Sampley points to 'gratitude' as a major factor concerning why believers do what they do morally. But there is a second factor: 'anticipation' of the return of Christ and 'the fullness of glory that will be granted when one's stewardship is certified at the judgment day' (1991: 101). In many ways, then, ethical behaviour is not a contemplation of how to do good as the final goal, but it is a response to God: 'The central issue in the moral life is whether one lives appropriately with regard to what God has done and is doing in one's life and among the faithful community' (1991: 104).

To help illuminate the significance of Paul's eschatological perspective, Sampley compares and contrasts the Apostle's writings to apocalyptic literature. Paul agrees with Jewish apocalypticists that the present age is beset by evil and that God must intervene. He also agrees that suffering is a mark of the times for the faithful and that God's true people must remain patient and steadfast knowing that God will judge the wicked and vindicate his faithful (1991: 10). Where Paul would diverge from traditional Jewish apocalypticism is in terms of how Christ has effected a change in the world where the new aeon 'has begun to break into the middle of the old aeon in a decisive way in Jesus Christ's death and resurrection' (1991: 10). Sin's power has been broken and thus 'God's redemptive purposes gained a beachhead' (1991: 10).

Sampley also focuses on the category of participation in Christ: 'Paul thinks of believers' relationship with Christ in terms of solidarity with,

participation in, or belonging to Christ' (1991: 12). Being 'in Christ' is 'the locus of new life, the space made possible by God's grace' (1991: 39). As a way of expressing the importance of identification with Christ in the between-times, Sampley draws attention to the Lord's Supper which 'marks the boundaries within which believers live' as they celebrate his death (past) until he comes (future).

Though Sampley is more focused on the chronological eschatology of Paul (and the believer's 'conformity' to the new age), he obviously acknowledges the apocalyptic agon themes that Furnish is so interested in. For Sampley, then, slavery/servitude is inevitable: 'all humans are slaves of some power or force external to themselves... Life without some master, lord, or authority is really unthinkable in Paul's time' (1991: 32). This realization impels the believer to actively submit to God in obedience.

When addressing the process of moral reasoning, Sampley, like many others, admits that Paul is not interested in a casuistic approach to ethics. Paul's approach is contextual, relational, and requires discernment. Believers do have certain resources in their pursuit of moral obedience to God. First, Sampley points to the community as 'the primary context for thinking about believers' (1991: 37) as it is 'the matrix within which individual lives of faith are nurtured and maintained' (1991: 37; see p. 43). In decision-making, Paul always advocates those decisions that benefit the group, even if it means inconvenience or difficulty for the individual. The individual must go with what is best for the community. Sampley also points out the resources of the Holy Spirit which reckons proper behaviour. The relationship between Spirit and community is underscored by the importance of spiritual gifts. In particular, Sampley looks at the gift of faith and how that affects behaviour. One's measure of faith is not how 'Christian' he or she is, but to what degree one can withstand temptations. So, when Paul refers to the strong and weak in Romans, the strong have more 'faith'. One is not 'better', but moral reasoning must account for how much faith one has (i.e., will it cause me to stumble if I do this?). But more important than the personal question of faith is the second criterion, 'is it beneficial to others?' Sampley sees the Corinthians, for instance, as confident in the first question, but ignorant and negligent of the second. Regarding this second criterion, a fundamental norm that Sampley finds in Paul is the centrality of love, which is 'acting in careful consideration for the well-being of others' (1991: 62). Such an ethical director 'functions as the governor that sets limits to what might otherwise be runaway individualism' (1991: 62).

In many ways, Sampley reiterates what Furnish has already written (eschatology, Christology, theology). However, Sampley does offer some

important extensions on what others have done and has taken some insights in new directions. There is more reflection on spiritual gifts in Sampley's work, especially pertaining to his dual criteria (personal faith, edification for others). His focus on the Lord's Supper and Baptism as reflecting on the past (Christ's death/resurrection) and the future (Christ's return; the resurrection of the baptized) confirms his primary point about eschatology. Also, the chronological eschatological perspective is more concentrated on judgment and reward for faithful stewardship. Finally, he has given more attention to how (social) identity affects ethics. Here he only briefly touches on social identity theories, but it makes way for others (like Meeks and Horrell) to develop more sophisticated approaches.

