

PAULINE INFLUENCE  
IN THE DEVELOPMENTS OF  
EARLY CHRISTIANITY

by

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## PREFACE

One of the most complex and trying problems faced by the Church throughout the ages has been that of structural change. Living as she has in a world that is constantly changing and committed as she is to an eschatological goal, this problem always remains with her. However, at certain times and in certain places, this problem becomes decisive. Today seems to be one of these times and the whole world the place. Restlessness and controversy plague her members as she tries to adapt herself to the modern world, and the world itself looks at her with skepticism. Can she survive, and if so, what must she do; what changes must she make?

These are the questions that prompted the choice of the topic of this thesis. It is not the purpose to answer these questions in this thesis, but rather, to undertake a study of structural change in the Church in a different age and at a different place. In particular, the structural changes that occurred in the early Christian community immediately following its founding will be studied. In making this general study, a further attempt will be made to show how St. Paul was influential in both bringing about this change and determining its outcome. From this effort it is hoped some insights might be gained

that will shed some light on the current problem thereby making it more readily understandable.

In order to accomplish this purpose, some of the findings of modern sociology concerning the dynamics of structural change will be used. These will provide a framework for identifying and evaluating the changes in current terms so that insights relevant to current problems might be obtained.

In using this approach, there is a risk that must be taken. The history of the early Christian community can easily be distorted by attempting to fit it into another framework. However, such an exercise is legitimate and can also be profitable. Therefore, to minimize the risk and strengthen the conclusions reached, scholars using different approaches will be frequently cited for support.

The sources that will be used in this study will be Paul's Epistles, the Book of Acts and the interpretations of these works by modern scholars. (For purposes of continuity, the Revised Standard Version of these works will be used whenever cited outside of direct quotes from other scholars.)

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## INTRODUCTION

In the following pages an attempt will be made to summarize the manner in which two scholars, Thomas F. O'Dea and Joachim Wach, describe the general processes by which religious institutions evolve from original religious experiences. An attempt will be made to identify certain universal elements common to such experiences and their institutional evolvments.

This summary will then be used as a framework for analyzing Paul's religious experience and for noting the effects this experience had upon him.

Then, within the same framework, the emergence of the beliefs, practices and organizations of the early christian community will be surveyed with special emphasis placed on the influence exerted by Paul.

Lastly, a general summary will be made and specific conclusions drawn with regard to the influence that Paul exerted on the development of these structures in the early christian community.

## CHAPTER I

### THE ROOTS AND EVOLUTION OF RELIGIONS

#### Methodology

Before presenting a summary of the religious analyses of O'Dea and Wach it might be advantageous to describe and criticize briefly the methodology used by each of these men in their studies.

O'Dea, as a sociologist, employs what he calls the "functionalist approach" and studies religion as "one of the important institutional structures making up the total social system." In this approach, religion is isolated within a framework of a theoretical society composed of various social institutions in a condition of ongoing equilibrium. Its function in relation to the maintenance of the equilibrium of the whole is examined. "Functional theory sees the role of religion as assisting men to adjust to the three brute facts of contingency, powerlessness, and scarcity (and consequently, frustration and deprivation)."

Once the functional significance of religion within the social system is determined, according to O'Dea, the problems of the origin and the processes by which religions evolve can be broached with some indications of where to look for the answers. Briefly his reasoning is as follows: "Functional theory sees religion concerned

with the aspects of experience which transcend the mundane events of everyday life - that is, as involving belief in and a response to some kind of beyond.<sup>4</sup> It emphasizes the importance of "breaking points" where everyday thought and action collapse and it "thus directs our attention to that experience (the religious experience) which is the source of the human response we call religion."<sup>5</sup> Thus, "The question arises in the context of functional theory: What is the religious experience, and how are rites and beliefs and social institutions engendered out of it?"<sup>6</sup>

Wach in his study of religion uses an empirical and comparative approach. He attempts to determine, using a phenomenological analysis, "if anything like a structure can be discovered in all forms of (religious) expression, to what kind of experience this variegated expression can be traced, and finally, what kind of reality or realities may correspond to the experiences in question."<sup>7</sup>

Wach explains how each religious group, with its own intention and self-interpretation of its religious experience, develops its own unique form of expression. By citing many examples and comparing them without making value judgments, he attempts to demonstrate that "the forms of this expression, though conditioned by the environment within which (they) originated, show similarities in structure."<sup>8</sup>

Based upon these similarities in structure he attempts "to develop and articulate a general framework in which scholars of different disciplines interested in religions, as well as adherents of

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diverse religious faiths, could understand each other."

The limitations of both these approaches are rooted in the limitations of the forms of expression and functions which are studied. On the one hand, if the expressive forms or functions are absolutized, the transcendent and unique character of the religious experience itself is lost and religion is divorced from its origins. On the other hand, if the transcendent character of the original religious experience is overemphasized, then the value of the expressive forms and functions is ignored and religion is divorced from history. Both O'Dea and Wach appear to be aware of these dangers. They both emphasize the transcendent character of religious experience as well as the historical roots of its expressive forms and functions.

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### Presentation of Analysis

O'Dea and Wach, in their different analyses of the religious experience, both arrive at the conclusion that there are four basic universal elements in such experiences. A summary of their conclusion is as follows:

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1. A religious experience is an experience of ultimate reality. Wach describes this as "a response to what is experienced as ultimate reality; that is, in religious experiences we react not to any single or finite phenomenon, material or otherwise, but to what we realize as undergirding and conditioning all that constitutes our world of experience." O'Dea, on the other hand, describes it as "man's

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response to breaking points at which he experiences ultimate and sacred power.<sup>13</sup>"

2. A religious experience is one of relationship. Wach describes it as "a total response of the total being to what is apprehended as ultimate reality."<sup>14</sup> O'Dea points out that in responding to this experience, men "tend to model their relation to God, . . . on the existing social relations of their society, expressing attitudes and feelings already present in normal everyday relationships."<sup>15</sup> Thus he says; "religion sacralizes the norms and values of established society,"<sup>16</sup> it does this while providing it with "standards of value in terms of which institutionalized norms may be critically examined and found seriously wanting."<sup>17</sup>

3. A religious experience is one of faith and intense personal presence. Wach describes it as "the most intense experience of which man is capable."<sup>18</sup> O'Dea also emphasizes this point, and he points out further that it "involves man's attempt to respond to and enter into a relationship with what lies behind appearances. It is a human response at the 'limit-situation' - where man breaks through to some kind of beyond."<sup>19</sup> Then, man's identity and selfhood, which are threatened by the impact of contingency and powerlessness, are reaffirmed in the identification with the power that lies behind and beyond experience itself. This, however, he notes, raises the possibility of doubt and indicates the "faith" dimension<sup>1</sup> of this experience. The experience of

presence cannot be objectively verified. Only man's response to this  
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 experience can.

4. A religious experience has a "call" characteristic to it which involves the obligation of response or metanoia. For Wach, it  
 21  
 "involves an imperative, a commitment which impels man to act."  
 O'Dea describes this characteristic more deeply when he says that  
 "In the religious experience men respond to the unusual, to power, to spontaneity, to creativity. Their response is characterized by intense  
 22  
 respect and great attraction." He continues: "Charisma issues a call, and those who for whatever reasons can hear this call respond with conviction. These followers feel that it is the duty of those who have been called to a charismatic mission to recognize its quality and  
 23  
 act accordingly."

After identifying the universal elements of religious experience, O'Dea and Wach both describe the processes by which religious ideas, practices and groups evolve out of the responses to these experiences.

According to O'Dea, these processes involve three things: the evolution of patterns of worship - cult; patterns of ideas and definitions - beliefs; and patterns of association - organizations. The manner in which these in turn evolve he describes as follows:

In the preaching we have the statement of what is believed, its first assertion in discourse. In the cultic activity, we see the expression of basic attitudes in relationship to sacred things, . . . In the brotherhood of believers we have the first form of organization. From

the preaching developed creeds and theology; from the cult, elaborate symbolic liturgies; from the brotherhood, the ecclesiastical organizations.<sup>24</sup>

Wach describes similarly these processes:

There are three traditional ways in which religious experience has found expression: in thought, in action, and in fellowship. All three forms are constitutive, yet only in the context of communion can the intellectual and the practical attain their true meaning. Myth and doctrine comprise the articulation in thought of what has been experienced in the confrontation of Ultimate Reality. Cultus is the acting out of this confrontation in worship and service. Both give direction to and 'center' the community formed by those who are united in a particular religious experience, while the community cultivates, shapes, and develops in thought and action the expression of its religious experience.<sup>25</sup>

Cult is defined as that complex of gesture, word and symbolic vehicle by which the responses, i.e., feelings, attitudes,<sup>26</sup> and relationships, of an original experience are acted out. The patterning of these spontaneous responses of word, gestures, and procedure, the objectification of the original attitudes of the believers,<sup>27</sup> results in the establishment of ritual. Ritual in turn, elicits attitudes in its performers, bringing them to confrontation with their contingency, thereby opening them to the religious experience. It is then, in approaching the ultimate that the ultimate comes to man. Wach says of this function that:

In his religious experience the humbling awareness comes to man that it is not he who establishes a relationship or communion but rather that he is established by and through performance of the religious act.... Man becomes man only by these acts which restore him to his true nature and destiny.<sup>28</sup>

In the attitudes and relationships expressed in cultic action are found the seeds for the emergence of belief patterns and organizations. These attitudes and relationships are given intellectual expression in two major modes and manners: mythical and rational-myth and doctrine. Both of these represent an attempt to make explicit and consistent, the intellectual and existential implications of the original experience and its tradition. They define the "existence and ethics of 'what is' and 'what ought to be done'." As such, these patterns of belief "enter into men's definition of the situations in which they act, their conception of proper goals and the means to achieve them and thus become bound up with practical attitudes towards the most varied aspects of daily life."

The interplay of cult and belief gives rise to religious organizations. In the cultic act which is social by nature, "the group re-enacts its relationship to sacred objects, and through them, to the beyond, and in so doing reinforces its own solidarity and reaffirms its own values."

The stable patterns of association created by cultic action give rise to more formal definitions of relationships. These definitions create roles and functions which differentiate members. Thus, groups based upon a specific purpose come into existence and perform specific functions, giving rise to religious organizations. O'Dea states that "Specifically religious organizations tend to arise as part of this general tendency toward functional specificity."

Once stable associations are organized, they "feed back" and affect cult and ideas. This produces a dynamic situation of interaction and the process of evolvment continues.

### Summary

The roots and evolution of religion as seen by O'Dea and Wach can be outlined in the following manner.

A religious experience is an experience that involves

1. an experience of ultimate reality, 2. an experience of relationship,
3. an experience of faith and intense personal presence, and 4. an experience of conversion.

Religious experiences tend toward expression in three different modes; thought, action and fellowship and are conditioned by the environment in which they originate. The first statement of what is believed is found in preaching, the first expression of basic attitudes in cultic activity and the first forms of organization in the brotherhood of believers. Then, from preaching, creeds and theology develop; from cult, liturgies; and from brotherhood, ecclesiastical organizations.

