

Gal. 2:10

They asked only one thing, that we remember the poor, which was actually what I was eager to do.

Paul worked among the predominantly Gentile congregations to gather a collection for those in the mother church not only to ease their dire plight, but to make tangible the bond which drew diverse groups together in Christian community. It was a way for Gentiles to acknowledge their indebtedness for the spirit of blessings which belonged to the Jews and to offer a visible expression of the mutual concern they shared in Christ (cf. Rom. 15:27). Two theological affirmations emerge worthy of consideration. First, *the unity of the church is built on one gospel of grace*. This means, then, that the common tie drawing Christians together is not to be discovered in mere agreement about doctrinal matters or in a joint ethnic heritage or in a national bond or in social homogeneity. There are matters to which people are naturally attracted and often determine the consistency of a church or congregation in North America, if not in the West generally. The question, however, is whether these particular attractions usurp [appropriate] the function of the gospel as the essential bond of the church and end up as exclusive rather than inclusive ties. Rather than unity what tends to develop is a uniformity or perceptions, morals, or styles of life; and those who fail to conform move on or drop out. In contrast, what we learn from verses 1-10 is that the gospel produces a church in which unity exists with amazing diversity.¹

What Paul struggles for in the early church is one of diversity and mutuality, where Gentiles are not forced to become Jews and *vice versa*. Being clear about

¹ Charles B. Cousar. *Interpretation. Biblical Commentary on Galatians* (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1982), 41.

the nature of the gospel does not constrict or confine the church; instead, it removes all the false conditions to unity laid on by years of tradition. When the message is one of grace and forgiveness, freedom is not destroyed either by pressure of conformity or by the contending force of pluralism. It is, to use Moltmann's phrase, "an evangelical unity," not an ethnic, social, or legal one. [Another point of 2:1-10] is that the *one gospel of grace pushes Christians towards a visible unity.*² To be one in Christ means constantly to be alert to those experiences in life and history when the gospel leads to a visible unity between individuals, groups, and churches. a) it is a unity discovered in the context of mission.³ The missionary movement of the nineteenth century gave rise to the ecumenical history of the twentieth. b) remembrance of the poor provided at least one occasion after the meeting when Gentile Christians could demonstrate materially their concern for Christian brothers and sisters in Jerusalem. Christian unity is not to be confused with mere tolerance or indifference or the absence of strife. Like love, it longs for expression in some tangible way, the participation of one partner in the life of the other. Common worship experiences and educational ventures, joint mission projects, the sharing of loaf and cup may not be sufficient, but at least they represent occasions where the celebration of the gospel in word and deed can be unifying bond and congregations can move a step or two beyond their separateness.⁴

Gal. 2:15-21.

a person is justified not by the works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ (v. 16).

Paul's statement on justification [by faith alone] arise out of his reflection on and defense of the Gentiles' entrance into the church, not out of his reflection

² Charles B. Cousar. *Interpretation. Biblical Commentary on Galatians* (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1982), 42.

³ Cousar. *Interpretation. Biblical Commentary on Galatians*. 43.

⁴ Cousar. *Interpretation. Biblical Commentary on Galatians*. 44.

on the question of how personal guilt is alleviated. Krister Stendahl and Markus Barth, among others, have repeatedly pointed out that the church from the end of the first century until the time of Augustine gave almost no attention to Paul's doctrine of justification, because there were no serious debates about the relation of Jews and Gentiles in the church during that period. Augustine, however, in his study of Paul found justification to be the key to his theology. In "making it relevant" he lifted it out of its original context in the missionary struggles of the apostolic period and made it answer the question of guilt raised by the introspective conscience of the typical Westerner. In doing so, Augustine individualized the concept. (cf. K. Stendahl, *Paul Among Jews and Gentiles*; and two articles by M. Barth, "The Kerygma of Galatians," *Interpretation* 21:131-46 and "Jews and Gentiles: The Social Character of Justification in Paul," *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 5:241-67).

바울의 "믿음으로만 의롭게 된다"는 말은 개인의 죄를 경감받는 측면에서가 아니라 이방인들이 교회로 들어오는 일을 변호하는 측면에서 나온 말이다.

The same occurs with Luther. Set against the background of the Medieval casuistic system, his theology was shaped by his personal experience, the absorbing search for relief from guilt, and the burden of worthlessness.