Richard B. Hays (1996)

There is good reason to survey the perspective of Richard B. Hays on Paul's ethics in his *Moral Vision of the New Testament* (1996) despite the fact that it spans the whole New Testament. Like Schrage, Hays seems to be particularly focused on Paul and devotes special attention to the Pauline corpus (1996: 16-72; *passim*). Indeed, consciously avoiding a more canonical-sequential approach, Hays begins with Paul and seems to derive his moral 'focal images' from his letters which he then tests on the rest of the New Testament.

In his treatment of Paul, Hays presents the Apostle as an 'ad hoc' ethical theologian in the sense that his moral discourse relates to the 'contingent problems that arise in his churches' (1996: 17). Indeed, the fluidity of his ethics is demonstrated in Paul's 'thinking on his feet', as it were, when addressing various issues: 'Paul is not simply repeating already formulated doctrines; rather, he is theologizing as he writes, and the constant aim of his theological reflection is to shape the behavior of his churches' (1996: 18). Yet, for Hays, Paul's ethics has an anchor in his gospel which grounds his whole moral universe.

This gospel-centred ethical logic is explicated by Hays in terms of three 'focal images': eschatology, the cross, and the new community in Christ. Certainly influenced by Furnish's work, Hays explains that 'the death and resurrection was an apocalyptic event that signalled the end of the old age and portended the beginning of the new' (1996: 19). The church is morally situated within this 'apocalyptic frame of reference' and finds its role within a cosmic story of God's salvation brought to the world (see 1996: 19-27). Hays especially understands this in terms of 'new creation' where the eschatological aeon has been inaugurated. Much like Sampley's analysis, Hays sees Paul as pointing to the future hope of Christ's return. The church

is not in an intermediate period which is between the old age and new age. Rather, 'Paul thinks of the present time as an anomalous interval in which the "already" and the "not yet" of redemption exist simultaneously in a dialectic tension' (1996: 21). As such, though God has defeated the powers of sin, evil and death, the war has not ended. The church engages in a moral and cosmic battle that will end in the day of the Lord.

Much like Furnish, Hays reserves a primary place in the logic of Paul's ethics for his Christology. But Hays focuses specifically on the cross as the 'pivot-point of the ages' as the fulfilment of the law and the catalyst for the sending of God's redemption to the world (see 1996: 26). The cross is also the paradigm for Christian obedience in Paul's letter such that '[it] becomes the ruling metaphor for Christian obedience' (1996: 31). This, in many ways, is confirmed by and related to his reading of *pistis Christou* in Paul's letters as a subjective genitive which refers to the 'faithfulness of Christ' which enables redemption and provides a 'pattern for the life of Christians' (1996: 31; see also 1983).

Hays's third focal image, the 'new community in Christ', involves a recognition that the final goal of the gospel is the formation of God-centred, Spirit-led communities that 'prefigure and embody the reconciliation and healing of the world' (1996: 32). The community, though, is not just the recipient of salvation, but also the place where one experiences God's 'saving power' (1996: 36). It is clear that, through the mutually edifying worship of the churches, 'the purpose of corporate worship becomes community formation' (1996: 35; see 1 Cor. 14.14).

For Hays it is not enough to understand Paul's ethics (or 'moral vision') *only* in terms of these focal images. Rather, he also discusses the 'warrants', 'norms' and 'sources of empowerment'. In line with both Furnish and Sampley, Hays underscores the important foundational concept of participation, or 'effective transformation through union with Christ' (1996: 38). And, especially aligning with Furnish's core concepts, Hays points to the warrant of the 'transfer of Lordship' as believers are freed from bondage in order to worship and serve the only God (1996: 38; Hays also expresses this in terms of 'transfer of allegiance'; see 1996: 39). The power of the Spirit is a 'warrant' as believers are compelled to bear fruit. Finally, under 'warrants', Hays notes that Paul is not afraid of discussing judgment as a means of expressing the believers' ultimate reckoning before God (see 1996: 40-41).

