

CROSS-PURPOSES IN PAUL? VIOLENCE OF THE CROSS, GALATIANS, AND HUMAN DIGNITY¹

Jeremy Punt
Old and New Testament
Stellenbosch University

Abstract

The cross of Jesus is an important theme in Paul's letters, identified by him as the focus and content of his message: Christ crucified (e.g. 1 Cor 1:23; 2:5). In Paul's understanding the death of Jesus was the result of victimisation and violence (e.g. Gal 3:13), complete with its accompanying terror and ultimate destruction of human life and dignity. Moreover, and beyond his candid treatment of the cross, it became in Paul's writings on the one hand the unmasking of imperial (and other) powers and terror, and on the other hand the subversion (disruption) of prevailing perceptions and structures – particularly in the simultaneous association of Jesus with cross and slavery. The emphasis on the cross with slavery as the backdrop is as suggestive of the implicit socio-political context of Pauline letters like Galatians, as the continued use of the symbols of cross and slavery in modern times require further consideration for their impact on the perception and construction of human dignity.

Keywords: Human Dignity, Cross, Slavery, Symbols, Empire, Power

Introduction

The cross is probably the most distinctive of all Christian symbols worldwide and is often identified as the most important symbol in Paul's letters. Scholars and theologians have written about the apostle and his significance from the perspective of the cross, even to the point of making the cross into the organising and foundational metaphor for Pauline theology (e.g. Cosgrove 1988; Cousar 1990; Hamerton-Kelly 1992; Meech 2006).² Such preferential treatment accorded to the cross in Pauline thought is not difficult to understand when his claims are considered, for example that his deliberate choice in discernment in the first letter to the Corinthians was limited to nothing but "Jesus Christ and him crucified" (1 Cor 2:2). Paul's conscious preference for and privileging of the theme of the cross is by no means limited to the Corinthian letters, but forms a constant refrain also in his other letters. Furthermore, even a cursory reading of his letters suggests that Paul's preferential treatment of the cross was anything but naïve or incidental. To the contrary, Paul was apparently quite aware of the resistance that the message of the saviour Jesus that died on a cross

¹ Edited version of a paper read at a conference on "Violence and Human Dignity", 18-19 June 2009, Stellenbosch University.

² Longer accounts on the significance of the cross in the NT often amounted to the cross becoming a theological trope for atonement (theology), with the latter functioning as the interpretative grid for the NT (e.g. Morris 1979:346-419).

engendered, a cross which (in his words) was a stumbling block to Jews and stupidity to the nations or Gentiles (1 Cor 1:23).

Nevertheless, far more people have been keen to accept the cross as the ultimate symbol of the gospel of Jesus Christ, than those who wondered how the cross as a brutal means of execution could have been adopted by the early followers of Jesus Christ as a powerful symbol of hope.³ More harshly, and to point to the extreme positions on the interpretative spectrum, the cross has probably (and especially in recent times) more frequently been romanticised and idealised than what it was culturally and otherwise resisted. In today's (post)modern times and sensitivities, concerns about the sublime violence inherent to the cross, not always drowned out by romanticised hymns about the cross,⁴ requires investigation of the portrayal of the cross in the New Testament – particularly when considering human dignity.

This is a brief investigation of a few aspects of the potential impact of Paul's treatment of the crucifixion of Jesus and its significance on a discussion about human dignity. It focuses on the first-century CE setting and effects of so powerful and widely used a symbol such as the cross, particularly also in relationship to another powerful symbol, slavery – taking the apostle's letter to the Galatians as major point of departure.⁵ While both the cross and slavery were in their original contexts imbued with what was opposite to human flourishing and dignity, the cross specifically was a sign of terror and tantamount to the destruction of human life itself – an instrument of shaming, torture, and eventually death, unleashed against the subordinate, the wilful, the insurgent, indeed, the archetypal slave.⁶ In short, the paper enquires about Paul's use of the cross, in connection with slavery, and its possible implications and repercussions for a discussion on human dignity.

Cross, Suffering and Slavery in the First Century CE

The cross of Jesus is evidently an important theme in Paul's letters, which he identified as the central focus and the gist of his message, a message which he summarised as Christ crucified (e.g. 1 Cor 1:23; 2:5). In Paul's understanding, the death of Jesus was the result of

³ In the early days of Christianity, Jesus' death on the cross was already interpreted in different ways, ranging from a Celsus who could not come to terms with Jesus crucified and thus redeeming, given that he was "bound in the most ignominious fashion" and "executed in a shameful way" (Origen *Cels* 6.10). On the other end was Gnostic docetism which did away with the cross' scandal, focusing on a spiritual Christ who remained oblivious and in fact laughed at his image (only) being crucified (e.g., *Apoc Pet* 82.1-83.15). Ignatius of Antioch occupied a middle position in holding that Christ did not merely appear to suffer but was 'truly crucified' (*Trall* 9.1; cf O'Collins 1992:1210). Christian authors generally had to defend against the ignominy of the cross, cf Justin Martyr defending Christianity against the 'madness' of worshipping a crucified man (*I Apol* 13.4); Lactantius' explanation why God did not allow Jesus to die an honourable death (*Inst* 4.26.29; cf Scaer 2005:2-3).

⁴ To echo a scholar's caution of a few decades earlier: "Reflection on the harsh reality of crucifixion in antiquity may help us overcome the acute loss of reality which is to be found so often in present theology and preaching" (Hengel 1977:90).

⁵ Therefore, this paper is not a general inquiry about the significance, potentially and otherwise, of the death of Jesus Christ; in fact, it is not even primarily concerned with the general category of Jesus' death; neither is the investigation about metaphors as literary trope or rhetorical mechanisms, nor about specific *topoi* (such as slavery or cross) as such.

⁶ Situating a discussion on the cross and slavery in the New Testament within the first-century CE context, should dispel the fear that an enquiry about possible harmful consequences of the-cross-in-theology for human dignity is simply about cultural and/or theological resistance. Again, other matters flowing from or impinged upon by this discussion, such as the connections made between cross and justification in and outside of the NT, or between the cross and atonement theories, etc are not discussed here.

victimisation and violence (e.g. Gal 3:13), complete with its accompanying terror and ultimate destruction of human life and dignity.⁷ Moreover, and beyond his candid treatment of the cross, it became in Paul's writings the unmasking of imperial and other powers and terror, and also the subversion (disruption) of prevailing perceptions and structures – particularly in the simultaneous association of Jesus with cross *and* slavery.⁸ Before considering their symbolic significance, cross and slavery have to be situated and understood in their contemporary, socio-cultural setting.