This general outline will be used as a theoretical framework for systematic organization throughout this study.

Footnotes - Chapter I

1. Thomas F. O'Dea, The Sociology of Religion (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1966), p. 1.
2. Ibid., pp. 2-5. Cf. also Talcott Parsons, Societies: Evolutionary and Comparative Perspectives (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1966): "As a frame of reference for empirical research, functional theory sees society as an ongoing equilibrium of social institutions which pattern human activity in terms of shared norms, held to be legitimate and binding by the human participants themselves."

The conceptual scheme created to study this society consists of three sub-systems; culture, the social system and personality. In this scheme, "Culture is the creation by man of a world of adjustment and meaning in the context of which human life can be significantly lived." It is seen as being "a more or less integrated body of knowledge, pseudo-knowledge, beliefs and values. These define the human situation and the conditions of action for the members of society. Culture understood in this way, is a symbolic system of meanings, some of which define reality as it is believed to be, others of which define normative expectations incumbent on humans."

The social system is seen as a complex of institutions in which each part (each institutional element) is interdependent with all the other parts. An institution is the concrete embodiment of patterns of action in the ongoing life of men. The structure of these institutions is the defined relations inherent in the patterns and socialization is the process by which these patterns are acquired, developed, maintained and transmitted.

Personality is seen as a "somewhat systematic complex of drives, needs, propensities to respond and act, and values" which is patterned by learning the important aspects of culture, but which has an autonomy of its own.

3. Ibid., p. 5. O'Dea further spells out the functional significance of religion as follows:

"It (functional theory) has called our attention to a strategic aspect of all religions: their transcendent reference and its functional significance for culture, society and human personality. Religion provides culture with an anchorage point, beyond empirical

proof or disproof, in terms of which ultimate meaning is postulated. This ultimate meaning provides a ground for the goals and aspirations of men, thereby evoking an attitude of awe which ensures continuing and effective agreement with the values and goals of culture itself. Religion contributes to social systems in that at the breaking points, when men face contingency and powerlessness, it offers an answer to the problem of meaning. It also provides a means for adjusting to the frustrations involved in disappointment, whether this derives from the human condition or the institutional arrangements of the society. The function of religion for human personalities is that it supplies the basic ground guaranteeing the meaningfulness of human life and effort, and offers an outlet for expressive needs and a catharsis and consolation for human emotions. It likewise supports human discipline by its sanctification of the norms and rules of society, and thereby plays a part both in socializing the individual and in maintaining social stability." (p. 16)

4. O'Dea, Sociology, p. 13.
5. Ibid., p. 18.
6. Ibid.
7. Joachim Wach, Sociology of Religion (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1944), p. 30.
8. Ibid., p. 47.
9. Wach, The Comparative Study of Religions, ed. Joseph M. Kitagawa (New York: Columbia University Press, 1958), p. xi.
10. O'Dea expresses his awareness in the following quote:  
 "All religious thought, of course, once it reaches a level of sophistication, recognizes that the reality of the presence encountered in the beyond is a supra-empirical matter, not subject to generally accepted empirical proof. Moreover, sophisticated Western theology casts its definition in terms of analogical concepts taken from everyday language and attributed to God in analogy only. Hence such theologies admit, so to speak, that important aspects of their ideas are socially and culturally conditioned. Belief in the supraempirical involves faith; definition by analogy involves projection of here-and-now characteristics into the beyond." O'Dea, Sociology, p. 30.

Wach similarly says:

"When seen historically, culturally, sociologically, and

religiously, our experience and its forms are always conditioned. An absolutely spontaneous religious experience is as inconceivable as its counterpart, an absolutely determined one. This does not endorse relativism or determinism of any sort. Rather it is a methodological caveat which should prevent us from absolutizing when we start - as we must - from where we are, from our own religious experience, our own apprehension." Wach, Study of Religion, p. 32.

11. O'Dea, Sociology, pp. 19-35. Wach, Study of Religion, pp. 27-59. Wach in arriving at his conclusion observes the following:  
 "There seem to be four views on the nature of religious experience. The first is the notion that there is no such thing and that what passes for it is an illusion. This view is held by many psychologists, sociologists, and philosophic thinkers. The second view allows the existence of genuine religious experience but holds it cannot be isolated because it is identical with general experience. The third view completely identifies one historical form of religion with religious experience, a procedure which is characteristic of a strictly conservative attitude in many religious communities. The fourth view is that there is genuine religious experience and that it can be identified by means of definite criteria which can be applied to any of its expressions." Wach, Study of Religion, p. 30.
12. Wach, Types of Religious Experience (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951), p. 32.
13. O'Dea, Sociology, p. 27.
14. Wach, Study of Religions, p. 32.
15. O'Dea, Sociology, p. 29.
16. Ibid., p. 14.
17. Ibid.
18. Wach, Study of Religions, p. 35.
19. O'Dea, Sociology, p. 27.
20. Ibid., pp. 30-33.
21. Wach, Study of Religions, p. 36.
22. O'Dea, Sociology, p. 24.

23. Ibid., p. 23.
24. O'Dea, Sociology, p. 39.
25. Wach, Study of Religions, p. 121.
26. Ibid., p. 39.
27. O'Dea, Sociology, p. 40.
28. Wach, Study of Religions, p. 97.
29. O'Dea, Sociology, p. 45.
30. Ibid.
31. Ibid., p. 41.
32. Ibid., p. 47.

## CHAPTER II

### PAUL'S RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE

Throughout his writings, Paul refers to an event to which he attributes his conversion and consequent call to be an Apostle (Phil. 3:4-12; Gal. 1:12-24; I Cor. 9:1; 15:8f; I Tim. 1:13). In the Book of Acts, there are also three accounts of this same event (Acts 9:1-19; 22:5-16; 26:12-20). Though the accounts in Acts are highly interpretive and Paul's references short on detail, scholars agree that the event was a genuine religious experience for Paul; that it involved an encounter between Paul and the risen Christ, and that it resulted in his conversion and consequent commitment to be an apostle of Jesus Christ. However, not all scholars agree as to how this event took place. Many theories have been proposed, but none of them appears to be completely satisfactory.

For the purposes of the analysis that will follow, the interpretations of W. Davies, G. Montague, J. McKenzie and D. Stanley will be used. These men all agree on at least the following points: The religious experience undergone by Paul at his conversion was essentially an experience of the living Christ, who he understood to be the Lord risen from death, who he perceived as being somehow present and active in the world of men through his disciples, and from whom he received

the call to be an Apostle.

These will be used as starting points for analyzing Paul's religious experience within the framework established in the preceding chapter, that is, as an experience of ultimate reality, relationship, faith and personal presence and conversion. However, for organizational purposes, the order will be reversed and the conversion aspect of his experience will be discussed first. Then his conversion will be related to his personal encounter with the risen Christ. This in turn will be followed by a discussion of how he conceived of the risen Christ and his new relationship to God in and through him.

### An Experience of Conversion

To show that Paul's religious experience was an experience of conversion, it will be necessary to describe what Paul was like before his encounter with the risen Christ and, what he was like after this encounter.

#### Before His Encounter

Before his encounter with the risen Christ, Paul described himself as a Pharisee, so dedicated to the law that he persecuted the early Christians in its name.

For you have heard of my former life in Judaism, how I persecuted the Church of God violently and tried to destroy it, and I advanced in Judaism beyond many of my own age among my people, so extremely zealous was I for the traditions of my fathers (Gal. 1:13-14).

Paul apparently thought that since Jesus of Nazareth had been put to death, condemned by the law, he was doing God's will in persecuting the Christians for still believing in him. These Christians implied by their belief that Jesus of Nazareth was the Messiah, that is, that the "way of the law" as God's way of dealing with man had been replaced by him. Paul, as a Pharisee, could not accept this. To more fully understand this point and consequently what Paul's conversion entailed, it will be necessary to trace briefly the development of the concept of the "way of the law" as it was held in Pharisaic Judaism at Paul's time.

The history of Israel as it is recorded in the books of the Old Testament is a record of Yahweh's intervention. Yahweh entered into man's history according to man's way of being, in and through particular historical events which occurred at specific times, in specific places and in which specific men were involved. His intervention may best be characterized as that of a call, an invitation: I, Yahweh will be your God, you will be my people. (Ex. 6:7).

Historically, the men of Israel responded to the God who delivered them from bondage in Egypt by entering into a covenant relationship with him. The terms of this agreement were specified in the law promulgated through Moses. Henceforth, the Israelites became the chosen people of Yahweh, elected not to privilege but to service as agents of his will. Correlative with the idea of election was that of obedience. The covenant relationship implied ipso facto, the acceptance

of the obligation to obey the demands made by Yahweh. The covenant was conditioned by obedience. "Now therefore, if you will obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation" (Ex. 19:5).

The will of Yahweh was identified with the law. It directed the human actions of the Israelites and dictated their behavioral orientations, thereby constituting them a people. As a people Israel became the vehicle whereby men of succeeding generations encountered Yahweh. The law became the structure in which the descendants came to the experience of Yahweh's will. In living this will, they came reflectively to a deepened awareness of the nature of Yahweh as a personal being and what it meant to be his people. The law in turn was revised to incorporate the new understanding and Israel thus grew and matured as a people.

In this process, as the Israelites settled in the land of Canaan, a tendency was ever present to Canaanize the spirit of the covenant. The law was often used as an instrument for national purposes rather than religious. This tendency became especially strong during the period of the kings. It resulted in a general breakdown of the covenant and obedience to the will of Yahweh. In reaction to this tendency, the prophetic movement arose. The prophets were men raised up by Yahweh. Their task was to interpret the covenant and proclaim the meaning of Israel's historical experience.

G. Von Rad summarizes the results of the prophetic movement as follows:

The net results of the prophetic message, in so far as it is possible to formulate such a thing, was a terrifying interpretation of the will of Jahweh for Israel and an equally terrifying prediction of new action in history on his part. But the prophets did not make this the basis for a command to Israel to grapple with her fate through doing her utmost to save herself by once more obeying Jahweh. To imagine that they made the renewal of the broken covenant relationship dependent upon a more meticulous fulfillment of the commandments would be to misunderstand them completely.<sup>10</sup>

However, though the prophets did not make the renewal of the covenant dependent upon a more meticulous fulfillment of the law, this is precisely what did happen in Israel. The exile, which occurred when the monarchy failed, caused a crisis in the faith of the people. The destruction of Jerusalem was interpreted as the judgment of Yahweh upon Israel for breaking the covenant. As a consequence of this, a movement of repentance began in the communities in exile. This movement was based upon the belief that the covenant could be renewed by returning to the traditions as they were recorded in the book of the law of Moses.<sup>11</sup> This movement under Ezra, became the dominant movement in the post-exilic community.

McKenzie points out that in the post-exilic community, "the written word of the law replaced the spoken word of the prophet as the vehicle of the revelation of Yahweh; prophecy yielded to the scribe as the guide of the faith of Israel."<sup>12</sup>

A further indication of this as Weber points out, was the practice which arose in Judaism of applying Jeremiah's criterion for determining false prophets (Jer. 23:9ff) as an authoritative criterion for determining false interpretation. Weber summarizes Jeremiah's criterion as follows:

Not only is the prophet self-evidently false if he teaches false gods or whose prophecy remains unfulfilled, but every prophet is bound by the law and its commandments and whoever seeks to estrange men from them is a false prophet. Hence only <sup>13</sup>one who converts men from their sins can be truly god-sent.

