

2010

Which “Body” Is a Temple (1 Corinthians 6:19)? Paul beyond the Individual/Communal Divide

Nijay Gupta

George Fox University, ngupta@georgefox.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <http://digitalcommons.georgefox.edu/gfes>

 Part of the [Christianity Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Gupta, Nijay, "Which “Body” Is a Temple (1 Corinthians 6:19)? Paul beyond the Individual/Communal Divide" (2010). *Faculty Publications - Portland Seminary*. 80.

<http://digitalcommons.georgefox.edu/gfes/80>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Portland Seminary at Digital Commons @ George Fox University. It has been accepted for inclusion in Faculty Publications - Portland Seminary by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @ George Fox University. For more information, please contact arolfe@georgefox.edu.

Which “Body” Is a Temple (1 Corinthians 6:19)? Paul beyond the Individual/Communal Divide

NIJAY K. GUPTA

Seattle Pacific University

Seattle, WA 98119

PAULINE SCHOLARSHIP has always been interested in the “theology” of the Apostle, and questions of his understanding of God, Christ, salvation, the church, and ethics are as passionately pursued now as in any prior generation.¹ An important methodological point that has been widely accepted among scholars, though, is that such attempts at extracting theological bits from Paul must take sufficient account of the ancient context of his writing and the “contingency” of his literary engagements, that is, “the specificity of the occasion to which it was addressed.”² One major manifestation of this concern for understanding Paul in his original setting has been the concern over the Augustinian/Lutheran/Bultmannian approach to soteriology that was centered on personal justification. This theological orientation, as Calvin J. Roetzel puts it, “sees salvation for the individual as the governing theme of Paul’s theology.”³ Thus, a new era in the interpretation of Paul commenced with Krister Stendahl’s famous “The Apostle Paul and the Introspec-

I am indebted to Dr. Stephen C. Barton and Dr. Michael J. Gorman for commenting on an early draft of this article and offering invaluable feedback, which has aided me in clarifying and improving my argument.

¹ A representative tome that engages in how to approach a theology of Paul is certainly James D. G. Dunn’s *Theology of Paul the Apostle* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998).

² J. Christian Beker, *Paul the Apostle: The Triumph of God in Life and Thought* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1980) 34.

³ Calvin J. Roetzel, *The Letters of Paul: Conversations in Context* (4th ed.; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1998) 180.

tive Conscience of the West" (1963), which tried to direct the attention of Paul's justification language away from the issue of personal guilt and sin toward the matter of the relationship between Jews and gentiles in the early church.⁴ The implications for viewing justification (among other key doctrines) as communal are evident in many who followed Stendahl. Consider this statement by N. T. Wright:

The gospel creates, not a bunch of individual Christians, but a community. If you take the old route of putting justification, in its traditional meaning, at the centre of your theology, you will always be in danger of sustaining some sort of individualism.⁵

There is no doubt that the voices of Stendahl and others in his wake have been heard and that attention to the social aspects of early Christianity is in the forefront of the minds of many scholars today. Consider, for instance, David G. Horrell's proposal that "Pauline Christianity may be best understood as *a symbolic order embodied in communities*."⁶ Stephen C. Barton offers an excellent précis of the growing interest in "the communal dimension of early Christianity" and mentions the influence of scholarship in particular ecclesiological circles, including Roman Catholicism and the modern charismatic movement.⁷ Though Barton, Horrell, and many others have offered helpful correctives that place Paul in his original social and historical context,⁸ there is always the temptation to go to the other extreme. In some ways, this 180-degree turn toward group orientation is evident in attempts to explain away any hint of language in Paul where he appears to

⁴ See Krister Stendahl, *Paul among Jews and Gentiles and Other Essays* (London: SCM, 1977) 78-96.

⁵ N. T. Wright, *What Saint Paul Really Said: Was Paul of Tarsus the Real Founder of Christianity?* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997) 158.

⁶ David G. Horrell, *The Social Ethos of the Corinthian Correspondence: Interests and Ideology from 1 Corinthians to 1 Clement* (Studies in the New Testament and Its World; Edinburgh: Clark, 1996) 54.

⁷ Stephen C. Barton, *Life Together: Family, Sexuality and Community in the New Testament and Today* (Edinburgh: Clark, 2001) 85-93, here 93.

⁸ See, most recently, Robert J. Banks, *Paul's Idea of Community: The Early House Churches in Their Historical Setting* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980); Richard B. Hays, *The Moral Vision of the New Testament: Community, Cross, New Creation. A Contemporary Introduction to the New Testament* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1996) esp. 32-36; Kent E. Brower and Andy Johnson, eds., *Holiness and Ecclesiology in the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007). Hans Wenschkewitz (*Die Spiritualisierung der Kultusbegriffe: Tempel, Priester und Opfer im Neuen Testament* [Angelos Beiheft 4; Leipzig: Eduard Pfeiffer, 1932] 112) makes this exemplary statement based on Paul's use of temple language and the orientation of early Christianity: "Der Tempel Gottes ist die Gemeinde. Weder in der Stoa, noch bei Philo treffen wir diesen Gedanken, denn hier war alles auf den Einzelnen, auf das Individuum eingestellt. Es ist sehr zu beachten, daß auch in diesem Stück das Christentum den Individualismus bricht, indem es seine durchaus individualistisch gemeinte Form der Umdeutung des Tempelbegriffes so wendet, wie es der im tiefsten nicht individualistischen neuen Religion entspricht."

be referring to the experience of the individual. Such an extreme is demonstrated by some social scientists who juxtapose “Western culture” and “ancient Mediterranean cultures” in terms of individualism and collectivism. For Bruce J. Malina and Jerome H. Neyrey, Paul can only “think ‘socially,’ in group terms, and . . . employ inherited stereotypes.”⁹ Thus, the Apostle would have considered “[s]ociety to be the primary reality, while the individual is a second-order, artificial or derived construct.”¹⁰ Accordingly, such ancients were, in fact, “anti-introspective.”¹¹ Ancient persons, then, cannot be balanced in their understanding of self and society, but fit one mold or the other—an extreme position that seems at times as strained and simplistic as the viewpoints it was meant to replace.