Cross in the First Century CE: Construing a Symbol

The Roman Empire deserved its reputation for the violent, brutal and often cruel imposition of its imperial social engineering, whether through the local elite or by direct means (militarily or politically, which amounted to more or less the same effect). Such violence ranged from the almost incidental public punishment of criminals and perpetrators to the organised, structured campaigns complete with violent measures such as crucifixion, sometimes of large numbers of people⁹ to act as deterrent to others.¹⁰ Crucifixion was deemed particularly effective by the Romans as equally an apparatus of war and as a means for securing peace, whether it meant eroding the resistance of besieged cities, the humiliation of the conquered or to intimidate seditious soldiers or restless provinces (Frankemölle 1992:217; Schotroff 1992:156-163; cf Punt 2009b). As one scholar put it, “the cross [was] an effective and feared symbol of imperial might long before it came to symbolize anything else” (Wright 2005:64).

The cross was not used only during military campaigns, unless the Roman occupation of the Mediterranean should be portrayed along such lines, but frequently employed in various other contexts.¹¹ The cruelty of crucifixion was generally admitted by Roman

⁷ The wide semantic register according to which Paul referred to the cross-death of Jesus defies simplistic categories, since the references range from Jesus' death as self-giving (Gal 2:20) or God's giving (Rom 8:32); the presence of crucifixion language (1 Cor 1:23) or its absence (2 Cor 5:14); the involvement of believers in his death (Rom 6:1-11) or his death's significance to believers (Rom 1 Cor 8:11); the focus on death alone (1 Cor 2:2) or in combination with resurrection (Rom 4:25); to a measure whereby God effects atonement for human sinfulness or as cause for persecution (Gal 5:11) (cf Cousar 1990:2).

⁸ Cross and slavery were, of course, intimately connected since cross was a form of punishment to which slaves were especially prone. But cross and slavery were in the New Testament connected in an otherwise and yet again especially powerful way, namely in the person of Jesus Christ.

⁹ For mass crucifixions in Judea, cf e.g. Josephus' *War* 2.75; 2.241; 5.449-451; *Ant* 17.295 (cf Frankemölle 1992:217). Such practices was apparently not limited to the Romans, with Alexander the Great recorded as crucifying 2000 survivors from the siege on Tyre (Curtius Rufus *Hist Alex* 4.4.17; cf O'Collins 1992:1207).

¹⁰ A brief indication of how widespread the ancient practice of crucifixion was (cf Hengel 1977:86) is found in O'Collins (1992:1207-1210). In as far as the accounts are reliable, it appears that in the ancient times people far and wide may have made use of crucifixion, albeit in various ways, and as recorded in e.g. Herodotus' reference to the Persians using crucifixion as a form of execution (*Hist* 1.128.2; 3.125.3; 3.132.2; 3.159.1), and to a mass-crucifixion of 3000 people in Babylon by Darius (512-485 BCE); Diodorus Siculus mentioned the use of crucifixion among the people of India (Diod Sic 2.18.1), the Assyrians (Diod Sic 2.1.10; Lucian *Iupp Trag* 16), the Scythians (Diod Sic 2.44.2; Tert *Adv Marc* 1.1.3), the Taurians (Eur *IT* 1429-30), and the Thracians (Diod Sic 33.15.1; 34/35.12.1), and with Celts even the crucifixion of criminals as a sacrifice to the gods (Diod Sic 5.32.6); Tacitus recorded crucifixion among the Germans (*Ann* 1.61.4; 4.72.3; *Germ* 12.1) and the Britons (*Ann* 14.33.2); Sallust (*Jug* 14.15) and Julius Caesar (*B Civ* 66) register the practice as a form of execution among the Numidians; and, various sources claimed that the Carthaginians used crucifixion (e.g. Polyb 1.11.5; 24.6; 79.4-5; 86.4; Diod Sic 25.5.2; 10.2; 26.23.1; Livy 22.13.9; 28.37.2; 38.48.13). O'Collins is of the opinion that the Romans took over the practice from the Carthaginians; Hengel sees in Plautus' (c 250-184 BCE) references to it, and evidence that crucifixion did not find a home in Rome until only after the First Punic War (264-241 BCE).

¹¹ Unlike the Persians and Carthaginians who used crucifixion against high officials and commanders, the

authors of the time, with Cicero and Seneca as two good examples. With the exception of Varro (*Sat. Men. Fr.* 24), who cut a lone voice in protesting against the barbarism of crucifixion, the general sentiment of the time was apparently that this form of execution was a necessary deterrent¹² to employ against the lower classes and especially slaves, in order to discourage serious crimes (O'Collins 1992:1209). As public spectacle it intended to shame the victim, crucifixion was generally done in public places or along busy roads, to ensure large crowds and even to offer a kind of public entertainment (Philo *Flacc* 84-85; cf Scaer 2005:2).

More than an instrument of execution, the cross was deemed an effective measure with which to shame and humiliate victims, and because of the way the human body is treated and portrayed in the process, it can in fact be described as sexually abusive humiliation and torture.¹³ In the case of the crucifixion of Jesus,¹⁴ it has been argued that the cross of Jesus could be read as involving the threefold elements of sexual humiliation, sexualised torture and (possible) sexual assault. Sexual humiliation was a primary objective in the treatment meted out to Jesus during his flogging and crucifixion. Crucifixion involved the shame of publicly stripping of the clothes of the prisoner (Diodorus Siculus 33.151.1; cf Scaer 2005:2), only to be tied up and then flogged in public – with the victim naked and in full view of the first century-spectators to whom public nudity was a major disgrace, surpassed only by disfigurement.¹⁵ Even the crucifixion itself symbolised physical violation that was at the time clearly understood in gendered and sexualised terms. It has furthermore even been suggested that sexual assaults on Jesus by the Roman soldiers were likely in the *praetorium* (cf Tombs 2006). In first-century crucifixion practices it is thus important to acknowledge the shame as well as the violence associated with the cross.

As far as human dignity is concerned, the impact of the cross was not limited to the ending of life, which it surely accomplished effectively and rather gruesomely as well, but was also about the ultimate public spectacle of humiliation, in presenting the victim as something less than human in the eyes of society. The social stigma attached to crucifixion was the negative stereotype of shameful and blameworthy death (Scaer 2005:2). And it is the shame and humiliation induced by the cross that heightened its primary connection with slavery.

Romans used it primarily against the low classes (slaves, violent criminals and unruly elements), cf Hengel (1977:87).

¹² “As a rule the crucified man (sic) was regarded as a criminal who was receiving just and necessary punishment” (Hengel 1977:87). Notwithstanding the frequency of crucifixion in Roman times, sophisticated writers sometimes opted to avoid the topic like Tacitus who did not mention the innumerable Roman crucifixions in Palestine (Josephus *Hist* 5.8-13; cf O'Collins 1992:1209).