The context is a social setting. The specific point Paul wants to make in that context is that God's favorable judgment in Christ means by its very nature that Gentiles are included in the Christian community on no different level or no different terms than Jews. Both belong at the same table.⁵

While the traditional Protestant understanding of justification was shaped by the effort to answer the guilt and inner tensions of individual conscience, Paul's understanding was shaped by his concern for the Gentiles (poor/homeless) and his effort to preach Christ in a pluralistic and divided world.

⁵ Cousar. *Interpretation. Biblical Commentary on Galatians* 56-57.

With the former, justification includes forgiveness but also takes account of a community of the forgiven who are drawn into a solidarity transcending every possible division.⁶

The Roman Catholic tradition tended to stress righteousness as an effectual gift which so shaped the nature and character of believers that they became truly righteous. The Protestant tradition, on the other hand, was inclined to insist that righteousness was an attribute of God in light of which God makes a judgment in favor of believers.⁷

One way out of the dilemma was to look at legal-forensic context of justification, particularly in light of its Old Testament roots, and to redefine it in basically relational terms. If the judge renders a favorable verdict, then all the defendants are placed in a new and right relationship to him. Justification has to do with the determination of the relationship, not with a quality inherent in the judge or in those justified. So far so good. What this redefinition, however, fails to emphasize is the divine activity carried on within the established relationship. In giving believers a new relation to himself God does not then abandon them. His gift becomes a power which both obliges them to obey him and makes the obedience possible.⁸

Paul completely reorients the issue by asserting that salvation is more than simply getting one's name on the list. It has to do with living one's life under the reign of God and of coping with the tension between existence "in the flesh" and existence "by faith." Christ "gave himself for our sins to deliver us from the present evil age" (1:4). To live in the new age into which believers are transferred means to follow the lordship of the self-giving, crucified Christ, to participate in his continuing mission in the world. In other words, justification is not only a gift but also a demand: it is responded to not by a passive resignation

⁶ Cousar. *Interpretation. Biblical Commentary on Galatians*, 58.

⁷ Cousar. *Interpretation. Biblical Commentary on Galatians*, 59.

⁸ Cousar. *Interpretation. Biblical Commentary on Galatians*, 60.

but an active obedience.⁹ What does this mean then? The righteousness of God –given, received, and lived out –is not just a personal but a corporate reality. It involves participation in a community of people who risk their own security by being *for* others whose histories may be radically different, who culturally, ethnically, economically, politically, and/or socially live on the other side of the track. So previously significant divisions no longer matter. Justification for Paul, then, implies social action in the broadest sense. It implicates the recipient in the cause of sisters and brothers of various circumstances who labor under the weight of oppression, affliction, and personal grief. The divine acquittal is received by faith which *is* social concern, or to use Paul’s words, “faith working through love.” (Gal. 5:6).¹⁰

Gal. 3: 28:

There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus.

[This verse] serves as the climax of the entire epistle [of Galatians]. The reason he went to Jerusalem a second time to see James, Peter, and John was to assure the fact that his mission among the Gentiles was not splitting the early community into Jewish and non-Jewish branches. Mutual recognition was an important implication of the faith he was called to preach. When Paul had to confront Peter at Antioch, it was over a question of church unity and how that unity reflected the integrity of the gospel. Throughout the chapter three, Paul redefines the people of God so as to demonstrate that Jews and Gentiles belong together as a community constituted on the basis of God’s faithfulness to his promise. The redefinition is now given a more positive turn and with a revolutionary explicitness that has had profound repercussions [consequence] in the life of the church to this day. “.... For in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith.” The shift is clean and sharp –from “we” to “you,” from slavery

⁹ Cousar. *Interpretation. Biblical Commentary on Galatians*, 61.

¹⁰ Cousar. *Interpretation. Biblical Commentary on Galatians*, 62.

under a custodian to life as heirs, from the law to Christ from division and exclusiveness to the emphatic “all.” The predominant motif is the change of control so that no longer do the people of God look to the law as their symbol of identity, but to Christ.¹¹ Paul says it repeatedly: “in Christ Jesus” (3:26), “baptized into Christ” (3:27), “have put on Christ” (3:27), “one in Christ Jesus” (3:28), “Christ,” that is, belong to Christ (3:29). Being incorporated into Christ qualifies persons as Abraham’s descendants. Since Christ is *the* seed of Abraham (3:16), it is identification with him rather than the law that assures inclusion in the promise.¹²