This swing of the pendulum to the side of communal interest has certainly affected how Paul’s letters are interpreted. One specific example of this individual/communal divide is evident in modern academic discussions of 1 Cor 6:19, where Paul states that the Corinthians’ “body” (τὸ σῶμα ὑμῶν) is a temple. The history of interpretation and the exegetical dynamics of this particular verse in its context (both literary and sociohistorical) will serve as a case study on this matter.

I. The Interpretive Crux: Individual or Communal “Body”?

This well-known statement from Paul is a *locus classicus* of the indicative-imperative framework of ethics from which he operates in his letters. Focusing on the matter of sexual immorality (πορνεία), Paul argues that the body as God created it was not intended for such behavior (6:13) and that joining oneself to a prostitute (πόρνη) is tantamount to joining a member of Christ to a prostitute (6:15). But the Corinthian believers should flee from sexuality immorality (6:18).

Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, which you have from God, and that you are not your own? For you were bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body. (6:19-20)¹²

Traditionally, this was understood to be an inference of the earlier epistolary discussion of holiness and unity whereby Paul affirms that the whole Corinthian congregation is God’s temple. Thus, Hans Conzelmann comments that “[w]hat was said in 3:16 of the community, that it is the temple of God, that the Spirit of God dwells in it, is here transferred to the individual.”¹³ The human body, then, is

⁹ Bruce J. Malina and Jerome H. Neyrey, *Portraits of Paul: An Archaeology of Ancient Personality* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1996) 227

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 51.

¹² All biblical quotations are from the *NRSV* unless otherwise noted.

¹³ Hans Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians: A Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians* (trans. George W. MacRae; Hermeneia; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1975) 112.

a temple of the Holy Spirit because, just as the Spirit resides in the community, so it lives in each person “in Christ.” Given the discussion above on Paul and community, however, what seems here to be an individualistic reading of cultic language, holiness, ethics, and Pauline pneumatology has left many readers unsettled such that the only logical conclusion is that the Apostle’s statement here does not contribute much to his overall theology. So Lucien Cerfaux boldly concludes: “[T]his theme of the individual and inner temple (which comes first for Philo with his Greek taste for what is individualistic) is secondary to Paul.”¹⁴ Taking one step further in hopes of resolving this tension, Michael Newton argues that Paul is, in fact, referring to the church. For Newton, the “body” in 1 Cor 6:19 is the communal body, not the individual one. His main proofs, among other secondary arguments, are theological and rhetorical.

Paul’s primary concern here is with the purity of the Church which is threatened with the defilement of sexual immorality. His starting point, then, is the community. . . . Philo, on the other hand, would start with the individual, but for Paul this is secondary to his concern for the unity of the community.¹⁵

For those who espouse such an interpretation, a number of issues, or “questions,” are factored in that lead them to reject the traditional individualistic interpretation:

1. The grammatical-exegetical question: Why is $\sigma\omega\mu\alpha$ singular in 6:19-20?
2. The rhetorical question: How would reading the individual body as temple in 6:19 fit within the cultic imagery of 1 Corinthians as a whole (cf. 3:16)? How would a communal reading fit?
3. The socio-anthropological question: Why is the body such an important social and religious image and metaphor for Paul? What does it have to do with the group? What does it have to do with the individual?
4. The theological questions: (1) Cultic language: Given that 1 Cor 6:19 deals with the imagery of cult (i.e., temple) and Spirit endowment, does Paul generally exhibit a tendency to apply such language in preference to individual or community? (2) Theological orientation: Is Paul interested

¹⁴ Lucien Cerfaux, *The Church in the Theology of Saint Paul* (trans. Geoffrey Webb and Adrian Walker; New York: Herder & Herder, 1959) 148.

¹⁵ Michael Newton, *The Concept of Purity at Qumran and in the Letters of Paul* (SNTSMS 53; Cambridge/New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985) 57; see also Kazimierz Romaniuk, “Exégèse du Nouveau Testament et ponctuation,” *NovT* 23 (1981) 199-205; regarding $\sigma\omega\mu\alpha$ in 6:18a, “il s’agit du corps comme organisme social” (p. 204).

primarily in the sanctification/progress/maturity¹⁶ of the individual or the community?¹⁷ Or is this a false dichotomy?

The specific matter of how to understand σώμα in 6:19-20 relates to the concerns that scholars have with a combination of these questions. The search for how to comprehend Paul's patterns of thought will be concentrated on answers to these issues. Although some have previously attempted to harmonize Paul's temple language, the complexity of his discourses on cult eschews such simplifications. Giving due attention to the following questions will allow a more nuanced approach to Paul's discussion of "the body."

II. Questions Raised by an Individualistic Interpretation

A. *The Grammatical-Exegetical Question*

If we examine the Greek text of 1 Cor 6:19, we notice that an English translation ("your body" [NRSV]) does not quite capture the unexpected pairing of a singular noun and a plural genitive pronoun (τὸ σώμα ὑμῶν). A more literal rendering, though certainly awkward, would be something like "the body of you all." Some would reason that, if Paul wanted to communicate that *each* person's *individual* body is a temple, he would have used the plural form of σώμα (cf. Rom 12:1).¹⁸ But, of course, such a combination of words as we have in 6:19 was capable of being understood distributively, meaning "the body of each of you." This is the easiest way to understand Paul's description of the body in Rom 8:23, "and not only the creation, but we ourselves who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly while we wait for adoption, the redemption of our body [σώματος ἡμῶν]."¹⁹ Further, in 2 Cor 4:10, Paul depicts the apostles as "always carrying in

¹⁶ Though the emphasis here will be on the progress and end of salvation, the initiation of it (i.e., conversion) and its general orientation are discussed by Stephen J. Chester (*Conversion at Corinth: Perspectives on Conversion in Paul's Theology and the Corinthian Church* [Studies of the New Testament and Its World; London/New York: Clark, 2003] 13), who concludes that it must be an experience rooted in *both self and society*.

¹⁷ If space permitted, one might also add the "pragmatic question"—*How did Paul carry out his instruction and ministry?* Certainly he taught in groups and his letters were read to the whole church, but the intimate familial language addressed to believers in 1 Thess 2:11-12 suggests that Paul (at least in that context) made it a point to attend to the care of each one of them (ἕνα ἕκαστον ὑμῶν).