In terms of norms, noting that Paul offers no particular code-book for conduct, Hays reiterates that Christ is the ultimate paradigm. The discernment of proper conduct also has a communal focus insofar as each member

must be willing to forego rights, privileges, honours, and the like for the sake of others.

In the context of the Christian community, the *power* of the moral life comes from the Holy Spirit for Paul (see Rom. 8.1-4; Hays 1996: 43-45). This is not an automatic pneumodynamic operation, but the Spirit works through 'Scripture, Paul's own teaching, the emissaries that Paul sends back to his churches, [and] the community's worship' (1996: 45).

One of the distinct contributions that Hays makes to the discussion of Paul's ethics is his socio-literary and cognitive approach. In his section on hermeneutics, he points to the importance of discernment in the process of studying the New Testament and the role of the mind. He describes this creative interaction between text and reader as '*an integrative act of the imagination*' which necessitates an exercise in 'metaphor-making' (1996: 298; original emphasis). Though his interest in this section is the question of how modern interpreters 'use' the New Testament texts, he applies his semiotic approach to the metaphors found in the New Testament (such as Christ being the 'living bread' in Jn 6.51). According to Hays, 'metaphors reshape perception' (1996: 300) and 'jolt' readers by joining two seemingly incompatible images or ideas. Once the reader accepts the challenge of the metaphor, he or she also accepts its authority and allows the message to remap reality in light of the new image (1996: 301). The symbols, stories and metaphors in a New Testament text, then, are not just informational 'doctrine', but they have the power to 'call us again and again to see our lives shattered and shaped anew by "reading" them in metaphorical juxtaposition with this story' (1996: 302). For Hays, then, a kind of doctrine-versus-paraeenesis approach to Paul's letters is misguided because it does not account for the way that he seeks to transform and challenge his readers' lives through a 'conversion' of their imagination (see Hays 2005). Thus, Hays' title (*The Moral Vision of the New Testament*) is indicative of his approach as the New Testament (and Paul) do not offer an ethical guide-book, but use a variety of rhetorical and literary devices in an attempt to paint a picture of life in conformity to Christ and the gospel; or, to bring into focus a 'moral vision' that reconstitutes cognitive and social reality.

David Horrell (2005)

Though David Horrell's *Solidarity and Difference: A Contemporary Reading of Paul's Ethics* (2005) is only a few years old, it is a highly perceptive and methodologically stimulating piece of research that is focused on Paul's letters. Now, although Horrell is specifically interested in reading Paul's ethics as a voice in conversation with the modern liberal and com-

munitarian ethical debate (represented respectively by J. Habermas [1993] and S. Hauerwas [1981, 1983]), this monograph has much to say about the subject of Paul's theo-logical ethics especially as Horrell is primarily 'concerned to discern the key moral values of Pauline ethics' (2005: 2). He specifically is interested in Paul's ethical discourses as 'community-forming' (2005: 45) and the politic dimensions of ethics insofar as his letters are a 'reflection on the ways in which human sociality should rightly be sustained and practised' (2005: 47). It is no surprise that Horrell, as the title suggests, sees a dialectic in Paul's ethics that promotes 'both solidarity and difference' in the community of faith (2005: 3).

Horrell specifically proposes a new pathway for resolving the indicative-imperative paradox. Gleaning insights from social-scientific theories (and building on the work of Wayne Meeks [1986, 1993]), Horrell proposes that Paul's letters be read as a theological blueprint meant to build a particular social construct (see Berger and Luckman [1966]). Whereas previously the epistles were understood as 'documents outlining, correcting, and instructing their recipients about the content of what they are to believe, with certain sections (the 'ethical' sections) concerned with the consequent practical instruction' (2005: 91), they should instead be understood as 'community-forming' documents that give meaning to and shape a symbolic universe (2005: 84). Developing this social reality is not only meant to bring order and stability to a community, but also to shape its corporate life and ethos.