Paul further describes the reality of Christ’s dominion by saying, “*There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus*” (3:28: NIV). Perhaps behind such a radical statement is that Judeo-Christian conviction that God is one and that, since he is one, he must be the God of the Gentile as well as Jews (so also of slaves and free, of males and females). Paul argues this way in Rom. 3:29-30, [*Is God the God of Jews only? Is he not the God of Gentiles also? Yes, of Gentiles also,³⁰ since God is one; and he will justify the circumcised on the ground of faith and the uncircumcised through that same faith*], and very effectively too, since the premise of the logic is fundamental to Israel’s faith (cf. Deut. 6:4-5): [*Hear, O Israel: The LORD is our God, the LORD alone.⁵ You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might*]. But more explicit here is a Christological rather than a theological conviction. “You are all one in Christ Jesus.” Christ’s death as a means of salvation excludes all other means; he creates one community, not many; thus there can no longer be barriers separating otherwise disparate groups.

Circumcision implied division between Jew and non-Jew and between male and female. Baptism into Christ means unity. But what sort of unity does Paul contemplate? What happens to the ethnic, social and sexual distinctions between

¹¹ Cousar. *Interpretation. Biblical Commentary on Galatians*, 83.

¹² Cousar. *Interpretation. Biblical Commentary on Galatian*. 84.

people? The three sets of polarities Paul mentions are not exactly parallel. One is born either male or female, and that is that (at least for Paul's day). One is born a Jew or not a Jew, though the categories are not so ultimately determined as the male-female differentiation. On the other hand, there is nothing inherent [inborn] in the makeup of either slaves or non-slaves which unalterably fixes their fates. Changes in status were not at all uncommon. Free people, usually for economic reasons, could find themselves in slavery, while the manumission of slaves, unlike the practice of a more recent era, was a regular occurrence. Though the three sets of polarities are not parallel, Paul makes no distinction between them. If Paul himself is taken as a model, one must say that the differences between the categories remain. He continues to reflect a Jewish self-consciousness (cf. Gal. 2:15; II Cor. 11:22; Phil. 3:5; Rom. 11:14), to treat Jews and Gentiles as ethnic units (cf. Rom. 9-11), to address slaves, slave-owners, men and women as distinct groups. In the light of this, the unity he declares is not one, in the first instance, in which ethnic, social, and sexual differences vanish, but one in which the barriers, the hostility, the chauvinism, and the sense of superiority and inferiority between respective categories are destroyed. Being in Christ does not do away with Jew or Greek, male or female, even slave or free but it makes these differences before God irrelevant.¹³

The very fact that the differences no longer matter means that Christians must treat people and groups in this light not only in church on Sunday but in the total affairs of life, in the so-called secular arena as well as the sacred. In 2:11-14 he defends the right of Gentiles to be present with Jews on a common basis at a social gathering. It is not just at worship services that the Jew-Gentile distinction is rendered irrelevant.¹⁴

As for the slavery question, Paul sets a direction in his handling of Onesimus, the runaway slave. He returns him to his owner Philemon "no longer

¹³ Cousar. *Interpretation. Biblical Commentary on Galatians*, 85.

¹⁴ Cousar. *Interpretation. Biblical Commentary on Galatians*, 86.

as a slave but more than a slave, as a beloved brother ... *both in the flesh* and in the Lord” (Phile. 16).¹⁵

The story in regard to equality of the sexes is analogous to that of abolition. Paul’s statements’ about women are also revolutionary. There is Gal. 3:28 and there are other passages where he affirms a healthy interdependence between male and female (cf. I Cor. 11:11-12), statements extremely radical for a former Pharisee: [*Nevertheless, in the Lord woman is not independent of man or man independent of woman. For just as woman came from man, so man comes through woman; but all things come from God*]. He mentions women by name from time to time and always on a par with men, never in a condescending or patronizing fashion (cf. Rom. 16; Phil. 4:2-3). One gets the clear impression that he happily worked side by side with a number of women in his various missionary travels and saw them as partners and not subordinates. In I Cor. 14:34-35 women are enjoined from addressing the congregation, but this passage is likely a later interpolation. It disrupts the flow of the argument and contradicts I Cor. 11:2-16 where mention is made of women participating with men in praying and prophesying. The “household rules” of Ephesians and Colossians describe the submissive role wives play in relation to their husbands (Eph. 5:22-23; Col. 3:18-19), but the Pauline authorship of these letters is in doubt. At the same time, Paul does not openly and vigorously attack the oppression of women anymore than he attacks the institution of slavery. If the parallel with slavery is correct, then the task of the church is to listen to Paul’s revolutionary insights, to shed its dominant male orientation (for the sake of men as well as women), and to discover the fellowship which can occur only when all members are truly free.¹⁶

Jewett sums up the case: the problem with the concept of female subordination is that it *breaks the analogy of faith*. The basic creation narratives imply the equality of male and female as a human fellowship reflecting the fellowship of Godhead; and Jesus, as the perfect man who is truly in the image of God, taught such equality in his fellowship with women so that one may say –

¹⁵ Cousar. *Interpretation. Biblical Commentary on Galatians*, 86.