¹⁸ Several scholars associate a corporate reading of σώμα with the fact of its singular form; see Paul S. Minear, *Images of the Church in the New Testament* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1960) 180-82; R. Kempthorne, "Incest and the Body of Christ: A Study of I Cor. VI. 12-20," *NTS* 14 (1967-68) 568-74, esp. 572-74; Newton, *Purity*, 57-58.

¹⁹ Though one may, even here, be tempted to interpret σώμα collectively, C. K. Barrett's theological hesitation is noteworthy: "Paul certainly does not mean 'the redemption of the Church',

the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may be made visible in our body [ἐν τῷ σώματι ἡμῶν]” (cf. Phil 3:21).

If Paul could communicate the idea of the individual body by using either the plural of *σῶμα* or the singular with a distributive genitive pronoun, why should one prefer the latter? Though it can only be speculation, two possibilities come to mind. First, it may be the case that hortatory speech lends itself to a more direct engagement with the readers by addressing the whole but communicating vividly to the individual. For example, in the Holiness Code of Leviticus, the LXX reads: “And you shall not make cuttings on your body [ἐν τῷ σώματι ὑμῶν] for a [dead] person” (19:28; my translation). And, in Matthew’s Sermon on the Mount, Jesus says, “Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life [τῆ ψυχῆ ὑμῶν] . . . nor about your body [τῷ σώματι ὑμῶν]. . . Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing?” (6:25).

A second reason why Paul may have preferred the singular of *σῶμα* could be theological, drawing attention to the corporate while speaking particularly about each individual. According to Robert H. Gundry, the collective singular (as in 1 Cor 6:19-20 and Phil 3:21) does not cancel out “individuation” but shows “interplay among individuals rather than a solidarity which blurs distinctions among them.”²⁰ Paul’s grammatical choices in 1 Corinthians 6 were meant not to harmonize his usage of temple and community language in the letter but to place an individual understanding of body-as-temple within a larger framework of cooperation among the distinguishable units that make up a collective temple (as in 1 Cor 3:16). From a grammatical standpoint, then, the mere fact that Paul uses the singular of *σῶμα* should not preclude the possibility that he refers to each individual body.

A final lexical note is in order. Though it is not incorrect to translate *ναός* as temple, it is most often used to refer to the sanctuary, and it was also a term used for pagan shrines.²¹ In Acts 19:24, it is difficult to know exactly what Luke meant by referring to Demetrius’s production of *ναοὺς ἀργυροῦς*, but they were likely to be “portable niches” that contained statues of the goddess (Artemis).²² The flexibility of this term for communicating the presence of God in both the individual and the group allowed it to be meaningful as “temple” in 1 Cor 3:16, and in 6:19 to imply that “the body is the shrine of the indwelling Spirit.”²³ The choice of *ναός*

for the Church is never the body *of us* but the body *of Christ*” (*A Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans* [rev. ed.; BNTC; Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1991] 157).

²⁰ Robert H. Gundry, *SŌMA in Biblical Theology: With Emphasis on Pauline Anthropology* (SNTSMS 29; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976) 220.

²¹ See O. Michel, “*ναός*,” *TDNT* 4:880-90.

²² See Lynn Allan Kauppi, *Foreign but Familiar Gods: Greco-Romans Read Religion in Acts* (Library of New Testament Studies 277; London: Clark, 2006) 94-95.

²³ Gordon D. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* (NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987) 265.

was certainly influenced by its usage in the LXX,²⁴ though Paul also had ἱερόν and οἶκος in the family of biblical terms he could have used metaphorically for temple. Nevertheless, ναός offered a considerable amount of semantic flexibility as well as communicating the state of intense holiness expected of the innermost portion of the temple.

B. *The Rhetorical Question*

Perhaps one of the most direct concerns that scholars raise concerning the plausibility of Paul speaking individualistically in 1 Cor 6:19 is that it is ostensibly incompatible with the earlier statement made in 3:16. This, however, is a myopic view of the scope and trajectory of Paul's line of thought in 1 Corinthians. A survey of the array of cultic images in the letter is required. We commence, though, at the very beginning of the Epistle with Paul's language of holiness (which derives, in part, from the cult),²⁵ for it has been observed that in such introductory statements Paul "telescopes several keynote themes."²⁶ One such element is the holy status of God's people who have been "sanctified in Christ Jesus" (1:2). Since the participle in question is plural (ἡγιασμένοις ἐν Χριστῷ), Paul certainly has the individuals in mind (literally, "the ones having been sanctified") who have trusted in the message of Christ crucified. It is also a bit odd grammatically, however, since it refers back to a singular noun, ἐκκλησία. The dialectic between collective unit and separate members is both semantically provocative and contextually appropriate. As Anthony C. Thiselton aptly states, "The singular stresses the solidarity of the readers as one united corporate entity, the plural calls attention to the individual responsibility of each member to live out his or her consecrated status in Christ."²⁷ From the very beginning, then, Paul is interested in maintaining the bal-

²⁴ See C. Marvin Pate, *The Reverse of the Curse: Paul, Wisdom, and the Law* (WUNT 2/114; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2000) 302.

²⁵ Though there are clear covenantal connotations in the language of holiness, the use of the verb ἁγιάζω in Jewish and early Christian literature seem to presuppose a cultic milieu (cf. Rom 15:16; Heb 9:13; 10:10, 14, 29; 13:12), thus: "Having entered into the linguistic register of the cult in his formula of address, Paul will devote a major portion of his letter to the issues that pertain to the cultic activity of the Christians of Corinth" (Raymond F. Collins, *First Corinthians* [SacPag 7; Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1999] 46). See also Brian S. Rosner, *Paul, Scripture, and Ethics: A Study of 1 Corinthians 5–7* (AGAJU 22; Leiden: Brill, 1994) 169-70.

²⁶ John G. Lewis, *Looking for Life: The Role of "Theo-ethical Reasoning" in Paul's Religion* (JSNTSup 291; London/New York: Clark, 2005) 37; also Dale B. Martin, *The Corinthian Body* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995) 55.

²⁷ Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (NIGTC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000) 76; also Margaret M. Mitchell, *Paul and the Rhetoric of Reconciliation: An Exegetical Investigation of the Language and Composition of 1 Corinthians* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1993) 193. Mitchell, though, states that Paul's primary interest

ance and tension between concentrating on the *person-in-community* and the *person-in-community*.