This criterion was applied to the interpreters of Israel's faith. They too were bound by the law and its commandments. Thus the religion of Israel tended toward legalism.

With this milieu in post-exilic Judaism, a group called the Pharisees arose which taught observance of the law in its strictest sense. To protect this observance, they built a fence around the law itself. This consisted of legal opinion, the "oral law", which "advanced the obligations of the law beyond the sense of the words, <sup>14</sup>and thus made it more difficult to violate."

Anderson sums up this whole development by saying that "According to Pharisaic Judaism, Israel's pilgrimage leads through the Old Testament to the Talmud and to a continued life of expectancy." <sup>15</sup>

Davies also notes that in the Judaism of Palestine in Paul's <sup>16</sup>day, the identification of the law with wisdom was commonplace.

In the Old Testament Wisdom literature, wisdom was

portrayed as being pre-existent and operating both in the cosmos in creation and in the world of men in redemption. Thus when the law became identified with wisdom, it was given the same characteristics; pre-existence, participation in the creation of the universe and instrumentality in the redemption of men.

Against the preceeding background, it is easier to understand why Paul, as a Pharisee, could not accept the the Christian claim that Jesus of Nazareth was the Messiah. He could not grasp how he who was condemned and put to death under the law could be Yahweh's instrument of salvation to Israel. This was scandalous and blasphemous for Paul. He persecuted the Christians in the name of the law. Ironically, it was here that he encountered the risen Jesus of Nazareth.

#### After His Encounter

A good source describing what Paul was like after his encounter is his own Epistle to the Galatians. There he sets forth his own defense against a charge of ignoring the way of the law which was brought against him by his fellow Jewish Christians.

Paul, in preaching to the Gentiles, did not require observance of the law as a pre-condition for becoming a follower of Christ. The more extreme Jewish Christians could not accept his readiness to waive the demands of the law, so they sent envoys to follow him and to discredit him in the eyes of his converts. (Gal. 1:6-10). They argued

that Paul had no real authority since he was not one of Jesus's original followers. They attempted to persuade Paul's converts to adopt their version of the gospel which included observance of the Jewish law. It is not surprising that in view of this hostile attitude, Paul refers to these men as preachers of a "different gospel" (Gal. 1:6).<sup>17</sup>

Paul answered the questioning of his authority by referring to his conversion experience in which Christ was not only revealed to him by the Father, but in which he was also directly commissioned to preach the gospel.

But when he who had set me apart before I was born, and had called me through his grace, was pleased to reveal his Son to me, in order that I might preach him among the Gentiles, I did not confer with flesh and blood, nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me... (Gal. 1:15-16).

However, the charge that he had no authority was in a sense peripheral.<sup>18</sup> Beneath lay something more serious. The reason the "judaizers" were so upset with Paul, was that he did not require his converts to obey the law. Thus, they concluded, the gospel Paul preached was false.

Paul responded to this more serious charge by first appealing to two passages from the Old Testament, Gen. 15:6 and Hab.2:14. From these he argued that even in the tradition of Judaism,<sup>19</sup> faith rather than obedience to the law was the basis for salvation. How little Paul intended that faith should be opposed to obedience, however, is clear from the rest of his argument.

Paul introduced the notion of Sonship to show how we are heirs through faith to the promises of Abraham which, according to the judaizers, could only be gained by circumcision and observance of the law.

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But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a custodian; for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. . . . And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise (Gal. 3:25-29).

By faith and baptism men are united to the risen Christ. This identification makes us sons of God and because we are sons, heirs to the promise made to Abraham by God. Paul then elaborated on his argument, showing how Christ, by exercising his Sonship in obedience to the Father, replaced the old law. Moreover, the Christian, motivated by the Spirit within him, lives the same life of obedience, no longer to the law but directly to the Father.

But when the time had fully come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons. And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!" (Gal. 4:4-6).

As can be seen, Paul's answer to the judaizers' charges is not found in his attack on the old Torah. But rather, he shows that with the coming of Christ, a whole new stage in the history of salvation began. He and all Christians were no longer bound by the old law but, all who accept Jesus Christ stand under the judgment and mercy of a new law, Christ within them.

This apparent identification of Christ with the new law will be taken up again later in this chapter. For present purposes, what is of importance is that after his encounter with the risen Christ, Paul became convinced that the law as God's way with man had been replaced by Christ. Thus Paul converted, lived and preached the way of the cross rather than the way of the law.

The question which still remains to be answered, however, is what caused this radical change in Paul? This leads to the second point of the analysis, namely, that his religious experience was an experience of personal presence from which his conversion resulted.

Experience of Faith and Personal Presence

Paul, as well as the author of Acts, indicates that his conversion was a direct result of his encounter with the risen Jesus of Nazareth.

But when he who had set me apart before I was born, and had called me through his grace, was pleased to reveal his Son to me, in order that I might preach him among the Gentiles, I did not confer with flesh and blood, nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me, but I went away into Arabia; and again I returned to Damascus. . . . Then I went into the regions of Syria and Cilicia. And I was still not known by sight to the churches of Christ in Judea; they only heard it said, "He who once persecuted us is now preaching the faith he once tried to destroy"(Gal. 1:5-23).

Paul's reference here to his encounter with the Father's revelation to him of the Son and to the fact that he consulted with no one before preaching to the Gentiles, "underscores the personal,

interior nature of the experience", and the fact that he did not need to  
 22  
 consult with others to accept it. This is further indicated by the  
 details of the second conversion account in Acts. There Paul is  
 described as the only one that is affected by the light clothing the risen  
 Christ even though others are present and seeing the light (Acts 22:5-16).  
 That Paul is blinded by this light, says Stanley, is a physical sign of  
 23  
 the interior change that occurred in Paul, namely, his conversion.

These details also illustrate the faith dimension of the  
 experience. Paul himself did nothing on his own that would account for  
 the "grace" of his conversion but rather, this experience was an  
 unearned gift to him from the Father. When he refers to this experience  
 in Philippians, the same theme is present.

If any other man thinks he has reason for confidence  
 in the flesh, I have more; circumcised on the eighth day,  
 of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew  
 born of Hebrews; as to the law a Pharisee, as to zeal a  
 persecutor of the church, as to righteousness under the  
 law blameless. But whatever gain I had, I counted as  
 loss for the sake of Christ. Indeed I count everything as  
 loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ  
 Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss  
 of all things, and count them as refuse, in order that I  
 may gain Christ, and be found in him, not having a  
 righteousness of my own, based on law, but that which  
 is through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God  
 that depends on faith (Phil 3:4-9).

Perhaps it was this awareness of the utter gratuity of his faith, derived  
 from his experience of the risen Christ, that led Paul to stress so  
 often the fact that salvation depends on faith.

From the above, it may now be concluded that Paul's

religious experience was one of faith and personal presence and that his conversion resulted from this experience. However, to more fully show this, it will now be necessary to look a bit further and see how Paul conceived of the person he encountered. This will lead to point number three of the analysis, Paul's religious experience as an experience of the ultimate.

Experience of the Ultimate

The person Paul encountered on the road to Damascus he understood to be Jesus of Nazareth raised from the dead; Jesus as the Messiah - "the ultimate, final figure of history," who continued to live on in the world of men through his followers. This is strikingly brought out in the accounts in Acts. All three accounts emphasize that in persecuting the Christians, Paul was really persecuting Jesus himself. "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me? . . . I am Jesus of Nazareth whom you are persecuting" (Acts 9:4-6; 22:8; 26:14-16). How could this be? Paul came to realize that God had indeed raised the crucified Jesus of Nazareth from the dead and in so doing had revealed him as Messiah and Lord.

Stanley points out that the details in the first two accounts of Paul's conversion in Acts reflect this awareness.

First, the intervention of Ananias in the first account (Acts 9:1-19) underscores the fact that Christ is living on in his disciples. It is not the risen Christ but Ananias who admits Paul into the

community by baptizing him and curing him of his blindness.

Secondly, the prominent use of the image of light in the second account to describe the physical effect of Paul's blindness stresses that "it is the risen Christ exalted in divine glory who manifests himself to Paul."<sup>26</sup>

In his own description of his encounter, Paul characterizes his awareness as the Father's disclosure of Sonship of Jesus to him.

But when he who had set me apart before I was born, and had called me through his grace, was pleased to reveal his Son to me, in order that I might preach him among the Gentiles, I did not confer with flesh and blood, ...but I went away to Arabia... (Gal. 1:15-17).

What this meant to Paul can be shown further by looking at his summary in Romans of the gospel he has been called to preach:

...the gospel concerning his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh and designated Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness by his resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord... (Rom. 1:3-4).

From the above it may be concluded that Paul understood the person he encountered to be God's own Son who became a man, died, was raised from the dead, and thereby was revealed as Messiah and Lord by his continued action in the world of men through his disciples. This is to say that his encounter with the risen Christ was an encounter with the ultimate. This leads to still another question. If the risen Christ was for Paul the ultimate, how did this affect his relationship to God? This question will be confronted by considering the final point of this analysis: Paul's religious experience as one of relationship.

### An Experience of Relationship

To demonstrate this point it will be helpful to recall how Paul, as a Pharisee, conceived his relationship to God. For a Pharisee, man's relationship to God was conceived of in terms of the law. Righteousness, complete and total obedience to the law, was prescribed as the necessary condition for inclusion in the blessings of the covenant.

Consequent upon his encounter with the risen Christ, Paul became aware that a new stage in the history of salvation had begun in which the old law had been replaced. He also became aware that all who accepted Jesus Christ now stood under the judgment and mercy of a new law, Christ within them, and that by faith in him, they were made righteous. What this apparent identification of Christ and the new law meant for Paul will need some further elaboration.

### Christ the New Law

It is true that at no point in his epistles does Paul make explicit in so many words his recognition of Jesus as the new law. Why he did not do so is not of concern here. The point that is important is that Paul did transfer to Christ the notions which Judaism cherished about the old law, the attributes ascribed to it, and the functions it had been assigned in the history of salvation.

Davies suggests the importance of this transfer has not been sufficiently emphasized for the proper understanding of Paul's  
27  
thought.

Therefore, it will be necessary to develop these points in considerable detail to understand Paul's new relationship to God in Christ.

First, by the law, Judaism meant "all that God has made known of his nature, character and purpose and of what he would have man be and do." <sup>28</sup> It is clear then, if our thesis be correct, that Paul would think of Jesus as the law, not only in the sense that his words were a law, but that he himself in toto was a full revelation of God and of His will for man. That Paul did so think of Christ is immediately apparent when the following passage from his Epistle to the Ephesians is read:

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. He destined us in love to be his sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, to the praise of his glorious grace which he freely bestowed on us in the Beloved. In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace which he lavished upon us. For he has made known to us in all wisdom and insight the mystery of his will, according to his purpose which he set forth in Christ as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth.