¹⁶ Cousar. *Interpretation. Biblical Commentary on Galatian*, 87.

must say –that “in Christ there is no male and female.” Any view which subordinates the woman to the man is not analogous to but incongruous with this fundamental teaching of both the Old and New Testaments. To affirm that woman, by definition, is subordinate to man, does not correspond to the fundamental radicals of revelation; rather it breaks the analogy of faith.¹⁷

The redefinition of the people of God is now complete. Before the coming of Christ that people’s pride was the law; it was the gift of God which set her apart as a special people, unlike other nations and religion. By attention to the law she sought to maintain her privileged position as the chosen of God. Then the Messiah came, and the question of who really belongs to God’s people was transformed. Christ fulfilled a promise to Abraham which had to do with the expansion of his family to include non-Jews who do not have the Mosaic law. The people of God no longer is determined by the law but by Christ, belonging to him, being joined to him in baptism. But redefine God’s people in this way is to imply revolutionary consequences for the nature of the new fellowship.¹⁸

Paul’s announcement of Gal. 3:28 in ancient Jewish culture, is like declaration of freedom of slavery in the U.S. sociopolitical and religious culture. This kind of announcement demands radical, reformatory, earthshaking changes in relationship between

5: 13-14: Love your neighbor sums up the law

“For the whole law is fulfilled in one word, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself’” (5:14). Does Paul say here that the law is summarized in the one command “You shall love your neighbor as yourself” Or does he say that in love the law is obeyed and thus brought to completion?¹⁹ A parallel passage, Rom. 13:8-10, suggests that he may have both summarization and completion in mind. The criterion from Lev. 19:18 clearly represents the essence of the law. He seems, however, to go beyond mere summarization by saying that the free life of love in reality (and of course in Christ) does fulfill the law. To put it in the words of the Romans parallel, “He who loves his neighbor has fulfilled the law” (Rom. 13:8). Thus the *love puts the law in proper perspective*. It frees people from misuse through the law and frees the law from misuse by people.

¹⁷ Cousar. *Interpretation. Biblical Commentary on Galatian*, 89.

¹⁸ Cousar. *Interpretation. Biblical Commentary on Galatian*, 89.

¹⁹ Cousar. *Interpretation. Biblical Commentary on Galatia*, 130.

Two comments about this: First, Love is not one virtue among a list of virtues, but the sum and substance of what it means to be a Christian. In dying with Christ and in the subsequent new life, persons discover that they are recipients of God's love, and faith essentially means surrendering to this love (2:20; Rom. 5:5, 8). Only out of such surrender does the fulfillment of Lev. 19:18 become a reality. To say that the law is fulfilled in love is to take account of God's love in Christ. As sinners are placed "in Christ," they remade by love so that they no longer are characterized by self-interest. "For the love of Christ controls us, because we are convinced that one has died for all; therefore, all have died. And he died for all, that those who live might live no longer for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised (II Cor. 5:14-15).

Secondly, love does not do away with the law but confirms it and provides its correct interpretation. Paul turns to the *Torah* (Lev. 19:18) itself to find "one word" which describes its fulfillment. The *Torah* is not then destroyed but set in a new perspective by the command to love. ²⁰ Love finds its true expression in God's giving of himself in Christ (2:20; Rom. 5:6-8), and just such concrete and substantial self-giving lies at the heart of the command to love. The obligation demanded by the law is in no way lessened by love; it is instead made more radical and comprehensive. What is owed to neighbors is not the carrying out of a specific law but a total approach to life: Continually being servants of one another. Love's claim is without restriction. The law, then, has value as a norm only in light of the dominion of grace, the power of love, and the new life of the Spirit. ²¹

²⁰ Cousar. *Interpretation. Biblical Commentary on Galatia*, 131.

²¹ Cousar. *Interpretation. Biblical Commentary on Galatia*, 132.