¹³ This kind of treatment was not unlike that which was recently perceived in photographs taken of its ‘war on terror’-prisoners in the USA’s Abu Graib facility (cf Tombs 2006).

¹⁴ Bearing in mind that the gospel accounts hardly present a uniform treatment of Jesus’ crucifixion; cf Scaer (2005:90-92) for a tabled summary of important differences in Luke’s account (aspects found only in Lk and aspects found in Mt and Mk but not in Lk). Scaer concludes that although Jesus was arrested as revolutionary, mocked, beaten and crucified, Luke deliberately offered an apology for Jesus’ death on the cross along the lines of the established Greco-Roman tradition of a noble death, traditional materials about Socrates’ unjust death, and, martyrological motifs in the Jewish tradition (Scaer 2005:1-5).

¹⁵ Seneca emphasised the shame of crucifixion flowing from the naked body disfigured by the machinations of the crucifixion processes; the body lost its beauty and natural dignity in the prolonged and painful process of dying. Public exposure was according to its stereotyped portrayal mostly extended with bodies left on the cross, becoming carrion for wild animals and birds (Juvenal, *Sat* 14.77-78; cf Hengel 1977:87). “There was no shame worse than dying on the cross” (Scaer 2005:2).

First century CE Slavery:¹⁶ A setting for Crucifixion

Since slaves were more likely to be the victims of crucifixion, Paul's slavery metaphor can be understood as a subtle invocation of the (prominence of the) cross.¹⁷ It was especially under Roman rule in Palestine that crucifixion was used to punish slaves and violent criminals, since as punishment its use was limited (with very few exceptions) to foreigners and those from the lower class. First and foremost, crucifixion was used against slaves and it became known as the 'slaves' punishment' (*supplicum servile*).¹⁸ In what O'Collins (1992:1208) described as a 'sadistically cruel' and 'utterly shameful death', crucifixion was the Roman Empire's way to uphold authority, preserve law and order and instil fear among rebels, criminals but especially slaves. In the Jewish context, crucifixion was of course also a constant reminder to the Jewish people of their enslavement to the foreign power of Rome.

Roman literature is replete with references to the connection between slavery and crucifixion. At times the crucifixion of slaves took place after revolts or violent confrontations. Plautus (d 184 BCE), the earliest author to refer to Roman crucifixions, frequently mentioned the cross of the slaves (*Poen* 347; see *Capt* 469; *Cas* 611; *Men* 66, 859; *Pers* 352; *Rud* 518; *Trin* 598), and various authors referred to specific instances where slaves were punished with crucifixion¹⁹ But slaves were generally prone to suffer crucifixion, and instances were recorded where slaves were crucified when falling out favour with their owners (Juvenal *Sat* 6.223),²⁰ for tasting the soup while carrying it from the kitchen (Horace *Sat* 1.3.80-83), or for consulting astrologers about the future of the emperor, state or their owners (Petronius *Sat* 53.3). Tacitus recounted how under Nero the custom was restored to kill the slaves of a household should the master be killed (*Ann* 13.32.1).

During the time of the New Testament, slavery was one of the most determining aspects of Greco-Roman society largely also because the Roman Empire was a slave society (Briggs 2000:110). While it is on one level important to record important differences between the slavery of the first-century and of later, colonial times,²¹ as institution slavery was regardless of the period under discussion, the "permanent, violent domination of natively alienated and generally dishonored persons": the constant threat and actions of

¹⁶ Cf also a more detailed discussion on first century slavery and its impact on the New Testament, cf Glancy (2006) and Harrill (2003; 2006); and on the letter to Philemon in particular, cf Punt (2009a). It is important to stress that 'slave' should not be generalised to merely a certain harsh lifestyle or subservient status; a slave was "a person with a definite financial value under the ownership of another person" (Tsang 2005:9).

¹⁷ For more extensive treatments on how the *topos* of slavery was used by Paul, cf e.g. Martin (1990) and recently Tsang (2005).

¹⁸ Cf Cicero (*Verr* 2.5.169); Tacitus referred to crucifixion as *servile modum* (a slave-type) punishment (*Hist* 2.72.1-2) Cf Hengel 1977:51-63; Scaer (2005:1).

¹⁹ 25 slaves involved in a conspiracy in Rome in 217 BCE (Livy 22.33.2); the leaders of a slave revolt in Etruria in 196 BCE (Livy 33.36.3); 450 slaves after the slave revolt in Sicily 139-132 BCE (Orosius 5.9.4); and, more than 6000 slaves were crucified along the Appian Way between Rome and Capua after the revolt that Spartacus led failed in 71 BCE. Cf Glancy (2006:152).

²⁰ In a classic instance, Juvenal recounts the notorious response of a Roman matron's response to her husband when he questioned her insistence that the slave should be crucified: *Hoc volo, sic iubeo, sit pro ratione voluntas* ("This is my will and my command. If you are looking for a reason, it is simply that I want it" (*Sat*. 6.223; cf O'Collins 1992:1208).

²¹ First-century CE slavery generally allowed the possibility of manumission, and in exceptional cases even possibilities beyond just freedom, which on the other hand always in any case implied a measure of attachment to the former owner. "In this way manumission played a part in the wealth-transferring process" (Garnsey and Saller 1987:200).

violence, natal alienation and loss of honour as the characteristic elements of slavery meant it was ‘social death’ (Patterson 1982:13; cf Martin 2005:228).²² Amidst all the many ways in which the Roman Empire exerted its power and control over first-century people, institutionalised slavery was the ultimate ‘displacement’ (Horsley 2004:12).

Violence was not incidental to slavery, since it was maintained by the threat and use of violence, including punishment, torture and even execution (Osiek 2005:206). While “the history of interpretation underemphasizes the somatic dimensions of slavery, including the sexual availability of the slave body and the vulnerability of the slave body to corporal abuse” (Glancy 2006:154),²³ in the New Testament 1 Pt 2:18-21 clearly demonstrates that a slave’s wrongdoing incurred corporal punishment. However, and maybe even more important for our discussion, is the effect of the social location of New Testament authors and the communities they represented and addressed, within a culture so thoroughly informed by and built around slavery.

Thus, both in the case of crucifixion as well as slavery, their metaphorical reach²⁴ can only be understood if the somatic dimensions of their deployment in the New Testament are kept intact and constantly referenced into the discussion. Neither cross nor slave should become dead metaphors (cf e.g. Tsang 2005:14), clichés filled with idealised, even romanticised twenty-first century content, making them devoid of their primary purpose, namely symbolising human life of a very real yet extremely disturbing kind (for both first and twenty-first century audiences) – and therefore tropes or symbols of immense importance for discussions on human dignity, especially when done in relation to the Bible as normative text of the faithful.