In him, according to the purpose of him who accomplishes all things according to the counsel of his will, we who first hoped in Christ have been destined and appointed to live for the praise of his glory. In him you also, who have heard the word of truth, the gospel of salvation, and have believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, which is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory. (Eph. 1:3-14).

Paul here expresses in one continuous burst of thanksgiving, his conception of the Christian salvation-history as a unified

whole. He dwells upon "the mystery," divine revelation; the harmonious unified order of salvation in the risen Christ, who, by his presence in the Church, provides that wisdom and true knowledge which is the blueprint for all Christian life; and the Spirit whose presence makes what was promised beforehand an already existing reality. Stanley commenting on this passage notes that "the novelty of this conception lies in Paul's realization that the 'keystone' (Eph. 2:20) in the whole divinely ordained order of salvation is to be found in the Person of Jesus Christ."

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Another theme that is unique in Paul's thought and which has come to be known as the problem of the "Wisdom Christology" in the Pauline Epistles, can be used to support the thesis further. This theme is most clearly presented in the following passage from Colossians:

He is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creation; for in him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or authorities--all things were created through him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. He is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning, the first-born from the dead, that in everything he might be pre-eminent. For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross, (Col. 1:15-20).

The significance of this passage, according to Davies, is that in Old Testament Wisdom Literature, the function of wisdom was twofold: it operated both in the cosmos in creation and in the world of men in redemption. This twofold function is here transferred to

Christ by Paul. He is presented not only as the agent in creation in a physical sense but also as the agent of the moral recreation of mankind. As was previously indicated, in rabbinic Judaism, the law had become identified with the wisdom of God and had been given the same characteristics: pre-existence, participation in the creation of the universe, and instrumentality in the moral discipline or redemption of mankind. Thus, for Paul, the identification of Christ with wisdom also meant identification with the law.

A final similarity to consider is the obedience commanded by the law in Pharisaic Judaism. According to Paul, this now is owed to Christ. In his interpretation of the Christian dispensation, Paul carried over many of the covenant concepts of Judaism. The Pauline account of the last supper is but one example of this (I Cor. 11:17-34). There he presents the death of Jesus as the inauguration of a new covenant. He exhorts the Corinthians to become more aware of the unity that should exist among them since it is by his death that Christ gave birth to their community.

The occasion which triggered this interpretation and exhortation was the "disobedient" manner in which some at Corinth were eating the bread and drinking the cup of the Lord. Paul's inclusion of the phrase, "do this...in remembrance of me" might also serve as a reminder to them that it was by his obedience in death that Christ inaugurated the new covenant. Those who are not obedient to this continuing death, are eating and drinking the judgment of the Lord upon themselves.

In other passages where Paul talks of the death of Christ, this theme is often repeated. Perhaps the most celebrated of these texts is the following:

If, because of one man's trespass, death reigned through that one man, much more will those who receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man Jesus Christ.

Then as one man's trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one man's act of righteousness leads to acquittal and life for all men. For by one man's disobedience, many were made sinners, so by one man's obedience many will be made righteous (Rom 5:17-19).

The universality of redemption is attributed to Jesus' obedience. To illustrate this Paul uses categories rooted in the Jewish notion of solidarity.

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In summary, Paul saw obedience to the death-resurrection (person) of Christ as the key to the continuing life of the community and to the universality of redemption just as Pharisaic Judaism saw obedience to the law as the way of life in Israel and of righteousness. Thus, he saw his new relationship to God as being "in Christ." The reason he did not explicitly call Christ the new law remains a question to be explored further, but, for present purposes, it would not be doing any injustice to Paul to infer that for him, Christ was the new law.

### Conclusion

Paul's religious experience was an experience of encounter with the risen Jesus of Nazareth. It occurred against the background of Pharisaic Judaism in which the law was of central importance influencing belief, cult and organization. It impressed upon him the

fact that in Christ, the Father had initiated a new stage in the history of salvation. In reacting to this encounter, Paul converted and lived a new life in which Christ replaced the law. In formulating his understanding of this new relationship to God, he transferred to Christ the notions by which the law had been conceived, its purpose in creation and history, its mediating role in man's relationship to God, its function of structurizing the community, and the obedience it commanded. In so doing, he also gave expression to his understanding of the universality of this new dispensation in man's history.

Footnotes - Chapter II

1. Walenty Prokulski, S.J., "Conversion of St. Paul" CBQ 19 (1957), pp. 453-472. Speaking of Paul's conversion, Prokulski says: "Not only sincerely believing theologians but also the most skeptical historians agree at least on this point: St. Paul actually saw Christ, both in the flesh and in glory, and regarded this appearance of the Son of God as a command to teach and to convert. The vision on the road to Damascus was, for Paul, a genuine "religious experience" (p. 453).
  
2. Ibid.: "Believing critics, all Catholics and many non-Catholics, regard Paul's conversion as a miracle, in the true sense of the word, wrought in his soul by the resurrected and glorified Christ, who appeared to him in person at Damascus. But even here there appears much difference in views as regards the real cause for the miracle. Some reject the view that Paul was actually prepared for the miracle, for the simple reason that no miracle can have a natural cause; therefore, they offer no explanation whatsoever.... Other writers, ... who do not wish to be accused of acknowledging that it was simply a miracle, agree with the former natural conditions favoring Paul's conversion. These are given as follows: his remorse at a sin committed in his youth, his conviction of inability to attain righteousness through the observance of the Law, the example of the persecuted Christians, and especially that of Stephen at the moment of his martyrdom, and all that was written in the Scriptures concerning a Messiah, who was to suffer and die" (p. 456).
  
3. D. Stanley sums up the significance of Paul's Damascus experience in the following three points: "1. The primary intuition of Jesus Christ as the Son of God risen from death, 2. the realization that the risen Jesus was somehow present and active in the world of men through his disciples, 3. the origin of Paul's vocation as Apostle to the pagans, more specifically, of his role as Servant of Yahweh." David M. Stanley, Christ's Resurrection in Pauline Soteriology (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1961), pp. 49-50. W. Davies: "Two things, therefore, converge in Paul's conversion. The awareness of the Lord as Jesus - that is, of the ultimate as crucified - and the awareness of the people of God as despised Christians. The recognition of Jesus as Lord

is extricable from the recognition of his followers as the people of God. W.D. Davies, Invitation to the New Testament (New York: Doubleday, 1966), p. 263. G. Montague: "The impact of the Damascus vision established in Paul's consciousness two truths, . . . Jesus is Lord; the Church is Jesus." George T. Montague, The Living Thought of Saint Paul (Milwaukee: Bruce, 1966), p. 4. J. McKenzie: "All the accounts make clear the decisive importance of the Damascus experience not only in the conversion of Paul, but also in determining the personal qualities of his faith and his gospel: its focus on Jesus as the glorified Lord who has risen from His saving death and lives in His Church; Paul's own commission to preach Christ to the Gentiles, with implications for the universal scope of the gospel which even Paul did not see immediately; the concept of election; the total salvation which Jesus brings; the importance of the resurrection." John L. McKenzie, Dictionary of the Bible article on 'Paul' (Milwaukee: Bruce, 1965), pp. 648-649.

4. Walther Eichrodt, Theology of the Old Testament tran. by J. A. Baker (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1961), Vol. 1, p. 37. He refers to the fact that the basic element in the whole Israelite experience of God is "the factual nature of the divine revelation." God's revelation is not grasped speculatively, not expounded in the form of a lesson; it is as he breaks in on the life of his people in his dealings with them and moulds them according to his will that he grants them knowledge of his being.
5. Ibid., pp. 36-45.
6. W.D. Davies, Paul and Rabbinic Judaism (London: S.P.C.K., 1965), p. 260.
7. Bernard Cooke, "Christ in Scripture" Studies in Salvation History ed. by Luke Salm (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1964), pp. 116-117. Cf. Eichrodt, Theology of the Old Testament, Vol.1, p. 39: "That which unites the tribes to one another and makes them a unified people with a strong sense of solidarity is the will of God."
8. Eichrodt, Theology of Old Testament, pp. 70-177. In two chapters dealing with the Covenant Statutes, "The Secular Law" and "The Cultus", Eichrodt deals with the formation, transformation and transmission of the law. In his treatment he goes to great lengths to show that when one is dealing with the Israelite legal tradition, one is not dealing with a sacred law which is a rigid entity, fixed once for all, but with the "formation and development of social and cultic ordinances which correspond to actual historical situation and in which differing trends are striving to prevail." In the closing of

his chapter on the cultus, he has a synthesis which though lengthy, is worth quoting here.

"Taking it all in all it may be said that both as a means of expression and as a sacramental institution the cultus performed a vital and indeed indispensable function in the Yahweh religion. Even if many elements in it were never fully assimilated, yet the overall pattern of the worship of God from the very first took its special stamp from the unique nature of man's relationship with God as the Old Testament understood it. The living relation between belief and cult showed itself in the incessant transformation and extension of cultic forms, revealing the massive power of assimilation inherent in the religion of Yahweh. . . . Not until the period of later Judaism, when piety underwent a transformation of the greatest consequences which turned the religion of Yahweh into a religion of observance, was there a threat that the soteriological character of the cultic actions might be obscured by the attempt to comprehend them all in the one-sided classification of works of obedience. This development, however, was not something based on the essential nature of the cult; it was the result of its subjection to the alien standard of legalism." (pp. 176-177)

9. Ibid., pp. 238-240.
10. Gerhard Von Rad, Old Testament Theology, tran. by D. M. Stalker (New York: Harper and Row, 1965), Vol. II, p. 404.
11. Bernhard W. Anderson, Understanding the Old Testament (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1957), pp. 451-460.
12. J. McKenzie, Bible Dictionary, article on "Prophecy", p. 698. Anderson agrees with McKenzie on this point. He says:  
 "Preoccupation with the Law seemed to stifle the spirit of prophecy. And understandably so, for if the basis of the holy community was the Law, regarded as directly revealed to Moses and written in a book, the greatest need was for scribes (like Ezra) who could study it, expounding its meaning, and preserve it carefully." B.W. Anderson, Understanding the Old Testament, p. 462.
13. Max Weber, Ancient Judaism (Glencoe, Illinois: The Free Press, 1952), p. 392.
14. J. McKenzie, Bible Dictionary, article on "Law", p. 499.
15. B. W. Anderson, Understanding the Old Testament, p. 537.
16. W. Davies, Rabbinic Judaism, pp. 170-171.