Horrell also underscores the *narrative* dimensions of this symbolic world which contains 'a story with some sense of temporal extension and direction' (2005: 85). Drawing on Wendy Doniger's work on myth (1998), Horrell describes Paul's use of the 'myth' about Christ and how it concretizes communal identity and behaviour. By myth, though, Horrell does not mean a 'fictional epic tale'. Rather, using Doniger's model, Horrell describes myth as 'a religious story believed to be true' (2005: 90). This myth is formative because it 'provide[s] the theological basis and motivational framework for Pauline ethics' (2005: 88). When we look at the *carmen Christi* in Phil. 2.5-11, for instance, the narrative nature of Paul's discourse clearly demonstrates that 'myths are used to construct and to legitimate patterns of social organization' (2005: 90). From a form-critical point of view, then, Horrell is insistent that only studying Paul's ethics in terms of exhortations and imperatives is a fundamentally-flawed methodological approach. The social theory that Horrell proposes can account for the relationship between indicative and imperative as the actions of the community reinforce their socially-constructed symbols, traditions and stories. This is made clear in the rituals (baptism and the Lord's Supper)

of the early church. Through these activities, 'the story of the faith was enacted and embodied' (2005: 91). A symbolic universe is constructed on the basis of theology, it shapes moral values, and it is reinforced by rituals and activities that are in line with its ethos. Horrell, then, sees the indicative of Paul's theology as if it were a movie whose reel is ever-turned by affirmation of and obedience to the imperatives (see 2005: 94).

The actual 'metanorms' for Paul's ethics are two-fold, according to Horrell. First of all, Paul is interested in 'corporate solidarity' which, based on participation in Christ's body, leads to unity and has 'egalitarian impulses' (see 2005: 99-100, 129). Solidarity in Christ, then, allows communal members to 'transcend' former distinctions of value. This is quite apparent both in the ritual of communion and also in the siblingship rhetoric in Paul's letters. As for the latter, referring constantly to believers as 'brothers and sisters' presumed that they were 'ranked together on the same level' (2005: 112). Such an emphasis on commonality, though, need not preclude the importance of differences. Here Horrell finds Paul's corporate-body image to be telling. The maintenance of both mutuality and individuality requires 'other-regard' which is his second metanorm. Differences of conviction and preference in *adiaphora* are acceptable in a community that demonstrates 'other-regarding love' and looks out for the welfare of the weak. Again, Christ is the example *par excellence* of other-regard through his 'self-lowering' (see 2005: 210). Paul's Christology, then, fuels both of his norms inasmuch as the Christ event enables solidarity with him and his 'myth' re-maps the symbolic world of all Christians as it 'form[s] the lens, the master-pattern, through which Paul makes sense of his own experiences' (2005: 213). It is 'the determinative plot which shapes Paul's [and his churches'] own moral reasoning' (2005: 214).

Horrell's social-scientific approach to Paul's ethics yields much especially in the understanding of indicative and imperative. The symbiotic relationship between story-thought and enactment helps to clarify how theology and ethics mutually contribute to the overall development of a stable Christian worldview and ethos. Also, Horrell's metanorms of 'solidarity' and 'other-regard' appear to be two fundamental principles in Paul's ethics that aid his churches in navigating through moral discernment.

Analysis of Major Contributors to Paul's Theo-Logical Ethics

Though it is quite clear by now that Furnish has laid an important foundation of scholarship for all of the subsequent major contributors to the question of Paul's ethics especially with regard to the christological and eschatological

stimuli, there are many points on which subsequent scholars have expanded. It would be useful at this point to briefly summarize commonalities in these interpretations and also distinctive contributions of each.

Orientation

All five of the surveyed scholars are in fundamental agreement that Paul is an 'ad hoc' ethicist who is much less interested in detailed ethical conformity. Though there is a pattern to Paul's moral logic, it is organic, not static. The contextual nature of the Pauline letters means that his ethical discussions are focused on particular problems related to specific circumstances. One can cull some general principles from these discourses, but one must accept that Paul advocates active discernment in decision-making.