Jesus Christ, Cross and Slavery in the Pauline Letters

Institutionalised slavery and its pervasive character had considerable impact on the character of the inhabitants of the Greco-Roman world, because “the master-slave relationship cannot be divorced from the distribution of power throughout the wider society in which both master and slave find themselves” (Patterson 1982:35). The impact of a slaveholding society is evident among New Testament authors, who both presupposed the presence of slavery and its moral acceptability;²⁵ to the extent of emphasising the suitable, submissive conduct of slaves towards the authority of slaveholders as a function of appropriate Christian life.²⁶ In a slaveholding society characters and habits were moulded by lifetimes

²² Slaves belonged to the ancient households of their owners, were included with the members of the family, participated in religious celebrations and rituals of the house, but were not considered part of the family: their status, welfare, and even existence depended on the benevolence of their owners (Osiek 2005:208-211).

²³ Asceticism in early Christianity as a form of disciplining the body and guarding its integrity through rejection of sexual activity, foods, refinements, sleep, pleasure and the like, largely excluded slaves. Partly because of what (some) slaves had to endure through no choice of their own (and would slaves have recognised these activities as such [asceticism] in any case?), and partly because slaves had the opposite predicament: not being able to refuse the sexual attention of their slaveholders, and also being reliant on food and rest in order to cope with their workload and so as to avoid punishment (cf Glancy 2006:154-155).

²⁴ While the metaphorical use of the cross/crucifixion was limited to the Roman world with the Greek world apparently finding it offensive (Hengel 1977:68), the use of slavery as metaphor was found more regularly in literature (cf Briggs 2003:185).

²⁵ Claims that Jesus’ teaching about the dignity of all people in the end destabilised the dehumanisation of slaves evidently ignores the importance of the trope of slavery in his teachings (cf Glancy 2006:145). Another difficulty is also knowing when a narrative is in fact having a slave in mind, cf the two accounts of the Roman military official in Mt 8:5-13 and Lk 7:1-10 and the uncertainty whether the afflicted person is a child or slave.

²⁶ While Col 3:22-25 and Eph 6:5-9 addressed both slaveholders and slaves, indicating responsibilities and

of command and obedience, where young and old became habituated to power, all of which was the backdrop for and certainly had an impact upon the emerging structures, worldview and self-understanding of the early Jesus follower-communities.

Paul's Letter to the Galatians

Paul's portrayal of the cross and its intersection with slavery in particular, can be investigated in various Pauline letters, with the Corinthian correspondence probably being one of the more obvious choices.²⁷ However, linking up with the first-century CE context of slavery and imperial brutality enforced (amongst others) by both the practice and the image of the cross, Paul's argument in the letter to the Galatians is important for exploring the cross-slavery relationship amidst the first-century CE context of imperialism. Although Galatians is of course not a systematic presentation of Paul's views on the cross of Jesus (Matera 1993:284), the cross was important to Paul's argument. In fact, the joint emphasis on the cross and slavery is as suggestive of the implicit socio-political context of Pauline letters like Galatians, as the continued use of the symbols of cross and slavery in modern times require further consideration for their impact on the perception and construction of human dignity.

Paul described the death of Jesus with a variety of terminology and concepts,²⁸ but contrary to expectations raised by his own claims, crucifixion terminology is statistically not prominent in the Pauline letters; however, it is used most often in Galatians.²⁹ While frequency and significance are not necessary corollaries, Paul's emphasis on the cross of Jesus and its significance is evident throughout the letter (cf Cousar 1990:21-24; Matera 1993:296). When Paul spoke about Jesus' crucifixion, different sentiments emerged with the cross becoming a symbol of Jesus' love (Gal 2:20), which also delivers from 'the curse of the law' (Gal 3:13).³⁰ Likewise, the followers of Jesus shared in his crucifixion, entailing the crucifixion of the former, sinful self (Gal 2:20, 6:14; cf Rom 6:6), which was no longer under the power of the Law (Gal 2:19), but renounced sin and desisted from the ungodly world – in fact, the very reason for the opposition Paul encountered was his presentation of the cross of Jesus in such terms (Gal 6:12).

In Galatians, the cross metaphor is employed at crucial turning points in the letter: Gal 2:19 (faith in Christ requires a serious change in the course of one's life); 3:1 (Paul openly preached Christ as crucified), 3:13 (faith going beyond the Law, since the beginning, i.e.

obligations and ostensibly (and at best) to maintain the stability of the household through treating the slaves fairly, in 1 Pt 2:18-21 slaves are instructed to submit even to excessive and abusive authority (Punt 2009a).

²⁷ The link between Jesus, crucifixion and slavery can also be investigated in Phil 2, and maybe 1 Cor 1-2; cf also in 1 Pt 2:18-15 cross [of JX] and slavery. E.g., in Phil 2 Jesus is presented as slave *μορφῆν δούλου λαβών* (Phil 2:7) and as dying on the cross (Phil 2:8). The strong contrast between the glory of Jesus Christ (Phil 2:9-11) and his humiliation and shaming is encapsulated by the phrase "even death of a cross" (Phil 2:8), the shameful death of a slave.

²⁸ Some particular terms probably handed down to Paul by tradition such as in the case of cultic language ('expiation' and 'blood', Rom 3:25), and other more general terms for dying (cf 1 Cor 15:3). Paul's contribution in extending the vocabulary on Jesus' death probably included notions such as 'gave himself' (Gal 2:20), 'was crucified' (2 Cor 13:4) and 'cross' (1 Cor 1:17) – but caution is advised here, cf below!

²⁹ Paul's used crucifixion terminology 8 times, viz Gal 2:19; 3:1 (not *σταυρός* but *ξύλον*), 13; 5:11, 24; 6:12, 14 (twice). In the other Pauline letters, it is found in Rom 6:6; 1 Cor 1:13, 17, 18, 23; 2:2, 8; 2 Cor 13:4; Phil 2:8; 3:18 (cf Eph 2:16; Col 1:20; 2:14).

³⁰ Other sentiments emerge elsewhere with the cross that also became a symbol of Jesus' obedience (Phil 2:8) and disclosing the power and wisdom of God (1 Cor 1:24; 2 Cor 13:4). In Col 2:14, the crucifixion of Jesus delivers from sin; and brings reconciliation and peace (Col 1:20; Eph 2:16).

Abraham's time); 5:11 (accepting circumcision as requirement for Gentile to be followers of Jesus would negate the cross as 'stumbling block'); 5:24 (those of Christ crucified "the flesh with its passions and desires"); 6:12 (Paul accusation is that circumcision is advocated to avoid being persecuted for the cross of Christ); all of which culminates in Paul's claim in 6:14.