17. C.H. Dodd, Meaning of Paul for Today (New York: Meridian, 1957), p. 52:  
 "It was the controversy with the Jewish National Party in the Church that drove Paul to formulate and defend the principles underlying his Gospel. The laboured argument which fills large sections of the letters to Rome and Galatia - and which has often been treated as almost the only valuable element in the Pauline writings - is to be regarded as apologetic directed against Pharisaic Judaism (which he knew by early training from top to bottom) and its revival within the Christian Church."
18. W. Davies, Rabbinic Judaism, pp. 76-77.
19. Ibid., p. 222.
20. D.M. Stanley, Pauline Soteriology, p. 267. Fr. Stanley, commenting on the significance of Christ's sonship in Paul's thought says the following:  
 "It is with the epistle to the Galatians that Paul begins to understand, by means of his own supernatural experiences, the intimate and personal nature of the Christian's present relationship to the risen Christ as Son of God. He refers to his own conversion as the Father's revelation of His Son in me' (Gal. 1:16). He perceives that the pattern of his own Christian life is determined by its relation to Christ as Son: 'By faith I live in the Son of God' (Gal. 2:20). The same verse recalls that it was as God's Son that Christ gave the supreme proof of his love by dying for men. For Paul, he is pre-eminently 'the Son of God, who loved me and handed himself over for my sake'. This redemption, effected by the Father's sending of his Son, had as its purpose man's adoptive filiation, revealed by the indwelling 'Spirit of his Son'" (Gal. 4:4-6).
21. W. Davies, Rabbinic Judaism, pp. 222-223.
22. D. Stanley, Pauline Soteriology, p. 41.
23. Ibid., p. 43.
24. W. Davies, Invitation to the New Testament, p. 262.
25. D. Stanley, Pauline Soteriology, p. 43. Cf. also, Stanley, "Paul's Conversion in Acts: Why the three accounts?" CBQ 15 (1953), pp. 315-338.
26. Ibid., p. 44.
27. W. Davies, Rabbinic Judaism, pp. 148-149.

28. George Moore, Judaism in the First Centuries of the Christian Era (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1932), p. 263.
29. D. M. Stanley, Pauline Soteriology, p. 216.
30. W. D. Davies, Rabbinic Judaism, p. 152.
31. Ibid., pp. 225-245.

### CHAPTER III

#### PAULINE INFLUENCE IN EARLY CHRISTIANITY

In the first chapter it was postulated that religious experiences universally tend toward expression in three different modes - thought, action, and fellowship; that in the preaching is found the first statement of what is believed, in cultic activity, the first expression of basic attitudes and in the brotherhood of believers, the first forms of organization; that from the preaching, creeds and theology develop, from cult - liturgies; and from brotherhood - ecclesiastical organizations; and that the beliefs, practices and organizations that evolve are conditioned by the environment in which they originate.

In this chapter, an attempt will be made to determine according to this framework how the preaching, cult and brotherhood of the early church evolved, and in particular how Paul, as a member of the community, conditioned by his Pharisaic background, influenced the development of these.

The specific questions that will be considered are: How did the "gentile problem" arise within Judaism?; How did it become the focal point of the preaching cult and brotherhood of the early community? Finally how did Paul in reacting to this problem, become the spokesman for the gentiles and exert his influence to establish the principle of

the gentile mission.

### The Gentile Problem In Rabbinic Judaism

In chapter two, it was shown that in the Old Testament the law became the instrument which formed Israel into the vehicle whereby men of succeeding generations could encounter Yahweh, know his will, and through obedience achieve their promised destiny. What can also be shown is that the law not only constituted Israel, but it also differentiated the Israelites from other peoples. Von Rad notes, "the saving event whereby Israel became Jahweh's is indissolubly bound up with the obligation to obey certain norms which clearly mark out the chosen peoples sphere, particularly at its circumference....the community solemnly and ritually separates itself from those with whom the Lord chose that it should have no fellowship." Early in her tradition, when her destiny was associated with the possession of a land, the practice arose of recognizing only those who permanently resided in the land and kept the law as belonging to the "people of Yahweh." Only these were heirs to the covenant promises.

Without going into a detailed discussion of the process whereby Israel's self-understanding developed and found expression in her law, let it suffice to point out that two poles of thought seem to have emerged in the process: particularism and universalism. These two poles were developed in the prophets and are reflected in varying views on proselytism in rabbinic Judaism.

Particularism sets the hostile gentile nations against Israel and regards them as godless and doomed to damnation. In Ezekiel, Israel is saved exclusively. The most extreme expression of this position is found in IV Ezra. With the gentiles in mind, the author writes: "Thou hast said that they are nothing and that they are like unto spittle and Thou hast likened the abundance of them to a drop in a bucket" (IV Ezra. 5:23-27).

Universalism, on the other hand, tended to think that through the instrumentality of Israel, all nations were to be converted and included in the Messianic kingdom. According to the great prophet of the Exile, Deutero-Isaiah, Israel was given, not merely "to raise up the tribes of Jacob and to restore the preserved of Israel," but also "to give light to the Gentiles, to make God's salvation known to the ends of the earth" (Isa. 49:6).

Unfortunately, in rabbinic Judaism, the missionary challenge of Deutero-Isaiah was not taken up. In the centuries after Exile, circumstances favored the growth of a narrow nationalism in line with the thought of Ezekiel. The post-exilic history of Judaism became the history of a "fenced" community, the fence being the law. The only hope for the Gentile was to become a Jew, i. e. to be naturalized into the Jewish people.

The development of this attitude seemed to act as a spur rather than as a hinderance to the practice of proselytizing even though the rabbis seemed to have oscillated between a desire to keep

off proselytes with one arm and the desire to draw them in with the  
 4  
 other. The complete and total damnation of the Gentiles was a bitter  
 pill to swallow. To soften this doctrine, various theories were  
 formulated within rabbinic Judaism to prove that the Gentiles had been  
 given the same chance as Israel. One theory claimed that the Gentiles  
 had been given the opportunity of accepting the law but had refused it,  
 and another held that prophets had been sent to them just as Moses had  
 5  
 been sent to Israel.

Concerning the actual practice of proselytism, three steps  
 6  
 of affiliation were distinguished. First of all, there was the "friend"  
 who accepted the monotheist belief in God and the Jewish ethic but who  
 did not accept the Jewish ritual and had no formal relation to the  
 congregation. Secondly, there was the "proselyte of the gate" who  
 vowed before three members of the community to honor no idols. The  
 seven Noachidic commandments, the Sabbath, the taboo against pigs,  
 and the ritualistic fasts were binding on him, but circumcision was not.  
 He was a passive member of the community with limited rights of  
 participation in festivals and celebrations in the synagogue. Thirdly,  
 there was the "proselyte of righteousness" who, after being circumcised  
 and assuming ritual duties, was received into full community member-  
 ship. The "proselytes", inasmuch as they were circumcised and  
 Israelites in religion, were held to the observance of the whole law  
 just as those who had been born Jews.

The official reception of a "proselyte" consisted of

circumcision, baptism and an offering of a sacrifice in the Temple.

During the baptism, which was symbolic of the Exodus, two men skilled in the law stood beside the one being immersed and recited some of the principal precepts of the law.

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### The Gentile Problem In the Early Church

From the preceding discussion it is not hard to see why the "gentile problem" was in the air at the time of the early church. Moreover this problem became focal within the Christian community quite early.

According to account in Acts, the earliest headquarters of the Christian community was Jerusalem. There, following the Pentecost experience, the Apostles began to proclaim to all Israel that by his resurrection and exaltation Jesus had become Lord and Messiah (Acts 2:33 ff). They also announced that with this event, a new, long awaited, era had begun. The proof of this lay in the coming of the Spirit. The victory over death accomplished in Jesus was described as the beginning of the re-establishment of God's reign over the world. The first "advent", that is, the historical life of Jesus of Nazareth, was the preliminary step. The consummation of this act of God in Christ's resurrection and exaltation gave rise to expectation of his second coming in which his full powers as Messiah and Lord would be manifested.

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Thus, the apostles announced the "good news" and preached "repentance" while awaiting what they thought to be an imminent "second

coming."

However, since the early Christians conceived of Jesus' messianic action as something that would only be fully consummated sometime in the future, they continued to observe the law, visit the synagogues and worship in the temple (Acts 2:42-27). They remained with the mainstream of Judaism as a messianic movement. The Jewish authorities, as it is recorded in Acts, made attempts to silence the leaders of this movement (Acts 4:1-5:42), but, when they were not successful, they adopted a policy of tolerance, hoping that in time the new movement would wear itself out (Acts 5:34-42).<sup>9</sup> Thus, tolerated by the Jewish authorities, the messianic movement began to grow and communities of Jewish Christians soon were founded not only in Jerusalem but also in Judea, Galilee, Samaria and the sea coast.<sup>10</sup>

As these communities grew and flourished, they were joined by a number of Greek proselytes and Greek speaking Jews from diaspora. According to Johannes Weiss, these converts were treated in the same manner as the so-called "God-fearing" gentiles in the Jewish communities of the diaspora. They were admitted to the religious services without being circumcised and observed only part of the ceremonial law. In addition, they were baptized, which was to some extent regarded as a substitute for circumcision and which corresponded in some ways to the Jewish baptism of proselytes. Furthermore, there was no feeling of doubt that salvation would come to them in fullness. The Spirit had manifested himself in them as well as

11

in the Jewish Christians giving proof that God had accepted them.

However, the Greek Christians began to complain to Jerusalem that they were not receiving proper treatment from their Aramaic speaking brethren. To meet the situation, the Apostles appointed seven of them to act as charity commissioners in Jerusalem (Acts 6:1-6).

The peace did not last. Stephen, one of the Greek commissioners, precipitated a crisis (Acts 6:8-7:60). Being a Greek Christian he did not consider temple worship as a necessary part of his new-found faith and publically attacked the Jewish cultus.<sup>12</sup> Adolph Harnack, commenting on Stephen's position as recorded in Acts, states that "Stephen did not urge any changes - these were to be effected by Jesus, when he returned as Messiah. All he did was to announce them by way of prophecy, thus implying that the existing arrangements<sup>13</sup> (cultus) were valueless."

The apostles apparently were willing to minimize the claims of Stephen, for in the ensuing disturbance they were unmolested. But, Stephen was put to death and the Greek Christians were driven from Jerusalem (Acts 7:58-8:2). One of these Greeks, Philip, who also had been a commissioner went to Samaria where he succeeded in making a number of gentile converts (Acts 8:4-8). In effect, this was the beginning of the Christian mission to the gentiles. Thus, Harnack says of Stephen, "He did not urge the gentile mission, but by his words and death he helped to set it up."<sup>14</sup>

The crisis brought about by Stephen's prophecy and death soon became an internal crisis within the Christian community itself. The more conservative Jewish Christians were determined to preserve their orthodoxy. Though they were not opposed to the admission of the gentiles, they were emphatic that the latter be circumcised and obey the law. They maintained that to remain within the Judaism of Judea, loyalty to the whole law had to be preserved. If the demands of the law were modified and the doors opened to the gentiles, the whole messianic movement would be exposed to the suspicion of the Jewish authorities and the chances of winning Israel would be severely damaged. Thus, in effect, the Jewish Christians, for the sake of Israel, were willing to erect "a high wall in front of God's grace, in that they required first the fulfillment of the law and then - God's grace." <sup>15</sup>

These in general were the conditions within the Christian community when Paul began to preach. As will now be shown, in confronting these conditions, Paul became the spokesman for the gentile mission, and as such made his major contribution to the growth and development of the early church. <sup>16</sup>

### The Influence Of Paul

Paul's career as an apostle apparently began when he was authorized by the church at Antioch to go with Barnabas on a preaching tour to the gentiles. <sup>17</sup> On this tour, Paul adopted the practices of the Greek missionaries, preaching first in the synagogues and then to the

gentiles, not requiring circumcision and full observance of the law. Following the completion of this tour, the problem of the 'gentile Christian' came up again.