Later, in chap. 3, Paul enters into a discourse about the scandalous nature of the factions that have arisen among the Corinthians in favor of their hailed leaders, since each one contributes to the upbuilding of the collective temple of God (vv. 1-17).²⁸ A major component of Paul's argument is that no solitary worker in God's "field" (whether planter or waterer) should be elevated. Rather, each one is assigned a task from God and all work as one. This logic may have been sufficient to make his point, but Paul goes on to mention that each one will receive a due wage (μισθός) from God (v. 8). It is not infrequently observed that this last statement seems superfluous. After all, Paul does not seem to be questioning the leadership of Apollos (see 16:12). What Paul may be doing here, as he does elsewhere, is using his own life and context as a model for his converts. Gordon D. Fee explains that

the *language* here . . . anticipates the argument to follow, that each worker is to take care how he/she builds (v. 10b), since fire will test the work of each and thereby determine the reward (vv. 13-15). In this case Paul is less concerned about himself and Apollos as such, although that is not to be discounted, as he is about those who are currently "at work" in the church in Corinth.²⁹

Thus, far from being a digression from his discussion of the internal disunity (in view of apostolic leadership),³⁰ 3:9b-15 is central to Paul's argument, and the warning to each one (ἕκαστος) in v. 11 applies the expectation of *wise* (σοφός [v. 10]) leadership "to all their teachers and in an extended sense to themselves as participants in God's work of building."³¹ The purpose of this passage is to affirm not only that God's people are to be a cooperative unit (a "building") but also that each individual leader is accountable to God.

Again, in his discourse regarding the abhorrent and infective situation of the sexually immoral man who maintained some status in the community, Paul appropriates Jewish cultic language by likening the man to an old lump of yeast that can ruin the entire batch of dough (5:1-13). In particular, Paul mixes a variety of images from the setting of the Passover festival (vv. 6-8). A clear corporate dynamic is

is "ecclesial formation." But maturity at the cooperative level cannot exist without maturity at the individual level.

²⁸ For the significance of the concept of "building" and "building up" in 1 Corinthians, see John R. Lanci, *A New Temple for Corinth: Rhetorical and Archaeological Approaches to Pauline Imagery* (Studies in Biblical Literature 1; New York: Peter Lang, 1997).

²⁹ Fee, *First Epistle*, 133.

³⁰ Rudolf Bultmann takes this view in his *Der Stil der paulinischen Predigt und die kynisch-stoische Diatribe* (FRLANT 13; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1910) 98.

³¹ David W. Kuck, *Judgment and Community Conflict: Paul's Use of Apocalyptic Judgment Language in 1 Corinthians 3:5-4:5* (NovTSup 66; Leiden: Brill, 1992) 172.

prevalent throughout, as Paul was stunned that such a one was permitted to remain among them (v. 2). Indeed, his final statement, “Drive the wicked person from among you,” echoes the Deuteronomic language of Israel that aims to secure the integrity of the covenantal community.³² Two clues in the text, however, suggest that Paul is interested in *both* the stability of the group *and* the personal integrity of the individual. First and foremost, Paul’s interest in expelling the “wicked person” is not just for the sake of the whole. Equally important for Paul is the preservation of the immoral man, because the handing over of him to Satan³³ is “so that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord” (5:5).³⁴ Certainly here Paul is concerned for the troublemaker’s restoration. David E. Garland makes an important point regarding the hope of salvation for the exiled. A hope of restoration lies at the heart of God’s dealing with Israel’s sin through exile. In Rom 1:18-32, Paul uses παραδίδωμι in reference to handing over people to their impurity, but surely anticipating their salvation.³⁵ A second element indicating that Paul has both individual *and* community in mind is the carefully constructed grammar of 5:7: ἐκκαθάρατε τὴν παλαιὰν ζύμην, ἵνα ᾗτε νέον φύραμα, καθὼς ἐστε ἄζυμοι (“clean out the old yeast so that you may be a new batch, as you really are unleavened”). He exhorts the Corinthians to root out the old piece of leaven, in order to be a new lump (singular). Indeed, they already *are* unleavened (plural). Of course ἄζυμοι is plural because Paul is writing to a group (ἐστε). But, having just likened the church to a φύραμα, it would have been quite easy simply to repeat the word in the next phrase. Choosing instead to use the adjective alone underscores the necessity for personal holiness in each person.³⁶

Though σώμα appears in 5:3 (Paul is absent in body/present in spirit), he does not commence a sustained treatment of body, community, and holiness until

³² See Richard B. Hays, *The Conversion of the Imagination: Paul as Interpreter of Israel’s Scripture* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005) 21-23.

³³ The language of handing over “to Satan” is probably a bit elliptical and means something like “to the sphere of Satan” (see Jerome H. Neyrey, *Paul, in Other Words: A Cultural Reading of His Letters* [Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1990] 164), though it would appear that Paul believed him capable of tempting individuals (1 Cor 7:5). If Paul is concerned about the individual being harassed by Satan, would he not be interested in the individual’s spiritual protection?

³⁴ Contra those who suggest that Paul is worried only about the protection of the Holy Spirit in the community; see Karl Paul Donfried, “Justification and Last Judgement in Paul,” *ZNW* 67 (1976) 90-110. For the use of σώζω only in respect to the people of God and not the Holy Spirit, see Heinz-Dietrich Wendland, *Die Briefe an die Korinther* (NTD 7; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1962) 39.

³⁵ David E. Garland, *1 Corinthians* (Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament; Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003) 174-75; also Beverly Roberts Gaventa, *Our Mother Saint Paul* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2007) 122-23.

³⁶ Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 179. This singular/plural dialectic appears also in Gal 3:29: “And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham’s offspring [singular], heirs [plural] according to the promise.”