Running the risk of oversimplifying, two central motifs can nevertheless be identified in Paul's use of crucifixion terminology in the letter.³¹ *Firstly*, the emphasis is on Christ as the crucified one. In Gal 3:1 Paul emphasised that Jesus was 'publicly displayed' (προεγράφη) as 'one crucified' (ἐσταυρωμένος), and in Gal 3:13 (cf Heb 13:12-13) the implication of Jesus' crucifixion is made clear: quoting from Deut 27:26 Paul states that Jesus took up the curse of hanging on a wood or cross in order to push the curse of the Law aside. Two chapters further, Paul again did not obscure the shame and humiliation associated with the cross of Jesus (5:11). *Secondly*, Paul relates the implications of crucifixion. In recounting how he changed from a persecutor of the communities of Jesus' followers (Gal 1:11-17), his interactions with the pillar apostles in Jerusalem (1:18-2:10) and later with Cephas in Antioch (2:11-14), and the content of his earlier message to the community in Galatia (2:15-21), Paul's ultimate and one of the most personal claims of the letter in Gal 2:19b is that he was 'crucified together with Christ'. This claim is flanked by his assertion that he has died to the Law so that God can live in him (2:19a), and likewise, that he no longer lives but Christ lives in him (2:20a). Paul's vision is one of sharing in the humiliation and death associated with Jesus death on the cross, but also a daring (cf 6:12) envisioning of a new existence (cf 6:15 *καινή κτίσις*). Not only for himself, but also for the Galatian community as he encouraged them with cross-terminology to live according to the Spirit (5:24)!

The cross-terminology resonates especially well since the slave metaphor, with its often ambiguous links with freedom, is prominent in the Galatians letter (cf Hansen 1997:213-237).³² After taking the Galatian followers of Jesus to task, Paul's concluding words in the antithetical thanksgiving-having-become-curse section, is to remind them that in his efforts to be true to God rather than to people, he is a slave of Christ (Χριστοῦ δοῦλος, Gal 1:10). Slavery is invoked again when Paul referred to the false brethren's actions whose aim was to spy out the freedom of Paul and others in Christ, in order that they could enslave Paul and company (2:4). Clearly slavery does not always, under all circumstances carry the same nuances, and simplistic claims about Gal 3:28 and the dissolution of boundaries in the first century CE, complicate rather than resolve matters.

Gal 4 contains the bulk of slavery terminology (4:1-3;7-9;23-25;30[x2];31), used primarily in claiming that people failing to accept (the cross of) Jesus either by not knowing God (4:8) or enslavement to the elemental spirits of the universe (4:3, an ever-present danger 4:9), are not the descendants of the free Sarah. To the contrary, those preferring the Law to Jesus are children of the slave Hagar, and therefore slaves rather than children with a claim to inheritance (4:21-31). And therefore Paul urges freedom, from enslavement to the Law and what it stood for (5:1) but also freedom that does not allow itself to be overrun

³¹ Some scholars argue that it is already evident in the greeting section (Gal 1:1-5) that the focus is not on Paul's defence of his discipleship, as often argued, but rather about the death of Jesus and its implications (cf Matera 1993:286).

³² There are other elements of and levels to the slavery trope, as for example in the description of Jesus as crucified, and also slave, who stands in stark contrast to the Law that is portrayed in Galatians as a custodian/disciplinarian (Gal 3:24,25), a work normally reserved for a slave; the notion of adoption (Gal 4:5) may also hint at the general outcome of the manumission of slaves, now finding themselves not only in client-patron relationships but also in a different capacity in their former households (cf Tsang 2005:49-52).

by ‘fleshly’ concerns but consists in being slaves to one another through love (διὰ τῆς ἀγάπης δουλεύετε ἀλλήλοις, 5:13).

Paul’s argument in Galatians turns on the importance of the cross (of Jesus) embedded in a context characterised by slavery, and the implications of the intersections between cross and slavery. The letter is a call to hold onto the freedom wrought by Jesus on the cross, invoking associations with slavery – reinforced by calls to be (spiritual) slaves to one another in the community. The cross of Jesus turned the much vaunted freedom claimed by the Judaisers on its head, exposing those who claim primary allegiance to the Jewish Law (and Jewishness as symbolised in circumcision) as slave descendants (Gal 4). At the same time, the cross enabled the demise of slavery by initiating freedom through Jesus who destroyed the curse of the cross and turned it into life-giving power of freedom (5:1).³³ The cross which propped up slavery becomes the symbol for freedom in Christ – again, as is often the case in Galatians, mimicked in Paul’s own life (“For I bear the marks of Jesus on my body”, 6:17)! The ambiguity of cross and slavery continues beyond Paul’s revisionist historiography regarding Sarah and Hagar.

Cross and Slavery: Ambiguity of Practices and/as Symbols

The letter to the Galatians is radical in many ways, partly extent due to Paul’s conviction that his apostleship and message were threatened by the ‘Judaisers’ and their insistence upon circumcision (Gal 2:14). Therefore, putting forth the gospel in equally stark terms, Paul apparently subverted some of the most basic and wide-ranging lines of division, such as the division of slave and free (3:28). However, in the second part of the letter, the claim to such dissolution of divisions is seriously jeopardised by Paul’s strong dependence on gendered metaphors of slavery (Gal 4-5).³⁴ So also, while Paul can admit to the curse (3:13) as well as the shame (5:11) of public display (3:1) associated with the cross, the cross was for him also the decisive enabling force (5:24; 6:14) even if it exacts a price (6:12), and the metaphor determining his life, through association with the crucifixion of Jesus (2:19) as well as the notion of crucifixion per se (6:14).

Even if Paul was not necessarily the first to have used slavery metaphorically (cf Tsang 2005:3), the theological impact of employing slavery as metaphor for Christian life was that it allowed for the brutality of first-century slavery to become a vehicle in Christian theology.³⁵ Not only is Jesus portrayed in the form of a slave accompanied by physical and social degradation in the most extreme form (Phil 2), but his followers share in both the enslavement and social disgrace of Jesus (Rom 6). The side-effects of the theological metaphor of slavery, with the followers of Jesus portrayed as slaves (also in 1 Cor 6 and 7) was two-fold. “On the one hand, one could argue that when everyone is reduced to slavery before God, as owned either by sin or righteousness, then the social import of such a statement would be levelling and egalitarian. On the other hand, when salvation itself is seen as a process of domination, then the critique of social arrangements, resulting from the process of domination, is made, to say the least, more difficult” (Briggs 2000:118). And it is the

³³ Along similar apparently contradictory lines, Paul explains in Gal 3:1-29 that the followers are already descendants of Abraham through their association with Christ, the true and singular descendant of Abraham (cf Matera 1993:289-290).

³⁴ “For ... Paul, the rhetoric of physical slavery haunts the claim that the only real bondage is the servility of will, of mind and of spirit” (Glancy 2006:30).