News of the success of Paul and Barnabas reached Judea and certain Jewish Christians there, travelled to Antioch to insist on the need to circumcise all converts (Acts 15:1). The 'gentile' crisis came to a head.

The Christians at Antioch were very upset with this demand. They saw it as a check on their work. Their possibility of winning gentiles would be seriously hampered if they had to preach the law and practice circumcision. As a consequence of the dissension that arose, Paul and Barnabas were sent to Jerusalem to confer with the Apostles on the matter (Acts 15:2).

The exact details of the conference that took place there are not recorded, but from Gal. 2:1-2 and Acts 15:6-21 it is possible to discover its highlights. A summary of Paul's argument, according to Davies, whereby he asserted his right not only to preach to the gentiles but to accept them into the church without requiring their adherence to the Jewish law goes as follows:

It was Paul's contention that the Church was the true Israel and that the Jews, who had failed to understand that they had been chosen by God not primarily for the enjoyment of a privilege but for the performance of a service, had been replaced by the 'righteous remnant', the New Israel. So the Christian community, composed of Jew and Gentile alike, could appropriate the Jewish hope, and its members were 'Abraham's seed, heirs according to promise.' Thus the divine purpose which ran through

all the history of Israel, from the call of Abraham onwards, had entered upon the final stages of its fulfillment, which included the gathering in of the Gentiles. As regards the law, Paul, while not denying that it was holy, declared that it was not an end in itself. It was an interim dispensation to reveal the true nature of sin and convince man of his helplessness, thus acting as a 'tutor to bring us unto Christ.' It was therefore no longer authoritative, and loyalty to it, which might not unreasonably be expected of Jewish converts, was not to be demanded of those Gentiles responding to the proclamation of the gospel.<sup>20</sup>

Acts records that Peter, James and John were impressed by Paul's presentation and gave their approval to his practices (Acts 15:13-30). They chose, however to confine themselves to the Jewish mission. The conference ended with the giving of 'the right hand of fellowship' which meant that they all bound themselves to partnership<sup>21</sup> in the work before them.

"Thus it was", as Harnack says, "that Paul preached the crucified Christ to the Gentiles and not only established the principle<sup>22</sup> of the gentile mission but made it a reality."

It is necessary at this point to look closer at Paul's argument to see exactly what the "principle of the gentile mission" was, and then, how he made this principle a reality.

Paul realized that it was no longer observance of the law<sup>23</sup> which brought one into the covenant of blessings but, faith in Christ. The religion of the law was essentially a national religion. To accept it meant not only initiation into a religion but incorporation into a nation; "naturalization into the Jewish people was the only way by

which an alien could hope to share in its glorious future."

Christ, however, was a revelation of God apart from the law and this meant that one could be a Christian without being a Jew and the doors were open to the gentiles. In Judaism, there could be no Greek or Scythian. In Christ, there would be both Greek and Jew, slave and freeman, male and female (Gal 3:28). The national principle had been transcended.

In the words of C.H. Dodd, "for Paul to accept Christ meant that he was outside the law and therefore on common ground with gentiles, and hence the true church of Christ must rest upon the principle, 'there is no distinction', in Christ there is neither Jew nor Greek."

Thus, it can be concluded that the principle of the gentile mission was that "there is no distinction."

Now, the question remains, how did Paul make this principle a reality? This question will be answered by considering three points: first, Paul's concept of the new community of Christians as manifested in his preaching, secondly, the cultic principles he adopted for admitting new members, thirdly, the principles he established for conduct within the brotherhood of believers.

Before beginning, however, it might be well to point out that in making the gentile principle a reality, Paul did not start a new religion. The fact that Paul is himself very much a product of early Christianity has often been obscured by an over-emphasis on the

"miraculous" nature of his conversion. Thus, as Davies points out, "It has often been asserted that Paul was sharply divided from other Christians."<sup>27</sup>

More recent scholars, as was indicated in chapter two, thought recognizing the uniqueness of Paul's experience, also recognize the influence of other Christians and his pharisaic background. Davies perhaps best summarizes this new approach when he says: "It was the encounter with the Church, behind and in which stood Jesus of Nazareth as Messiah, that turned Saul of Tarsus into Paul the Apostle. . . . Paul was converted, not only through the Church, but into the Church."<sup>28</sup>

### The New Community

The Messianic age which Paul believed had arrived, was regarded in rabbinic thought as the age of the Spirit and the age in which the law would come unto its own.<sup>29</sup> Ezekiel looked forward to the age to come as the time when the Spirit would reunite Israel and renew its life (Ezek. 27). Jeremiah, on the other hand, looked forward to that age as the period when a new covenant would be established between Israel and Yahweh.

Behold, the days are coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, not like the covenant which I made with their fathers when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, my covenant which they broke, though I was their husband, says the Lord.

But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will

write it upon their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And no longer shall each man teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord', for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, says the Lord; for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more (Jer. 31:31-34).

It would be stretching Jeremiah's thought to assume that when he speaks of a new covenant he also implied a new law. However, the rabbis generally interpreted this passage in reference to the law claiming that at present one could only know the law imperfectly since one learns it from fallible teachers or one learns it and forgets it. <sup>30</sup>

In the Messianic world, however, all would know the law perfectly, learning it from God himself and never forgetting it. Whether Jeremiah's words be understood in terms of a new law or merely a time of perfect conformity to the old law, the age to come would mark the triumph of obedience to the law and it would be a time when the rebelliousness of the people of Israel would cease. This is, however, in no way incompatible with Ezekiel's vision. For where the Spirit is poured forth, there is fulfilled the hope of Jeremiah. In the same chapter where Ezekiel looks forward to the coming of the life-giving spirit, he speaks, like Jeremiah, of a covenant. "I will make a covenant of peace with them, it shall be an everlasting covenant with them; and I will bless them and multiply them and will set my sanctuary in the midst of them forever" (Ezek. 37:26).

Paul was convinced that he was living in the age of the Spirit. He describes this age as being marked by the new covenant,

whose minister he himself had been commissioned to become. (I Cor. 10)

To be a Christian meant to die and rise with Christ, to undergo a new exodus, to stand at the foot of a new Sinai, and thereby to enter into a new covenant. What, though, was the nature of this new covenant? Jeremiah had envisioned and yearned for a new covenant which would have the essential characteristic of "inwardness"; one that would be written "in the hearts of men". In a passage in II Cor., Paul contrasts the Christian dispensation of the new covenant with that of the old. He claims that he himself has written Christ into the hearts of his converts.

Are we beginning to commend ourselves again? Or do we need, as some do, letters of recommendation to you, or from you? You yourselves are our letter of recommendation, written on your hearts, to be known and read by all men; and you show that you are a letter from Christ delivered by us, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts.

Such is the confidence that we have through Christ toward God. Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to claim anything as coming from us; our sufficiency is from God, who had qualified us to be ministers of a new covenant, not in a written code but in the Spirit; for the written code kills, but the Spirit gives life (I Cor. 3:1-3).

In the following verses, Paul further contrasts the work of Moses with his own work as a minister of Christ. He claims that he had been the instrument for planting a new law in the hearts of Christians. Paul can speak this way because for him the law has become "Christified." This also meant that it was of the Spirit because in his thought Christ and the Spirit are very closely related. Thus, though we cannot say that Christ is Spirit and the Spirit is law, at least we can say that by the Spirit, Christ the new law dwells in the

hearts of Christians. This requires more elaboration.

For Paul the Christian is one who has died and risen with Christ and who is therefore "in Christ." But, through the resurrection, Christ had become the life-giving Spirit (I Cor. 15:45), and so one who is in Christ can also be described in parallel fashion as being in the Spirit (Rom. 8:9 ff). Paul speaks of Christ and the Spirit being in the Christian (Gal. 2:20; I Cor. 3:16; 6:19). Just as dying and rising with Christ involved dying to sin and rising to righteousness, (Rom. 6:1 ff; 8-10) so too, to be in the Spirit or to walk in the Spirit is to bear good fruit: joy, love, peace, long-suffering, graciousness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness and self-restraint (Gal. 5:22 ff). Furthermore, Paul is convinced that he personally has been delivered from "the law of sin and death" by the Spirit (Rom. 8:2), that his preaching is by the power of the Spirit (I Cor. 2:4), and that he himself has the Spirit of God (I Cor. 7:40). His epistles also make it clear that it is the Spirit who leads individual Christians to accept the gospel and calls them to personal holiness (I Thess. 5:13 ff). It is also by the Spirit that the individual Christian is personally joined to Christ as is a wife to her husband (I Cor. 6:17). The body of the Christian is considered the dwelling place of the Spirit (I Cor. 12:20 ff), and by the differing "gifts" conferred by the Spirit, Christians are differentiated from one another (I Cor. 12:-14). Furthermore, the whole of Christian life, in its ethical as well as in its "ecstatic" dimensions, is the expression of the

activity of the Spirit. Love, joy, peace, righteousness and "every

victory won" in the moral sphere are all regarded by Paul as the fruits of the Spirit (Gal 5:22 ff). In summary, both Christ and the Spirit may be said to be the life of the individual Christian (Rom. 8:2; 10; Gal. 6:8; Col. 3:4).

However, to isolate this individual aspect of the Spirit's activity is to distort Paul's whole conception of the Spirit. Just as to be "in Christ" implies an almost corporeal relationship with Christ and other Christians, so too, to be "in the Spirit" means fellowship and unity. For Paul, the Spirit is not only the life of the new man but of the new Israel, the Church, as well. The Church is the body of Christ animated by the Spirit. The solidarity of all Christians with one another and with Christ through the one Spirit is such that Christians as a community as well as individually constitute a temple of the Spirit (I Cor. 3:16). The gifts bestowed upon the individual Christians by the Spirit are not for their own self-gratification but for the upbuilding of the whole Christian community (I Cor. 12:14 ff). And, the supreme expression of the Spirit, agape (I Cor. 13), is by its very nature constitutive not only of a community of like but unlike as well. The fellowship created by the Spirit knows neither Jew nor Greek, (Gal. 3:28), bond nor free, male or female, and involves a sharing of material as well as spiritual benefits (2 Cor. 8:7 ff); (Rom 12:13).

The inwardness of the new covenant of Jeremiah's hope is achieved for Paul through the indwelling Christ, the new law, "written in the heart." The obedience of the Christian man is to the

promptings of the Spirit. But since this Spirit derives His character from a person, and is rooted in the words, life, death and resurrection of Christ, it is also for Paul a new kind of law. The conditions of the messianic age have been met, a new covenant has been made, a new law given, a new Israel formed: the community of the Spirit.