6:12-20. Here, too, the singular and collective dialectic is present with regard to individual bodies and the corporate body. In v. 13, Paul is probably reciting and refuting a Corinthian slogan that encouraged the view that God will destroy the physical body in time and thus it is now under no ethical obligation. He addresses their misconception by arguing that the physical body³⁷ is one of the Lord's instruments/members and will be raised (6:14; 15:44). Each believer's body belongs to the Lord and has permanent significance, both individually and interrelationally. Paul asks, "Do you not know that your [physical] bodies [σώματα] are members of Christ?" (v. 15b). The sanctity of each individual is of concern for Paul because every believer is united with Christ. Intercourse with a prostitute is a sin against one's own body because the physical body is, in some sense, a barrier that separates the realm of purity inside from the evil cosmos outside: "The act of intercourse breaks the boundaries around the physical body that keep the two apart."³⁸ We have here, then, a commingling of the concepts of the body of the individual, the group, and Christ with a significance for each one. When Paul finally reaches v. 19 and claims that "your [pl.] body [sing.]" is a temple, he follows it up with "you are not your own." Paul, though, is not speaking to the church as a whole as if they corporately decided that they would go to prostitutes. Paul's concern is with those individuals who felt that their personal activities were inconsequential to themselves and the whole church.

We have seen, then, that from the start of the letter Paul is quite interested in the salvation and maturity of both the person and the group. His message of cruciformity and cooperation with Christ/the Spirit stems from his understanding of the transition from the old age to the new. Pride, honor seeking, and self-preservation are nullified by the cross: "It is as if Christ's victory over death and the believers' hope of future resurrection *transforms the axes of human existence both individual and corporate.*"³⁹

C. The Social-Anthropological Question

Among the NT authors, Paul is most fond of using σῶμα to refer to the corporate "body." But why is this particular metaphor so central to his reasoning, especially in 1 Corinthians?⁴⁰ Many scholars who recognize that Paul's first canonical letter to the Corinthians was primarily concerned with the unity of the church have found much wisdom in the work of anthropologist Mary Douglas, who noted

³⁷ Following Gundry, *SOMA*, 51-80; see also Wenschkewitz, *Spiritualisierung*, 111-12.

³⁸ T. L. Carter, *Paul and the Power of Sin: Redefining 'Beyond the Pale'* (SNTSMS 115; Cambridge/New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002) 72.

³⁹ Barton, *Life Together*, 202.

⁴⁰ See Jerome H. Neyrey, "Body Language in 1 Corinthians," *Semeia* 35 (1986) 129-70, here 129. Paul uses σῶμα forty-six times in 1 Corinthians; only thirteen times in Romans.

the particular suitability of the physical body as a “model which can stand for any bounded system.”⁴¹ Just as the human body must maintain a structure and protect boundaries, so also the social body. The natural tendency to speak of a group as a body demonstrates the inextricable link between individual and society. Thus, what may seem like ritualistic concerns for purity of the physical body in a religion are, to some degree, “an expression of social control.”⁴²

There is, indeed, much merit to the application of Douglas’s research to Paul’s language in 1 Corinthians, but two qualifying points need to be made. First, the body-as-self actualizes the meaning of the body-as-group (and vice versa). Only in the personal experience of embodiedness is the transference of such symbolism intelligible.⁴³ Not only that, but Douglas argues that the borders between the two bodies (self and society) are sometimes so unclear and obscured that they can become “so near as to be almost merged.”⁴⁴ Thus, one cannot realistically relegate either body to a lower status when Paul uses the same language for both. If emphasis is given to the individual body or the social body, the evidence should be found primarily in the context of the text and not just based on what Paul is generally interested in vis-à-vis his “theology.”

Second, the social body to which Paul refers should be modeled not primarily on the “body politic” but on the body of Christ. This certainly reinforces the notion of a corporate christology whereby the people of God are given a new communal identity in the new creation, and what now determines group boundaries is whether one is “in Christ.”⁴⁵ But the bodily relationship between Christ and the individual is also direct—as is clearly indicated by 1 Cor 6:16-17: *the one who joins himself to a prostitute becomes one body with her . . . but the one who joins himself to the Lord is one spirit with him*. As any one is “in Christ,” that one must demonstrate holiness and maturity because that very one is liable to unite a member of Christ to a prostitute (6:15). The idea behind 6:15 is that what may seem like a harmless physical activity on the part of the Corinthians has a fundamentally destructive

⁴¹ Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo* (1966; repr., London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1978) 115.

⁴² Neyrey, “Body Language,” 131.

⁴³ Fiona Bowie, “Body as Symbol,” in eadem, *The Anthropology of Religion: An Introduction* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2006) 34-61, here 39; see Rodney Needham (*Belief, Language, and Experience* [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1972] 139), who insists that the body is so potent a symbol because it is “the one thing in nature that is internally experienced, the only object of which we have subjective knowledge.”

⁴⁴ Mary Douglas, *Natural Symbols: Explorations in Cosmology* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1973) 112.

⁴⁵ See David G. Horrell, “‘No Longer Jew or Greek’: Paul’s Corporate Christology and the Construction of Christian Community,” in *Christology, Controversy, and Community: New Testament Essays in Honour of David R. Catchpole* (ed. David G. Horrell and Christopher M. Tuckett; NovTSup 99; Leiden: Brill, 2000) 333-42.

and disastrous effect on the relationships among believer, community, and the union with Christ. In part, then, this concern of contaminating Christ is well communicated by the metaphor of the body. Dennis Owen offers a helpful socio-anthropological perspective:

[A] social body would appear to be something other than a social group. . . . Social bodies will experience social diseases whereas social groups experience deviance. In the case of social bodies, social ills will parallel physical ills. Deviants in this view can become tumors—cancerous growths on or within the social body. Their removal or expulsion becomes a matter of primary importance, for left untreated there is the likelihood that they will infect the entire body.⁴⁶

Paul could not have chosen a better metaphorical domain than his somatic one to communicate the contagious potential of sexual immorality, in its capacity to have such a damaging effect on the whole matrix of relationships within which Christ, community, and individual are bound. When some scholars appeal to anthropology to explain the social dynamics of Paul’s body metaphors, they recognize that this metaphor operates via the individual’s reflection on the experience of each person as an embodied self.

D. The Theological Questions

1. *Cultic language.* Bound up closely with the hermeneutical questions that are involved in properly interpreting 1 Cor 6:19 are the dual themes of the presence and operation of the Spirit, and the transference of cultic language to Paul’s converts. In both of these areas, an appropriate question to explore is, *Should the emphasis in Paul’s descriptions of such themes fall on the individual or the community?* We will commence with Paul’s language of the Spirit.