³⁵ Although the negative, social-death (Patterson) aspects of slavery are emphasised here as backdrop for Paul’s use of cross-terminology, Paul’s understanding of himself as slave of Jesus as honorary position underlined his authority and the integrity of his message (cf Tsang 2005:133).

imperceptible link but common association of the cross with slavery that would have emphasised domination forcefully.³⁶

Paul's letters give no evidence that he made a conceptual or moral distinction between theological and social processes of domination. The validity of God or Christ (cf Gal 5:24) owning human bodies and their whole existence in the spiritual realm provided no incentive for a critical stance towards people including fellow followers of Jesus in their owning others, again as bodies and their whole existence, in the social world (Briggs 2000:118-119). Paul's letter to Philemon regarding his slave Onesimus is an example of such a disposition. By assuming power over both Philemon the slaveholder who was also the head of the household (*pater familias*), as well as the slave Onesimus, Paul at the same time subverted or at least unsettled the conventional social structure of ancient society (Frilingos 2000:91-104; White 2003:469-470), but simultaneously also established himself in the role of the ultimate authority over Philemon's household and other households in the community of Jesus followers³⁷ (cf Punt 2009a).

Such contrasts, ambiguities and tensions might not have resonated similarly in the first century CE, and might betray more about modern interpreters; however, the embeddedness of the metaphors of cross and slavery in current theological understanding, and their potential impact on framing considerations of human dignity, require a consideration of their enduring symbolic power.

Cross-purposes: (Dis)empowering Symbols and Human Dignity³⁸

The language of Paul often surprises, not always pleasantly, depending on the listeners' gender, social status, and their relationship to the Pauline communities; and, perhaps nowhere more so than in his talk about the cross of Jesus.³⁹ Contrary to the expectation that the crucifixion of Jesus might be given a different twist, a re-interpretation to counteract the weakness and deprivation – if not also its senselessness – associated with it, Paul did not present Jesus as sublime hero, but crucified in shame and rejection, weakness and death (e.g. 2 Cor 13:4; cf Cousar 1990:1). Unlike a Luke who showed signs of reinterpreting Jesus' cross and its shame as praiseworthy and according to the values of the Greco-Roman society⁴⁰ (cf Scaer 2005:90-134), Paul emphasised its cross' shame and humiliation,

³⁶ The only notions which can be constructed as contemporary voices of criticism levelled against the practice of crucifixion, was the Stoic concern with ἀπάθεια and ἀρετή (cf Hengel 1977:88).

³⁷ “The letter, then, is concerned less with Onesimus' situation than with Paul's own status” (Frilingos 2000:104). So also, if Brown (2001:723-37, esp 733) is correct and Paul's use of δοῦλος to refer to himself in Rom 1:1 is a technical term and akin to being a slave of the emperor, then Paul assumed a very powerful position and words of power for himself, backed up by references to and claims upon Christ! For the metaphorical use of slavery to describe the relationship between God, Christ and believer in Paul's letters, cf Briggs (2000:111-115).

³⁸ Maintaining the focus on the impact of Paul's use of cross-terminology, in conjunction with slavery, in Galatians on a discussion of human rights, other important issues are not addressed here; e.g. whether Paul's presentation of Jesus' death on the cross employed or even depended on contemporary noble death traditions (cf Seeley 1989).

³⁹ In the NT, the symbol of the cross is employed differently, e.g. “the Synoptic Gospels spoke of ‘taking up one's cross’ and following Jesus (Mark 8:34; Matt 10:38; 16:24; Luke 9:23; 14:27). ‘Taking up one's cross’ may have been a profane and/or Zealot expression which then was applied to Christian discipleship. For the Synoptics it meant saying no to oneself, accepting suffering, and even surrendering one's life for and with Jesus – in short, being a cross bearer all one's life” (O'Collins 1992:2010).

⁴⁰ Elsewhere in the NT, the scandal of the cross is also lifted: for Jn it becomes a gateway to glory (Jn 12:27-33), but for Paul it remains both scandal and the hour of Christ's weakness (1 Cor 1:23, 25; 2 Cor 13:4) (Beker 1990:89).

especially in the link between the cross and slavery. Given this situation, questions remain about the significance and implications of the cross, as a symbol of shame, of life wasted away, and how it can be(come) also an empowering symbol?

Interpretative and Theological Frameworks

The interpretation of the Pauline letters by means of the increasingly discredited filter of a traditional approach emphasising an introspective, individualised concern with personal salvation as Paul's response to first-century works-righteousness, has divorced his letters from their socio-historical moorings, leading to the neglect of certain of their vital components. The stranglehold of the individualist-soteriological approach used as secondary interpretative grid for Paul's letters resulted in various shortcomings, amongst others neglecting Paul's apocalyptic theological orientation,⁴¹ in other words, politics writ large, with God and the powers engaged in a cosmic battle, replicated on another level in the human history of earthly realities and power struggles. The centrality of the cross in his letters, and when it is not 'mythologised' (Elliott 1994:93-139), questions Paul's supposed disinterestedness in political realities. Once the cross is recognised as political event, the sentimentality often attached to it can be removed, and it can be acknowledged as the "most nonreligious and horrendous feature of the gospel" (Beker 1980:207), the instrument and symbol of imperial terror⁴² – at the same time, providing a better platform for evaluating the significance of the cross today.

Since for Paul the crucifixion of Jesus was the crux of God's plan for unmasking and overthrowing powers of this world, the cross has to be understood against the global horizon of God's struggle against the powers. For Paul the present time was understood to be under the domination of earthly leaders, visible among others also in the numerous references to the cross and crucifixion in Galatians. Yet, without denying the shaming shock of Jesus as public spectacle on the cross (Gal 3:1), Paul could through his own association with the cross (Gal 2:19) and the encouragement of others through cross-terminology (Gal 5:24), emphasise another perspective on the cross.⁴³

⁴¹ Notwithstanding the work of Beker (1980; 1990) and others, some uneasiness has been noted with ascribing an apocalyptic perspective to Paul, especially in the case of Galatians, but cf especially the convincing arguments of e.g. Martyn (1985; 2000).

⁴² Beker (1990:87-88) warns against simplistic constructions of a theology of the cross, since it is rare in the NT, and argues that it should not be merged with a theology of the death and resurrection of Christ or a theology of Christ's suffering; e.g. in Paul's letters the cross is not used with sacrificial formulas (ὑπέρ and περί; on behalf of), and death (θάνατος) and dying (ἀποθνήσκειν) are frequently connected to the resurrection of Christ. The notion of a sacrificial death is not used with cross-terminology, probably not even in Gal 6:14 although the phrase δι' οὗ (through whom; or, by which) could be understood differently. In Matera (1993:283-296) the distinction between these different theologies are not always maintained.