Membership Requirements

If, for Paul, the community of Christians was a new Israel, then it would not be surprising to find some analogy between entry into it and entry into the old Israel. As was pointed out in previous discussion, entry into the old Israel was primarily based upon observance of the law. As was pointed out also, at least in theory, the law was to create a structure in which the Israelites could have the necessary experience and come reflectively to an awareness of God as a personal being. Davies, commenting on the observance of the law as part of the process through which membership in the Jewish community was achieved, says:

It was not only one generation that was to stand at the foot of Sinai to receive the Law but all subsequent generations. The person who fails to read the national experience into his own experience thereby excludes himself from the community. The external facts of history have to become living, present realities; the realization of one's own personal participation, as it were, in these external acts of history ipso facto makes one a member of the nation. The individual must himself make the appropriation, he can choose to regard himself as a slave brought out of Egypt or he can refuse to do so, but his very appropriation or refusal involves him in community or isolation.

What has been said here of the observance of the law and

the effect it was intended to produce may be said equally of the liturgy and ritual of the Israelites, particularly of their Passover celebration.

When Paul speaks of faith, he speaks of the acceptance of the gospel which he had been commissioned to preach, a gospel which Dodd points out is a proclamation of certain events charged with significance. Thus, Paul's doctrine of becoming one in Christ through faith and baptism means making one's own in and through the ritual action of baptism, the death and resurrection of Christ.

W.L. Knox's comment on Rom. 6, which is a key text on baptism in Paul, confirms this.

In Romans 6... the death and resurrection of Jesus replaces the Exodus from Egypt. The proselytes through circumcision and the proselyte's bath, was enabled to come out of Egypt and pass through the Red Sea into the promised land of Israel. This original salvation of the people was re-enacted in every Gentile who was prepared to come out of Egypt, the natural type of evil in a religion whose literature was dominated by the utterances of the prophets who had counselled submission to Babylon. Paul transfers the argument to the death and resurrection of Jesus. Those who share in it through faith pass through the waters of Baptism, are delivered from the old Egyptian bondage to sin and pass instead into a new slavery to righteousness, which results in sanctification. Here the union of the Christian with Jesus is stated in terms of an exchange from one slavery to another on the strength of the Christian conception of the passion and resurrection as the new Passover.<sup>37</sup>

Thus, it may be concluded that the cultic practice for admission into the community was baptism, the ritual re-enactment of the death-resurrection of Christ. This is parallel to the requirement in Judaism.

In this regard, Paul seems to hold a privileged position with respect to the communities he founded. It is always the imitation of himself which he proposes to his converts. Rarely in his letters does he propose Jesus's earthly career as a model for Christian behavior. This would seem to raise a rather interesting problem. Did Paul then simply make up his own ethic?

Stanley answers this question as follows:

The Christian being called to liberty (Gal. 5:13, 18), all extrinsic norms of conduct have been per se abolished. The Christian, ideally speaking, is guided interiorly by the 'law of the Spirit' (Rom. 8:2). Thus in Paul's eyes the 'law of Christ' (Gal. 6:2, I Cor. 9:21) excels the Mosaic law, not as a loftier moral code excels a more primitive one, but as the living Spirit excels the 'letter' which 'kills' (II Cor. 3:6; Rom. 7:6). Pauline realism, of course, recognizes that this is the ideal, rarely attained. Because the majority of Christians are sinners (I Tim. 1:9) and because even the holiest of them are in danger of falling from grace (Gal. 5:17), some external rules of Christian conduct are normally a practical necessity. Such laws, however, always remain secondary to the 'law of the Spirit'; moreover, they have a reason for existing only insofar as they are somehow the expression of Christian love (Gal. 5:13-44; Rom 13:8-9).<sup>41</sup>

It is this last point here, "laws... have a reason for existing only insofar as they are somehow the expression of Christian love," that is of special significance. Paul's concept of the Christian life is that of a life "in Christ" which is gradually assimilated, beginning with baptism and reaching consummation with the resurrection of the just. The extent of assimilation, on the other hand, is measured by the positive effects produced by the indwelling Spirit. Oscar Cullmann points out that the dynamic of Christian conduct for Paul springs from

this indwelling of the Spirit which confers on the Christian the power dokimazein, "the capacity of taking, in each given situation, the moral decision conformed to the gospel."<sup>42</sup> Thus, Paul holds himself up as an example to be imitated, recognizing the need in those he has fathered in the faith for an objective, concrete norm against which they can "test" (dokimazein) the influence of the Spirit upon themselves.<sup>43</sup>

Though it is not particularly necessary to go into a detailed analysis of the development of Paul's moral exhortations, it is significant that, as Davies demonstrates, Paul's didactic material is derived from the words of Jesus and the rabbinic tradition and, as was customary within that tradition, it is closely related to baptismal catechesis.<sup>44</sup> A quote from Davies in which he summarizes his findings will further clarify this point.

In view of what we have written it will have become clear that Paul, like other writers of the New Testament, was indebted to baptismal catechetical material and that he used this material in his role as teacher. There was a common storehouse of baptismal hortatory material, probably oral, on which he could draw. Moreover, it is equally clear that in his catechizing of baptized Christians he was following the custom of Jewish Rabbis when they baptized proselytes. To Paul, as to the Rabbis, the convert was a new creation, to be instructed and warned. We may probably rightly surmise that much of Paul's activity in his dealings with converts must have been indistinguishable to outsiders from that of Jewish Rabbis in their proselytizing.<sup>45</sup>

In summary, Paul conceived of the Christian community as the "New Israel", constituted by the risen Christ, the new covenant and law, who was present within them, individually and corporately, by the

power of the Spirit. With this understanding, he adopted the cultic act of baptism, the faith re-enactment of Christ's death-resurrection, as the means of incorporating new members and obedience to the inner promptings of the Spirit as the norm for conduct in his communities.

### Conclusion

In this chapter, the following two points were established. First, Paul, in confronting the "gentile problem", became the spokesman for the gentiles and won a theoretical position of equality within the Christian community for them. Second, Paul implemented this equality in the communities he founded by universalizing the preaching, practices and organization of Judaism.

From these two points, it may now be concluded that the immediate effect of Paul's influence was the securing of theoretical equality for the gentiles and the establishment of this equality in his communities.

Footnotes - Chapter III

1. Von Rad, Old Testament Theology, p. 391.
2. Davies, Rabbinic Judaism, p. 59ff.
3. Davies, Rabbinic Judaism, pp. 61-62. Cf. also, Joseph Bonsirven, Palestinian Judaism in the Time of Christ, tran. by William Wolf (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1965), p. 142:
 

"The Jewish religion is basically national. The God in whom it trusts is the God of the Fathers and the God of Israel, and the favors asked for are mainly those which have to do with the nation's glory and future. Many rituals and sacrifices are performed in the name of the community of Israel. The main goal of the observances is to maintain the people of God in holiness and in the proper state of separation. This explains the Jewish attitude toward observances; we must not make the mistake of believing that the Jews suffocate under a tight net of regulations. They gladly accept their laws and their restrictions because they are accustomed to them, more importantly, because they are happily and proudly determined to preserve the chosen race in all its purity."
4. Dodd, The Meaning of Paul for Today, p. 44:
 

"The Pharisaic party which cherished these views with the deepest convictions (that the rest of mankind was there for Israel's sake) was by no means indifferent to the fate of the non-Jewish world. It is even probable that this sect was prominent in the vigorous Jewish propaganda which was going forward throughout the Mediterranean area at the time when Christianity appeared. But in the nature of things such propaganda could only be a kind of spiritual imperialism. It rested on the assumption of the inherent and eternal superiority of one nation and one form of culture over all others. Individuals of other nations could be incorporated in the chosen people, but it was only as naturalized aliens that they could take their place. They were held at arm's length, admitted only grudgingly and by degrees to the spiritual privileges of Israel..."
5. C.J. Montefiore and H.M. Loewe, Rabbinic Anthology, (London: 1938), p. 576.
 

"The particularist doctrine of the Rabbis was that the

heathen nations could not be 'saved'. They were doomed to hell. Yet sometimes the heart of the Rabbis smote them for this cruel doctrine, even as the heart of some Christian theologians smote them for a similar teaching. For if the heathen knew no better and had never heard of the one true God how could their doom be justified? ...Hence the theory of the 'seven prophets' who 'warned' them. But these prophets had ceased long ago. What then? Well, then came the Law which arranged for the reception of proselytes. Ever since, the nations could become Jews if they chose. The proselytes of each generation are a warning to all their contemporaries. The warning is unheeded; therefore the doom of hell is justified."

6. Weber, Ancient Judaism, p. 419. Cf. also Adolf Harnack, The Mission and Expansion of Christianity, tran. by James Moffatt (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1961), p. 10:

"In other religions, variations of this kind (different degrees and phases of proselytism) usually proceed from an endeavor to render the moral precepts imposed by the religion somewhat easier for the proselyte. In Judaism this tendency never prevailed, at least never outright. On the contrary, the moral demand remained unlowered. As the recognition of God was considered the cardinal point, Judaism was in a position to depreciate the claims of the cultus and of ceremonies, and the different kinds of Jewish proselytism were almost entirely due to the different degrees in which the ceremonial precepts of the Law were observed."

7. Davies, Rabbinic Judaism, p. 66.

8. J. McKenzie, The Power and Wisdom (Milwaukee: Bruce Publishing Company, 1965), p. 196. Cf. Also Johannes Weiss, Early Christianity, ed. by Frederick Grant, (New York: Harper and Row, 1959), Vol. 1, p. 36:

"For Jewish expectation, the Messiah was nothing more than an abstract idea. No matter how brilliantly the fancy might clothe him with power and glory, he still remained a vague, impalpable figure. For the disciples, on the contrary, the heavenly Messiah possessed the perfectly definite, personal characteristics of Jesus. Thus he was removed out of the realm of imagination into that of concrete actuality. Viewed as an eschatological hope, it was an immense step forward that these men no longer looked into the future for the appearance of some kind of Messiah or other, but already knew whom he should be."

9. Harnack, Mission and Expansion, p. 46:

"By their strict observance of the law and their devoted

attachment to the temple, they fulfilled a Jew's principal duty, and since it was in the future that they expected Jesus as their Messiah his first advent having been no more than preliminary step - this feature might be overlooked, as an idiosyncrasy, by those who were inclined to think well of them for their strict observance of the law."

10. Ibid.

11. Ibid., p. 264. Harnack also commenting on practices of the Gentile churches at this time says:

"The Gentile Christian churches of Syria and Cilicia did not observe the law, yet they were conscious of being the people of God in the fullest sense of the term, and were mindful to keep in touch with the mother church of Jerusalem, as well as to be recognized by her. The majority of these cosmopolitan converts were quite content with the assurance that God had already moved the prophets to proclaim the uselessness of sacrifice, so that all the ceremonial part of the law was to be allegorically interpreted and understood in some moral sense." (p. 54.)