Warrants

Though each scholar submits that Paul was influenced by a number of sources (especially the Old Testament and the apostolic reservoir of Jesus' teachings), the most significant grounds for his ethics are focused on the Christ event. All would agree that eschatology and Christology are fundamental. In terms of the former, Furnish emphasizes more the apocalyptic dimensions of eschatology as God in Christ defeated the powers of sin, death and the law, and reclaimed humanity for himself. Sampley underscores the temporal aspect of inaugurated eschatology where the church lives in the intermediate time between the death/resurrection of Christ and his return. Schrage appears to be more in line with Furnish while Hays is with Sampley. Christology, though, is central to all of the scholarly approaches. Furnish highlights the victory of Christ in resurrection and his lordly status over believers. Hays concentrates on the cross.

This raises the matter of the indicative-imperative relationship which is also a *sine qua non* factor in a discussion of Paul's ethics. Though, again, each scholar takes a slightly different approach to defining the relationship, none have offered a clear way forward except, perhaps, Horrell who re-frames the discussion in terms of social identity and ethos.

Norms

Perhaps the most significant pattern recognized by these scholars is the 'story' or example of Christ. Warrant and norm, though, are fused in Paul's Christology through 'participation' in Christ. For Furnish this is best understood as a 'belonging to God' and the category of 'possession'. Schrage offers a sacramental perspective that shows union of Christ in baptism and communion. Hays explains this as entering into the drama of Christ

and imitating his faithfulness. Horrell uses the language of 'solidarity' in Christ. For most of the scholars, communal formation is the *telos* of Christian morality. Sampley's second test in Paul's framework of discernment focuses on whether the act will negatively affect the community, finding an affirming nod from Hays. Horrell refers to this as 'other-regard'. The key-word 'love' is a tidy way of summing up, for all of these scholars, the primary moral virtue of the Christian community according to Paul. However, on the issue of 'imitation', Schrage diverges from the others by not seeing it as mimicking Christ, but accepting his authority (i.e., an 'imitator' is a 'disciple', not a 'copy'). The example of Christ is understood by most scholars as the expression of the metanorm of 'love'. It is interesting to note that Hays prefers to speak of cruciformity (or the 'focal image' of the cross) as a norm and not 'love', because 'The term [love] has become debased in popular discourse...having become a cover for all manner of vapid self-indulgence' (1996: 202). Horrell (2005: 36-37) and BurrIDGE (2007: 107-108), though, offer rebuttals and critiques of Hays's perspective while not denying his concern for the gap between how the term 'love' is used today and how Paul would have understood it.

Empowerment

The resources that enable the believer to exercise proper moral judgment are quite clear to all five scholars. The Holy Spirit is absolutely the central agent of discernment. There are varying attitudes towards how the human mind and conscience participate in this act, but the Spirit's guidance is clearly involved. The community itself is considered, by Hays and Sampley, for instance, as a resource for and context within which the believer makes decisions according to Paul.

Current Research and Avenues for Further Study

Though the impact of these five scholars have been significant, there is quite a lot of work that has been done by other New Testament researchers that have advanced areas of study in Paul's ethics. In this section we will touch upon a number of insightful studies as well as giving direct attention to needs for further research.

Orientation to Studying Paul's Ethics

The overall approaches to the study of Paul's ethics in the past have been varied. In an earlier generation, scholars found more interest in uncovering ethical sources. Others have preferred a thematic approach (see Mohrlang

1984; Lohse 1988). Still, more recently, scholars like F. Matera (1996) have taken an exegetically-driven approach recognizing the contingent nature of Paul's letters. Brian Rosner (1995), though he is interested in much more than the 'logic' of Paul's ethics, proposes a multi-faceted approach that involves interacting with the *origin, context, social dimension, shape, logic, foundations, and relevance* when considering a Pauline text. His own exegetical approach, then, is quite sophisticated and engages a morally-centred passage from several angles (see especially 1995: 351-62). An interesting area for further research is a comparative approach that puts Paul's letters side-by-side with another (probably contemporaneous) writer. Mohrlang attempted this in his comparison of the ethical constructs of Matthew and Paul (1984), but this, I think, could be done for Paul in comparison to, for example, Philo or the Qumran writers. An exercise in comparison may shed light on interesting levels of agreement and disagreement, as well as hermeneutical and philosophical paradigms.