⁴³ For Paul, the cross was on the one hand the apex of God's wrath and judgement, negating the worlds of religion and culture (contradicting wisdom, 1 Cor 1:18; crucifying the law and the world, Gal 2:20; 6:14; arousing public hostility, Phil 3:18; is foolishness, 1 Cor 1:18; scandal to Jews and folly to Gentiles, 1 Cor 1:23; Gal 5:11; manifestation of weakness, 1 Cor 1:15; 2 Cor 13:4), and on the other hand, the apocalyptic turning point of history, signifying also resurrection and life by reminding of the hidden victory of Christ and the future triumph of God (Beker 1990:89-91). However, Beker's threefold distinction, the cross used with either wisdom (1 Cor 1:17-18, 23; 2:2, 8), or law (Gal 2:20; 3:1; 5:11; 6:14) or new creation (Gal 5:24; 6:14; Rom 6:6), with first two focussed on negation, is probably just too rigid (Beker 1990:89-90).

Disempowering Symbols

As noted above, crucifixion was widely used by the Roman Empire as a form of punishment, and in the case of Jesus during the Jewish festival of Passover where it would have served the further purpose to quell any political restlessness that might have been provoked by the celebrations. As punishment, crucifixion was a mechanism that humiliated, tortured and executed, devised to deal with those deemed most threatening to the regime, the broader establishment and its interests, and publicly demeaning for the victims. It is disconcerting that the ultimate symbol of powerlessness became during the period of colonial expansion⁴⁴ a symbol (and at times, the symbol) of victory and power (Sugirtharajah 2002:85). But the cross, ultimately an extreme symbol of absolute political power, and related concepts and configurations already started to assume a centrality among the early followers of Jesus.⁴⁵

The different ways in which slavery was perceived not long after Paul's death are evident from the deutero-Pauline letters with its world-affirming ethos; especially when compared with 1 Peter whose association of abuse of slaves with the passion of Jesus provides a foothold for condemning the system of slavery (Glancy 2006:150). Yet, as evidenced by the affirmative use of domestic codes in the letter, 1 Peter creates the impression of a document set upon convincing the members of the community it addressed not to challenge the structures of the day but rather to fit in and so become a living apology of and testimony to a gospel which does not disrupt and disturb.

In Paul's letters, the life of Jesus is of little importance for his theological reflections,⁴⁶ underwritten by an explicit focus on the death of Jesus. It was the body rather than the life of Jesus that was in focus, incarnation rather than biography, and it was used to extrapolate meaning and significance for the bodies of believers. However, the claim that the focus on the crucified Christ exposed to his followers their own dysfunctional bodies, whereas the resurrected body of Christ provided a source of inspiration for them and persuasive power for Paul's discourses (Vorster 1997:402), does not do justice to the Pauline material.⁴⁷ Since as much persuasive power is claimed for the crucified body as for the resurrected body of Christ, such as separation is challenged.⁴⁸

In the end, the lingering and disturbing question is not only whether the cross has become perverted in our modern day and age (and maybe even in the many centuries of Christendom), but also to what extent the cross has already in the New Testament times become a symbol of power rather than powerlessness?

⁴⁴ And even earlier; on the confusing of the 'crucified' mind of Christ with the 'crusading' mind of many Christians, cf Kwok (1995, 28 with reference to Koyama).

⁴⁵ Some scholars argue that it was his focus on the cross (cf 1 Cor 2:2), as the symbol of ultimate violence in the first century CE, that informed Paul's 'penchant for violence' (Gager and Gibson 2005:19).

⁴⁶ So, e.g., is Paul rather unconcerned to identify the perpetrators of the crucifixion of Jesus, except for a rather obscure reference to the τῶν ἀρχόντων τοῦ αἰῶνιου (rulers of this age, 1 Cor 2:8); cf Cousar (1990:26); Elliott (1994:11).

⁴⁷ The emphasis on self-sacrifice as ethical consequence for the followers of Jesus always stood the chance, in a patriarchal society where it inevitably took on gender-specific forms, to warp mutual giving into women's subordination to men (Briggs 1994:230).

⁴⁸ Especially in view of 1 Cor 1 and 2 where Paul in fact argues for a reversal of human values concerning power and weakness, knowledge and foolishness.

Symbols for Empowerment

Probably most surprising of all twists in Paul's letters was the broadening of the ultimate symbol of shame, the cross, into an empowering, transforming metaphor of life.⁴⁹ In what amounted to more than a simple reversal, re-interpreting the shame of the cross to extend it towards the power of salvation, has been the apostle's achievement with the most significance and longest lasting impact – even if in the history of interpretation of the cross his sentiments did not always carry the day.⁵⁰

However, for Paul the cross retained its radical dynamic, since in his portrayal of it “the Crucifixion is for those who challenge and work towards dissolving hegemonic and imperial codes” (Sugirtharajah 2002:85).⁵¹ For Paul the cross meant returning to the raw, accursed (e.g. Gal 3:13) victimisation that constituted Jesus' death, and while the cross unmasked the powers and its imperial terror, it was at the same time also an act of solidarity with the marginalised, as well as a disruption (*skandalon*) of the conventions of the world of the time, of the bigger ‘scheme of things’ (Zerbe 2003:88; cf Georgi 1991:46-51). The cross was more than a religious symbol (of readiness for suffering and sacrifice) and more than an ethical model (calling for discipleship); being this as well, the cross symbolised much more, namely that God identified himself with the ‘extreme of human wretchedness’ in the cross of Jesus, endured representatively for all people (Hengel 1977:88-89). In fact, within the agonistic, hierarchical world informed by strong honour and shame codes, the cross could become the ultimate symbol of non-retaliation, not only of putting an end to the scapegoating of the innocent but also an end to the punishment of the guilty. The cross was what underlined God's establishment of justice for Paul, that the cross was ultimately about justification which happened by grace, and not retaliation (McCann 2007:164-165).

And therefore the cross of Jesus held such vital implications for the lives of his followers. Paul's powerful insistence that he was ‘crucified with Christ’ (2:19), implied his association with the connotations of Christ's death as an outcast, with the defilement of a body hanging on a tree. His identification with the crucified Christ not only meant that he included himself with an outcast, but also provided the ultimate grounds for Paul to include also Gentile believers in the table-fellowship of the followers of Christ, *and* made it inconceivable for him to withdraw from it (Dunn 1993:144-145).⁵² In fact, if as Deut 27:26 would suggest, the cross pronounced a curse on someone (3:13), exiled from the covenant

⁴⁹ Cf Johnson (2006:93) on ‘queer’ being taken up and given new meaning – aligning it with what early Christians did re the cross of Jesus: the erstwhile negative symbol given a new, empowering meaning.