Paul often speaks to his converts of the Spirit being ἐν ὑμῖν, as in 1 Cor 3:16, where the communal temple is the locus of God’s Spirit “among them.”⁴⁷ One may be tempted, then, to read 1 Cor 6:19 corporately and see the reference to the Holy Spirit ἐν ὑμῖν as the nearness of God through the divine Spirit, which fulfills the kind of “new covenant” prophecy found in Ezek 37:27, where God promises to make a habitation *among* the people (ἐν αὐτοῖς; cf. 2 Cor 6:16). But we must not reject the possibility that at other times Paul intends for ἐν to be more individually

⁴⁶ Dennis Owen, “Spectral Evidence: The Witchcraft Cosmology of Salem Village in 1692,” in *Essays in the Sociology of Perception* (ed. Mary Douglas; London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1982) 275-301, here 280.

⁴⁷ Gordon D. Fee, *God’s Empowering Presence: The Holy Spirit in the Letters of Paul* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1994) 115. For ἐν as “among,” see also 1 Cor 14:25, referring to the God who is ἐν ὑμῖν; see Albert L. A. Hogeterp, *Paul and God’s Temple: A Historical Interpretation of Cultic Imagery in the Corinthian Correspondence* (Biblical Tools and Studies 2; Leuven/Dudley, MA: Peeters, 2006) 316.

significant. After all, he is quite fond of speaking of Spirit endowment as occurring in the hearts of believers (Gal 4:6; Rom 5:5; 8:27; 2 Cor 1:22; 3:3).⁴⁸

Robert Jewett points to a particularly instructive description of the possession of the Spirit in Rom 8:9.⁴⁹ Contrasting the life of the Spirit with life in the flesh, Paul states that the Romans should be identified as “in the Spirit, since indeed the Spirit of God dwells among you” (8:9b; my translation).⁵⁰ The language of the Spirit here so resembles 1 Cor 3:16 that it is likely to be understood similarly as the Spirit “among” them. But, as Jewett observes, Paul goes on to personalize the pneumatic statement with the “individual expression” εἰ δὲ τίς πνεῦμα Χριστοῦ οὐκ ἔχει, οὗτος οὐκ ἔστιν αὐτοῦ (“anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him”) (Rom 8:9c). Jewett prefers to label Paul’s speech here as “charismatic” and “mystical,”⁵¹ but it seems that the term “personal” is more appropriate. Nevertheless, I am in agreement with his recognition that the experience of the Spirit defines both “self and community [as] in co-participation with Christ” in equal measure.⁵²

What about Paul’s cultic imagery overall? Is it *more* important for Paul to associate language of temple and sacrifice with the church as a whole or with individuals within it? Certainly the former is in view for some scholars, especially those who have concentrated solely on 1 Corinthians.⁵³ Once the whole spectrum of cultic metaphors is in view, however, Paul shows a surprising interest in the body of the individual as a sacral person or place. Two examples are worth mentioning. First, the *locus classicus* of Paul’s sacrificial metaphorization is Rom 12:1, where he refers to the people’s bodies (plural) as a sacrifice that needs to be presented. The singularity of the act of sacrifice, θυσίαν, suggests an important communal dimension to the passage, but Paul goes on to talk about the renewal of the mind (12:2; 1 Cor 14:15) and his concern for sober judgment (12:3)—a command specifically directed not to the community as a whole but to each individual (παντὶ τῷ ὄντι ἐν ὑμῖν).

Often overlooked in discussions of Paul’s cultic metaphors is his discourse about “our earthly [somatic] tent” (ἐπίγειος ἡμῶν οἰκία τοῦ σκηνῶν) in 2 Cor 5:1,

⁴⁸ The individually identifiable “ecstatic” nature of such spiritual receptivity is fleshed out, with particular interest in Gal 4:6, by David J. Lull, *The Spirit in Galatia: Paul’s Interpretation of Pneuma as Divine Power* (SBLDS 49; Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1980) 66-69.

⁴⁹ Robert Jewett, “The Question of the ‘Apportioned Spirit’ in Paul’s Letters,” in *The Holy Spirit and Christian Origins: Essays in Honor of James D. G. Dunn* (ed. Graham N. Stanton, Bruce W. Longenecker, and Stephen C. Barton; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004) 193-206.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 195-96.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 196.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 206.

⁵³ See the perspectives of Conzelmann and Cerfaux above on pp. 520-21; also Mitchell, *Rhetoric of Reconciliation*, esp. 104.

where he speaks of the individual in language that probably alludes to the Jewish tabernacle. Though it is true that the LXX prefers the term σκηνή in reference to the tabernacle, the cultic milieu is almost undeniable, given the immediate mention of the “building from God” (οικοδομήν ἐκ θεοῦ [cf. 1 Cor 3:9, 16]).⁵⁴ Moreover, the designation ἀχειροποίητος (“not handmade”) is certainly meant to be in contrast to the term χειροποίητος commonly found in the LXX with persistent reference to idols—*cultic* images (Lev 26:1, 30; Isa 2:18; 10:11; 16:12; 19:1; 21:9; 31:7; 46:6). Indeed, it is probably more than coincidence that the Marcan Jesus (14:58) is accused of saying he will destroy (καταλύω [cf. 2 Cor 5:1]) the handmade temple (χειροποίητος) and build (οικοδομέω) a new one without hands (ἀχειροποίητος [cf. Heb 9:11])⁵⁵. But, for Paul, the “tent” and the “building” in 2 Cor 5:1 are referring to forms of the human body, similar to the discussion in 1 Cor 15:47-49.⁵⁶ This connection is strengthened by the fact that in both passages Paul uses the rare term ἐπίγειος to refer to what is “earthly.”⁵⁷ Though Paul is keen on using “building” language in relation to the community (as in 1 Cor 3:16), it is not unusual as a metaphor for the human body, as demonstrated in the Dead Sea Scrolls (1QH 7.4-5, 8-9), where such language expresses human frailty but also the spiritual support of God.⁵⁸

What divides how Paul expresses a cultic understanding of the body in 1 Cor 6:19 from his expression in 2 Cor 5:1 is that in the latter attention is specifically given to the significance of the body (in its present frail form) despite the fact that a new body will be given. What unites the two is an appeal to the body as the locus of the Spirit and a conduit for carrying out the work of the Lord.⁵⁹ In light of this, Paul’s individual application of temple imagery in 1 Cor 6:19 is neither fleeting nor secondary to his concern for the community, but equally bound up with his interest in the glorification of God through *both* the embodied person and the corporate body.