Warrants

The foundations for Paul's moral logic have been securely proven to be his Christology and his eschatology. However, there is some flexibility as to how these terms are understood. Exactly what effect did Christ's death and resurrection have on humans? Bultmann, of course, primarily considered this to enable a new 'self-understanding'. Scholars like Käsemann (1969; ET 1971: 1-31) understood this to be too anthropologically focused. Furnish, of course, attests that Paul's view was apocalyptic insofar as Christ conquered sin and death and liberated humanity to serve God. Those who 'participate' in Christ can experience ethical freedom and new service to God. That Pauline ethics is not about 'discerning the good', but doing God's will is an important distinction. T.J. Deidun approaches Paul's participatory ethical framework from the perspective of 'covenant' (1981). However, Deidun does not go far enough in spelling out how ancient covenants bound the two parties and obligated one to the other. Also, Deidun has been faulted for not interacting with the notion of 'covenant nomism' coined by E.P. Sanders and central to the New Perspective on Paul debates (see Sanders 1977; Dunn 2008). This work in covenant and ethics has been done more generally by, for instance, Scott Hafemann with a view towards the whole Bible (see 2001), but such a viewpoint focused just on Paul is still in need of further research.

Other possible frameworks exist for how to understand the ethical implications of the God-human relationship in Paul's letters. Here we may point to two options that are noted in Richard Hays's discussion of

potential categories of 'real participation' in Christ (2003). The first is familial. In line with Furnish's view of 'belonging' and Horrell's interest in kinship, Hays offers the category of household membership. Though recently T. Burke (2003) and R. Aasgaard (2004) have taken interest in Paul's kinship language, there is still much work to be done specifically on the moral inferences of recognizing God as 'father'. Hays also raises the option of 'political/military' participation in Christ (see Rom. 6.12-14). We are, it would seem, in need of a major study of Paul's military ethics. On the political side, as many scholars think that Paul shapes his communities in ways similar to Greco-Roman guilds, it may be worthwhile to investigate the moral ethos of such groups in comparison with Paul's.

The modern discussion of the indicative-imperative relationship has tended to move into the arena of identity formation and ethos, as we have seen from the works of Hays (1996) and Horrell (2005). On ethos, Wayne Meeks has been particularly influential in his discussion of the social context of early Christianity and the process of 'resocialization' that churches went through (see 1986: 126). The kind of interpretation that seeks to identify how worldview influences social ethos inspired a group of New Testament scholars to treat each New Testament book from the perspective of the interpenetration of ethics, ethos and identity (Van der Watt 2006). While the subject of ethos has been dealt with by a number of Pauline scholars (see Barton 2001; Esler 2003), the importance of 'identity' is still often presumed rather than explicated. The ground has been tilled a bit by Joel Green (2007) and a group of scholars at a Nordic conference in 2007 (see Holmberg and Winninge 2008), especially on the cognitive aspects of identity, but there is much left to be done.

Norms

Again, the basic attitude towards Paul's ethical norms has been well laid out. The pattern of Christ is discussed in all of the above five interpreters. Additionally, Michael Gorman's *Cruciformity* has further explored the narratological dimensions of this metanorm (see 2001). This is also highlighted in Stephen Fowl's work on ethics in Paul's traditional descriptions of the 'story of Christ' (1990). The subject of Christ-imitation is the focus of Richard Burrridge's *Imitating Jesus* which covers this topic over the whole New Testament (2007). Also, the general subject of how conformity to Christ and ethical maturity relate is a subject of J.G. Samra's published thesis (2006). A core dimension of this Christoform ethic in Paul is the centrality of love, yet, as far as I can tell, we are still in need of a full-length study of 'love' in Paul's letters (though, on the whole New Testament, see

Spicq 1958; Furnish 1973). Another key term that seems broadly relevant to Paul's ethics is 'holiness'. Indeed, Matera bases his whole reading of Paul's theology on the notion of the 'sanctified' community (especially as portrayed in 1 Thessalonians; see 1996: 138-60; also Bockmuehl 2005: 95-124). The relationship between holiness, ethics, and community formation is central to the essays in the recent study by Brower and Johnson, *Holiness and Ecclesiology in the New Testament* (2007), but a monograph purely focused on Paul is yet to be written especially in light of related social-scientific and modern semiotic theories.