12. J. McKenzie, Bible Dictionary. article on 'Stephen', p. 846.

13. Harnack, Mission and Expansion, p. 50. He continues and further says:

"Stephen did not attack the temple and the law in order to dispute their divine origin, but he did affirm the limited period of these institutions. In this way he did set himself in opposition to the popular Judaism of his time, but hardly in opposition to all that was Jewish. It is beyond doubt that within Judaism itself, especially throughout the Diaspora, tendencies were already abroad by which the temple-cultus, and primarily its element of bloody sacrifices, was regarded as unessential and even of doubtful validity. Besides, it is equally certain that in many a Jewish circle, for external and internal reasons, the outward observance of the law was not considered of any great value; it was more or less eclipsed by the moral law."

14. Harnack, Mission and Expansion, p. 50. Harnack further points out:

"So long as it was a question of proselytes, even of proselytes in the widest sense of the term, there was always one standpoint from which the strictest Jewish Christian himself could reconcile his mind to their admission: he could regard the proselytes thus admitted as adherents of the Christian community in the wider sense of the term, i. e., as proselytes still." (p. 52.) Cf. also Weiss, Early Christianity, p. 171:

"This scattering of the Hellenists or at least their leaders

was an important event for the primitive church. With it came a first severance from the main body, a kind of sifting which was to be not without influence on the further development of the Jerusalem church. The death of Stephen was a warning to be cautious and gave the upper hand to the conservative element in the church. Perhaps the distrust of the primitive church for the Hellenistic movement dates from this period, that distrust which becomes prominent in the story of Paul, and also that stiffening in its attitude of loyalty to the Law which we notice more and more as time goes on, and the rise to great prominence of James who now takes up the leadership of the church."

15. Weiss, Early Christianity, p. 265. He further comments concerning their demand for circumcision as follows:  
 "But above all, and here their instinct was quite correct, the Gospel would be denationalized through the Gentile mission and become a message of salvation for all men, the Messiah would turn more and more into a non-Jewish Savior and Kyrios and salvation into a purely individual matter instead of being the concern of Israel. It was important once again to emphasize strongly that the Messiah had come for Israel and that only Jews could have a share in salvation. That was the meaning of the demand for circumcision. It was not just a question of the assumption of a particular obligation of the Law, but of the necessity for the Gentiles to become Jews before they could be Christians."
16. McKenzie, Power and Wisdom, p. 202:  
 "There is scarcely any point of Pauline theology which is not directly or indirectly a response to the Judaizers."
17. Weiss, Early Christianity, pp. 203-206. Weiss points out that there is very little direct evidence of what Paul did during the early years of his life as a Christian. Apparently, he confined himself to preaching in and through the synagogues, attempting to win Israel by being a 'Jew to the Jews' (I Cor. 9:20). How he came to Antioch is uncertain.
18. Ibid., pp. 203-218.
19. McKenzie, Power and Wisdom, p. 200:  
 "In the hypothesis of recent scholars the Council of Jerusalem as it is described never occurred; it is a theological statement of an agreement which was actually reached, and of the position which the Church finally took on the question of the Gentiles."
20. Davies, Rabbinic Judaism, p. 210. Cf. also Stanley, Pauline Soteriology, pp. 71-72.

21. Weiss, Early Christianity, p. 268.
22. Harnack, Mission and Expansion, p. 56. McKenzie commenting on the effect of this crisis on Paul says:  
 "In the sources one can almost catch the shock with which Paul heard the statement that one could not be saved without circumcision and the Law. One imagines him asking himself, "Have I been doing this all wrong?" Reflection followed; and the fruit of the reflection was Pauline theology. To justify his own practice Paul gave the gospel a close scrutiny such as it had not yet received. There is scarcely any point of Pauline theology which is not directly or indirectly a response to the Judaizers. And for this reason the controversy over Judaism is more than a historical curiosity with as much interest for modern Christians as the Monophysite controversy. Out of the Jewish controversy were elaborated the fundamental ideas of Christian doctrine. If there is a key to the New Testament - and there really is not - it would be the Jewish controversy." J.L. McKenzie, Power and Wisdom, p. 202. Cf. also Stanley, Pauline Soteriology, pp. 71-72.
23. Davies, Rabbinic Judaism, p. 67.
24. Moore, Judaism, Vol. 1, p. 233.
25. Davies, Rabbinic Judaism, p. 68.
26. Dodd, 'The Mind of Paul', Ryl Bulletin. Vol. XVIII.
27. Davies, Introduction to the New Testament, p. 264.
28. Ibid. Davies further shows in what precise areas Paul was at one with other Christians. The following quote from him will illustrate this:  
 "In his treatment of Baptism and the Eucharist he is not removed from what other Christians believed. Like other Christians, he drew upon the words of Jesus for moral guidance. Like other Christians, he used the hymns and the creedal formulae which were the common property of the Church. In his understanding of Jesus and of his death, of the Spirit and of the Church itself, Paul shares with other Christians a common treasury of thought. This is not to reduce Paul to the intellectual and spiritual level of all other Christians; it is to recognize that, great as he was, he was not a peculiarity in the life of the Church but a profundity. He set about expounding the Christian faith, which was his through his conversion, not from outside the Church but from within it. ...Christianity for Paul was not merely individual possession but a common tradition."

29. Davies, Rabbinic Judaism, p. 223.
30. Ibid.
31. Ibid., p. 225.
32. Ibid., p. 220.
33. Cf. Rom. 12:ff; I Cor. 12:12; Eph. 4:4; Phil. 2:1; II Cor. 13:13.
34. Davies, Rabbinic Judaism, p. 226.
35. Ibid., p. 104.
36. Dodd, The Apostolic Preaching and Its Developments, p. 3.  
 Cf. also Stanley, Pauline Soteriology, p. 27. Dodd points out that a distinction must be made between what is called the 'preaching' and the 'teaching'. Fr. Stanley, though he does not agree entirely with Dodd, does agree with him on what might be termed 'preaching'. "Preaching may be defined, after Dodd, as 'the public proclamation of Christianity to the non-Christian world'. It is centered upon the redemptive death and exaltation of Jesus as the inauguration of the messianic era;...The preaching ends with a call to metanoia, which is specified as Christian by the act of faith in Jesus' divinity and messiahship, and concretized in the aggregation to the Christian community by the reception of Baptism."
37. Knox, St. Paul and the Church of the Gentiles, pp. 87 f.
38. Davies, Rabbinic Judaism, p. 112.
39. Ibid., p. 112.
40. Ibid., p. 112. Cf. also Stanley, Pauline Soteriology, p. 27. Stanley gives the following description of teaching:  
 "Teaching gives to the convert, who had already responded to the preaching by an act of faith, a deeper theological insight into the meaning of the kerygmatic proclamation. It bears a close relation to the full Christian understanding of 'the Scriptures'. It explains the nature of the Kingdom which has come in the messianic community and instructs the disciple in the salvific meaning of the events of Jesus' life which brought it about. The Pauline epistles furnish one of the best examples of this teaching, inasmuch as they contain abundant instances of a more profound explanation of the truths of the Christian faith, which results in the living of these dogmas in a fully fruitful manner."

41. Stanley, The Apostolic Church in the New Testament (Westminster, Maryland: The Newman Press, 1965), pp. 372-373.
42. Oscar Cullmann, 'Christ et le temps', p. 164, quoted by Stanley, The Apostolic Church, p. 372.
43. Stanley, The Apostolic Church, pp. 388-389. Stanley in the chapter entitled "Become Imitators of Me": Apostolic Tradition in Paul, concludes his investigation of the meaning of Paul's 'imitation of himself' advise to his converts as follows:
- "Our inquiry has yielded the following data. 1. Paul urges this "imitation" of himself only to those communities which he has founded. 2. It is the necessary result of having accepted 'his' gospel which creates a special relationship between himself and the churches he founded personally. While Paul insists that his kerygma is essentially the same as that preached by other apostles, he is also aware that, as his personal testimony to Christ, his preaching and way of life have their own characteristic modalities, determined chiefly by his conviction that he carries on the role of Christ as the Suffering Servant of God. 3. Thus, the 'imitatio Christi' which Paul proposes to his communities is a mediated imitation. It springs both from Paul's apostolic authority as an authentic representative of Christian tradition, and from the recognized need of those he has fathered in faith to have an objective, concrete norm against which they can "test" (dokimazein) the influence of the Spirit upon themselves. W. Michaelis is surely right inasmuch as obedience is certainly one element in this 'imitation' of Paul by other Christians. It involves in addition, however, the help provided by a concrete, 'Vorbild', the specific examples and lessons contained in Paul's own version of the gospel as preached and lived by him.
- Consequently, this "self-imitation" proposed by the Apostle, so necessary in his eyes as a vehicle for the transmission of apostolic tradition, must not be overlooked in any systematic presentation of Pauline moral theology."
44. Davies, Rabbinic Judaism, p. 144. In concluding his analysis of the relationship between Paul's ethical teaching and the words of Jesus, Davies refers to the following quote from Dodd:
- "That Christ loved us and died to save us is the most moving fact in Paul's universe. And he so died 'that those who live should no longer live for themselves'. His love puts a moral constraint upon us. Accordingly the stamp of Christ will be upon the whole of the Christian's daily activity. The 'law of Christ' is binding upon him in all things. That law is apprehended inwardly by the activity of the indwelling Spirit of Christ, for it is the Spirit that gives us 'the mind of Christ'. But it would be a

mistake to divorce this thought from a direct reference to the historic teaching of Jesus Christ. Paul, in fact, not only allows that teaching to mould and colour his own thought to a greater extent than is commonly realized, but he also definitely cites the words of Christ as morally authoritative."

45. Ibid., p. 129.

## FINAL CONCLUSION

It was postulated in the first chapter that religious beliefs, practices and organizations evolve from original religious experiences and are conditioned by the environment in which they originate. With this as a framework the religious experience of Paul was discussed and the following established.

Paul's religious experience occurred within an environment in which Pharisaic Judaism was one element. In this form of Judaism, the law was of central importance, influencing belief, cult and organization. As Paul's manner of thinking, acting, and associating developed following his religious experience of the risen Christ, the influence of the law was discernable. The importance and centrality assigned to the law Paul transferred to Christ. The notions by which it was conceived, the function it was assigned in creation and history, the mediatorial role it served in man's relationship to God, its function of structurizing the community, the obedience it commanded, all of these Paul transferred to Christ.

In turn, Paul, conditioned by his background and as a member of the early Christian community, exerted an influence on the way the beliefs, practices and organization of the Church evolved. In particular, his continued insistence that the law had been replaced by

Christ and was no longer authoritative, secured for the Gentiles a position of equal recognition within early Christianity. Also, in the preaching, practices and organization he adopted for his communities, he established equality for the Gentiles. These efforts further earned him the title of Apostle to the Gentiles.

The further exploration of the consequences of Paul's efforts are not within the immediate scope of this thesis. However, within the framework here established, it would be possible to do so. It is a historical fact that eventually Christianity itself broke from Judaism and became the religion of the Gentiles. Furthermore, the Book of Acts itself literally reflects the emergence of Gentile Christianity and the repression of Jewish Christianity in portraying the victorious march of the gospel from Jerusalem to Rome. The fact that Paul is prominent in this portrayal would seem to indicate that this victory is another consequence of his efforts. To demonstrate this would entail a further analysis of the development of the preaching, practices and organization within Christianity as it is recorded in the Synoptic and Johannine gospels.

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