2. *Theological orientation.* Turning to the last question, it must be shown finally that Paul had a *theological* interest in comparing the human body to the

⁵⁴ See Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (NIGTC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005) 370.

⁵⁵ Here, Christ is the high priest of a more perfect “tent” (σκηνή; Vg. *tabernaculum*), that is, heaven (cf. 9:24).

⁵⁶ Andrew T. Lincoln, *Paradise Now and Not Yet: Studies in the Role of the Heavenly Dimension in Paul’s Thought with Special Reference to His Eschatology* (SNTSMS 43; Cambridge/New York: Cambridge University Press, 1981) 61; see also Gundry, *SŌMA*, 150-51.

⁵⁷ Lincoln, *Paradise Now*, 61.

⁵⁸ Fredrik Lindgård, *Paul’s Line of Thought in 2 Corinthians 4:16–5:10* (WUNT 2/189; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2005) 143-44, relying on the work of Mathias Rissi, *Studien zum zweiten Korintherbrief: Der alte Bund, Der Prediger, Der Tod* (ATANT 56; Zurich: Zwingli, 1969).

⁵⁹ See Ralph P. Martin, *2 Corinthians* (WBC 40; Waco: Word, 1986) 116.

temple and balancing this with metaphors of the community as a temple. The reluctance on the part of many to allow for an individual interpretation of 1 Cor 6:19 derives in part from a fear that we will resort to a Bultmannian view of Paul, much like his historical Jesus, that was “unrelentingly nonpolitical,” “socially uninvolved,” and “ethically individualistic.”⁶⁰ But, in hopes of approaching a more nuanced view of Paul’s ethics, anthropology, and ecclesiology, we must investigate his letters to understand truly how he imagined the relationships among the individual, the community, the world, and God. Here I will deal with the main question, Did Paul take serious interest in the life and maturity of the individual?

Regarding the general matter of Paul’s apostolic orientation, we must recognize that his calling was to found, lead, and serve people who would acknowledge the gospel of Christ and worship him. Thus, his letters are generally addressed to groups where Paul’s interest is in the maintenance, growth, and sometimes redirection of the church(es). It would be no surprise, then, that his exhortations of love, steadfastness, and unity are plural, or that he speaks about “*those* who are in Christ Jesus [τοῖς ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ]” (Rom 8:1).⁶¹ Nevertheless, I will draw attention to two points, one minor and one major, regarding Paul’s ministerial orientation. In the first place, we may learn much from the letter to Philemon. Though the salutation of the letter includes other names (e.g., Apphia, Archippus), Peter T. O’Brien recognizes that “[t]hey are not named along with Philemon as recipients of the letter. The matter Paul is dealing with is a personal affair which concerns Philemon alone and the decision to be arrived at is not a concern of the entire community.”⁶² Indeed, Paul apparently prays for Philemon in particular (4, 6), and knows of his personal love and faithfulness to the holy ones (5). Yet the interconnectedness of the individual (Philemon) and the church is manifest throughout the short letter, especially in the closing. Note the interplay of singular and plural pronouns:

Yes, brother, let me have this benefit from you [σου] in the Lord! Refresh [ἀνάπαυσον] my heart in Christ. Confident of your [σου] obedience, I am writing to you [σοι], knowing that you will do [ποιήσεις] even more than I say. One thing more—prepare [ἔτοιμαζε] a guest room for me, for I am hoping through your [ὑμῶν] prayers to be restored to you [ὑμῖν]. Eraphras, my fellow prisoner in Christ Jesus, sends greetings to you [σε], and so do Mark, Aristarchus, Demas, and Luke, my fellow workers. The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your [ὑμῶν] spirit (vv. 20-25).

⁶⁰ These descriptions are applied by Walter P. Weaver (*The Historical Jesus in the Twentieth Century* [Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 1999] 108) to liberal Protestant views of the historical Jesus from the 1920s.

⁶¹ Michael J. Gorman, *Cruciformity: Paul’s Narrative Spirituality of the Cross* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001) 350; also Dunn, *Theology*, 411-12.

⁶² See Peter T. O’Brien, *Colossians–Philemon* (WBC 44; Waco: Word, 1982) 273.

This singular/plural oscillation demonstrates the interrelationship of the individual and the whole. For Paul it is key to recognize that the foolishness, hard-heartedness, or indiscretion of the one is volatile for the whole. Thus, Paul must be as interested in the spiritual development of Philemon for the sake of his house church as he is, in another situation, for the group choices made by the Galatians that have affected their believing communities.

A second correlative matter regards how we interpret Paul's self-awareness in his letters. For, if we read his correspondences to communities and conclude that his primary interest is in the salvation, instruction, maturity, and judgment of groups, we must recognize that just as every eye has a blind spot where it cannot see because the conduit of perception must be connected to the brain, so we miss the very personal way in which Paul (as the "I/me" of the discourse) writes to his converts in communities. When we critically analyze Paul's theology, we must not be blind to the fact that he is an individual and refracts his theology through the lens of his own personal faith. James D. G. Dunn explains: "Paul's own experience played a vital role in the reconstruction of his theology as a Christian and apostle. The theology of Paul was neither born nor sustained by or as a purely cerebral exercise. It was his own experience of grace which lay at its heart."⁶³ This is obvious in a number of passages (e.g., Gal 6:15-17; 2 Cor 4:1-6; 12:9-10; Phil 3:7-11), but none so lucid as Galatians 2, where Paul is addressing the matter of "our" justification (v. 17). His first proof is not an abstract analogy or an interpretation from Scripture but a personal narration: "I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me" (vv. 19-20; my translation). Paul's self-reflective speech was intended not to set him apart from others but to allow Christ's power to penetrate the Galatians' lives through him. As N. T. Wright puts it, "That which was said in the plural in Gal. 1:3-4 is now brought into sharp singular, not . . . because Paul is special but because he is paradigmatic."⁶⁴ What is stated in abstraction as ἀνθρώπος (2:16) is best read through Paul's self-conception as the archetypal "eschatological human being."⁶⁵

This kind of speech not only blurs the boundaries between the typical human and the "I" of Paul's speech, but (as the whole letter bears witness) Paul was also a model for his whole community as he became a representative of Christ to them through the story told by his scars (Gal 3:1; 4:13-14). On these terms, the separate lives of Christ, "I," and "we" have been intertwined and made indivisible by the

⁶³ Dunn, *Theology*, 179.