In terms of general approaches to the nature of Paul's ethical interests, there has been new research on the subject of 'virtue ethics' and how the apostle could be understood in terms of this moral theory (see Brawley 2007). Rather than focusing on specific ethical rules (and compliance to them), virtue ethics is interested in the formation of people as moral agents in the world. This more holistic approach to ethics seems to have the potential for yielding insights into Paul's moral reasoning.

The place of the community in the *telos* of moral formation has been secured by Hays (1996), Horrell (2005) and many others. But as this was, in some ways, reactionary to an overly individualistic interpretation inherited from Bultmann and popular in western Protestantism, the communal focus may have gone too far and neglected the person. For an argument encouraging a more balanced position on individualism and communalism, see Gary Burnett's *Paul and the Salvation of the Individual* (2001) which offers some insights on his ethical interests as well (see also Keck's discussion of the 'accountable self' in Paul, 1996). One avenue for studying the individual's ethical responsibilities is the matter of the body in Paul and its proper uses. Much can be gleaned from Robert Gundry's well-known study of *sōma* (1976) and from an ethical perspective mention should be made of Dale Martin's *The Corinthian Body* (1995) and also K. Sandnes' look at belly and body-worship in Paul (2002). More research on Paul's understanding of the importance of the physical body and ethics would be illuminating.

Resources for Ethical Life

Because the Holy Spirit has been such a focus in the subject of the empowerment for ethical life, there have been a number of studies on this topic (see Hafemann 1986; Fee 1994). Two recent studies by I. Scott (2006) and A. Munzinger (2007) give specific attention to the relationship between the human mind and the Spirit, especially in moral reasoning. The former argues particularly for a narrative logic in Paul's understanding of ethics,

while the latter points to the role of the Spirit in 'existential transformation' and as a catalyst for the transfiguration of the mind.

Passages

We have not taken the time to discuss the particular passages in Paul's letters that offer the basis for constructing Paul's ethics, and here we can only mention the key sections and also ones that have been glided over too hastily. Perhaps the two most important foundational texts are Phil. 2.5-11 and Rom. 12.1-2 where the former has demonstrated the narratological and christocentric dimensions of ethics, and the latter the importance of self-sacrifice, communal orientation and a God-centred understanding of morality and worship. The moral implications of participation in Christ are often understood on the basis of Rom. 6.1-23 and baptism into his death. Additionally, the holiness of the body is understood especially from the perspective of 1 Thess. 4.1-8 and 1 Cor. 6.12-7.16. Those who emphasize the eschatological significance of ethics in the overlapping of the ages often appeal to 1 Cor. 7.29-31 and Gal. 3.28, the latter being especially important regarding the transcendence of human categories of social value in the new age. Perhaps there is a need to look at 2 Cor. 8.9 more closely ('though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that by his poverty you might become rich', *NRSV*) from a narrative perspective to see how it functions as a moral paradigm. Also, the very important indicative-imperative text 1 Cor. 5.7 ('Clean out the old yeast so that you may be a new batch, as you really are unleavened. For our paschal lamb, Christ, has been sacrificed', *NRSV*) clearly links Christ's death to moral implications, but how this works logically in Paul's ethics has yet to be fully understood.

Conclusion

Throughout this article, it has become clear that the study of Paul's theological ethics is a vast topic that links up with a number of issues in his theology. It has been shown that Victor Furnish set the agenda for the study of Paul's ethics in 1968 with his ground-breaking work which highlighted critical eschatological, christological and theological foundations. Furnish, though, left much work for subsequent scholars who have teased out parts of his insights, explored various intimations in his work, and expanded on some of his key principles, bringing in a host of tools and methodological approaches to further illuminate this enigmatic topic. The work, though, is still far from done and we have adumbrated a number of areas where new light needs to be shed.

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