⁶⁴ N. T. Wright, "Redemption from the New Perspective? Toward a Multi-Layered Pauline Theology of the Cross," in *The Redemption: An Interdisciplinary Symposium on Christ as Redeemer* (ed. Stephen T. Davis et al.; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004) 69-100, here 87.

⁶⁵ J. Louis Martyn, *Galatians: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 33A; New York: Doubleday, 1997) 258.

Christ event. John M. G. Barclay makes a similar point in terms of personal “narratives.”

because the connection and coherence between [the stories of Paul, Israel, and the church] is Christ crucified, they do not cohere by the normal criterion that the smaller plot fits within the larger, on a timescale congruent with human historiography. Although the crucifixion of Christ was indeed an event in history, it punctures other times and other stories not just as a past event recalled but as a present event that, in an important sense, happens anew for its hearers (Paul and the Galatian Christians) in “the revelation of Jesus Christ.” In the preaching of the gospel, time becomes, as it were, concertinaed [*sic*] [that is, collapsed], and the past becomes existentially present.⁶⁶

The same general point seems to be applicable in terms of Paul’s perception of bounded anthropology. What may previously have been perceived as separate or divisible personal boundaries of identity have been “punctured” by the cross and blended into the identity of Christ and his people through the Spirit.⁶⁷ Thus, for interpreters of Paul to separate out the group with a bias against the individual is nonsensical, as the two cannot be divided neatly. This has become an apocalyptic reality that parallels Paul’s “no longer Jew nor Gentile . . . no longer slave or free . . . no longer male and female” (Gal 3:28a). If he witnessed the modern scholarly tendency to devalue the “individual” in his letters, he might reply “there is no individual or community” but “you are all one in Christ Jesus” (cf. 3:28b).

III. Conclusion

In the course of this investigation we have seen that yet another complex matter in the interpretation of Paul’s letters and the understanding of his thought is the manner in which he directed his discourses to his converts. If it was common, owing to the influence of Luther and Bultmann, to orient Paul’s theological attitudes toward the individual as the primary recipient of salvation and the object of God’s transformative power and justification, the voices of scholarship (especially in the last forty years) have forcefully swung the pendulum in the direction of the community. Pauline scholarship has greatly profited from a necessary encouragement to attend to the social dimensions of Paul’s ministry and a more historically accurate picture of *why* Paul engaged in theological dialogues. Yet some have

⁶⁶ John M. G. Barclay, “Paul’s Story,” in *Narrative Dynamics in Paul: A Critical Assessment* (ed. Bruce W. Longenecker; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2002) 133-56, here 146.

⁶⁷ This point is made by Susan Eastman (*Recovering Paul’s Mother Tongue: Language and Theology in Galatians* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007] 119; more generally, 63-88), who likens Paul’s language to prophetic discourse where such figures “speak in solidarity with both the recipients of their message and its source, God.”

understood Paul’s social interests as his only significant interests, as if he cared only about groups and not individuals. A clear case of this tendency is found in some recent interpretations of 1 Cor 6:19, where Paul is supposedly not referring to the *individual* body but the *communal* body, attempting to filter this text through the corporate application of temple imagery in 3:16. As I have observed, though, Paul is fond of a dialectic interplay that transfers christological import to the individual and the community (as in Rom 8:9; see above).

Thought we dare not turn back to Bultmann, we may find wisdom in the perspective of someone sympathetic to his interest in the individual but focused on the wider horizons of God’s transformative power—Ernst Käsemann. Käsemann resisted the temptation to fit Paul into a particular stereotype and limit his potential to be radical.

The other New Testament writers view a person more or less as the representative of a group—Judaism or the Gentile world, the chosen people, the disciples, the church. For Paul, too, this aspect has its relevance, and he always has it in mind. But at the same time, with unusual emphasis and by no means merely paraenetically, he brings the individual, as believer or unbeliever, into prominence. This can hardly be by chance: the faith in the God who justifies the ungodly which Paul proclaims so passionately . . . breaks through the religious regulations and social ties or limits which had obtained before. In so far as these are still retained and recognized, they are merely the sphere in which the Christian has to prove his liberation from the forces which had once enslaved him, and with it the sole sovereignty of Jesus. *Even within the church he must not fall back under the pressure of similar dependencies; even in the community of the body of Christ he is more than a dispensable member of a corporation, for he is the irreplaceable representative of his Lord.*⁶⁸

What Käsemann affirms here, no doubt, springs from such apocalyptic statements as 2 Cor 5:17, where new creation is demonstrated by *any* person being in Christ (τις ἐν Χριστῷ). As the universe is in fact a “battleground,” and each person represents the *cosmos* in conflict, Käsemann sees anthropology in direct relationship to cosmology “because the fate of the world is in fact decided in the human sphere.”⁶⁹ This is all bound up in his view of the sovereign lordship of Christ, where each individual as well as each church must submit to the authority of Christ and allow Christ’s power to be manifest in the individual body. With such a perspective in mind, Käsemann observes that, as mutual cooperation was vital for Paul, it could exist only when each member is operating in his or her unique role. But the inimitable contribution of each one cannot take place while the individual is dominated by Sin—“a victim of its powers”: “According to the apostle, indi-

⁶⁸ Ernst Käsemann, *Perspectives on Paul* (trans. Margaret Kohl; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1971) 4 (emphasis added).

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 23.

viduation does not follow from already existing individualities; it is a crystallization of our calling, in which the point at issue is the universal lordship of Christ.”⁷⁰

Hence, the human body must be a temple of the Spirit that accepts the ownership and rule of God (1 Cor 6:19-20) in order to enable individuals to have victory over sin and death (15:56-57) and appropriate their particular gifts for the sake of the communal temple (3:16). In the end, we must look to the details of Paul’s ostensibly convoluted discourses about how the person participates equally with the community in Christ and, in Paul’s theology, find meaning that goes beyond an individual/communal divide.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 31.