⁵⁰ In the later traditions within the New Testament the transformative power and significance of the cross came to assume a life on its own, so that the presence of the cross in the Fourth Gospel was, although not a goal in itself, still a means by which Jesus brings his friends to eternal life (Jn 3:14-16; 4:14; 12:50; 17:2; 20:31), that is a friendship with Jesus and God, characterised by freedom, autonomy, mutuality, responsibility and joy (Reid 2004:384). Emphasising the cross as Jesus' way in the FG to go to ‘calamity's depths’ for his friends, Reid admits that this does “not resolve all of the theological questions about the cross and the pastoral challenges concerning violence towards victimized people” (Reid 2004:385). On the shame of the cross in the FG, cf also Neyrey (1996:113-137).

⁵¹ This is, of course, the point where the discussion has to turn to the consideration of appropriately responsible and accountable hermeneutical positions and approaches, but which space does not allow. Suffice one quote from Sugirtharajah: “Postcolonial criticism not only celebrates the presence of oppositional voices within the text but also marks out silenced voices and spaces in texts which fly in the face of hierarchical and hegemonic modes of thought” (Sugirtharajah 2002:85).

⁵² In the case of the Corinthian church, the distaste among the Roman(-ised) upper class for talk about the cross does not see Paul shy away from the topic. It is in the cross that Paul evokes the dissolution of the Roman order, challenging the wealthy Corinthians to relate differently to the poor, and so highlighting the political aspects of the cross for Paul (cf Elliott 1994:124).

community, it meant that while the crucifixion of Jesus put him outside the covenant, God's acceptance of Jesus set the precedence for the acceptance of outsiders (Dunn 1993: 176-178).

Within the New Testament as well as in its subsequent interpretation, the cross understandably tended to invoke superlative but not necessarily unambiguous language.⁵³ Paul was no exception to such complexities, when he insisted that his understanding of the gospel, "the power of God for salvation to everyone who has faith" (Rom 1:16), is encapsulated in a singular focus on "Jesus Christ, and him crucified" (1 Cor 2:2). Illustrative of the ambivalence of Paul's discourse on power and weakness in his letters, together with the invocation of slavery terminology, the cross remained the central motif. Paul acknowledged the paradox of the cross in all its ambiguity as ultimate symbol of destructive power yet at the same time an enabling, life-giving event (1 Cor 1:23-24; cf 2:2-5). Such ambivalence is exemplified in the question to what extent is the cross in the New Testament already becoming a symbol of power also for its (potential) victims, amidst its association with powerlessness?

Conclusion

The triumphalism of a church and its insistence on following a militant, exalted Christ does not augur well for the promotion of human rights, nor does it sit well with the Pauline emphasis on the cross of Jesus.⁵⁴ The passion and cross of Jesus can still grip modern-day believers if the furor over the Mel Gibson movie, *The Passion of the Christ* (2004), is anything to go by; even if in the movie the macho image of Christ overrides the shame and scandal inherent to first-century crucifixion. In the movie, the violence of the cross was re-packaged, celebrated for its own sake, establishing a macho Christ while it largely ignored the humiliation of the cross, particularly against the backdrop of slavery. For twenty-first century believers as much as those from the first century the question remains how to extrapolate the meaning of the cross of Christ for human lives today? Paul's portrayal of the violence of the cross does not allow for its interpretation as "passion mysticism, a meditation on the wounds of Christ, or in terms of a spiritual absorption into the sufferings of Christ. Paul never sanctifies or hallows death, pain, and suffering. He takes no masochistic delight in suffering" (Beker 1990:88).⁵⁵ In the Pauline letters, notwithstanding its humiliation and violence and its connections to the shame of slavery, cross terminology never became the celebration of the suffering of Christ, of God and never the celebration of human suffering.

⁵³ Wright succeeds in capturing the radical nature of the contrast, but misses out on the complexities involved: "It took genius to see that the symbol which had spoken of Caesar's naked might now spoke of God's naked love" (Wright 2005:73).

⁵⁴ "The crucifixion of Jesus is not only a past, datable, verifiable fact in the church's memory, but also an ever-present reality to guide and determine the church's life" (Cousar 1990:4).

⁵⁵ The death of Christ is efficacious only because it stands within the radius of the victory of the resurrection (Rom 6:8, 10; 14:9; 2 Cor 13:4; 1 Thess 4:14 (Beker 1990:88).

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Beker, JC 1980. *Paul, the Apostle. The Triumph of God in Life and Thought*. Edinburgh: T & T Clark.
- Beker, JC 1990. *The Triumph of God: The Essence of Paul's Thought*. Minneapolis: Fortress.
- Briggs, S 1994. Galatians. In *Searching the Scriptures. Vol 2. A Feminist Commentary*, (ed.) E Schüssler Fiorenza, 218-36. New York: Crossroad.
- Briggs, S 2000. Paul on Bondage and Freedom in Imperial Roman Society. In *Paul and Politics. Ekklesia, Israel, Imperium, Interpretation. Essays in Honor of Krister Stendahl*, (ed.) RA Horsley, 110-23. Harrisville: Trinity Press International.
- Briggs, S 2003. Slavery and Gender. In *On the Cutting Edge. The Study of Women in Biblical Worlds. Essays in Honor of Elizabeth Schüssler Fiorenza*, (eds.) J Schaberg, A Bach, and E Fuchs, 171-92. New York, London: Continuum.
- Brown, MJ 2001. Paul's Use of ΔΟΥΛΟΣ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΣ ΙΗΣΟΥΣ in Romans 1:1. *Journal of Biblical Literature* 120(4):723-37.
- Clancy, RAD 1994. Theology of the Cross. The Doctrine of Justification and the Problem of Human Suffering. *Currents in Theology and Mission* 21(4):267-74.
- Cosgrove, CH 1988. *The Cross and the Spirit. A Study in the Argument and Theology of Galatians*. Macon: Mercer.
- Cousar, CB 1990. *A Theology of the Cross: The Death of Jesus in the Pauline Letters. Overtures to Biblical Theology*, (eds.) W Brueggemann, et al. Minneapolis: Fortress.
- Driver, TF 2000. The Act Itself: Tracing the Roots of Violence in Ritual. *Soundings* 83(1):101-17.
- Dunn, JDG 1993. *The Epistle to the Galatians*. Black's New Testament Commentaries. Peabody: Hendrickson.
- Elliott, N 1994. *Liberating Paul. The Justice of God and the Politics of the Apostle*. The Bible & Liberation, vol. 6. Maryknoll: Orbis.
- Elliott, N 1997. The Anti-Imperial Message of the Cross. In *Paul and Empire. Religion and Power in Roman Imperial Society*, (ed.) RA Horsley, 167-83. Harrisville: Trinity Press International.
- Frankemölle, H 1992. Peace and the Sword in the New Testament. In *The Meaning of Peace: Biblical Studies*, (eds.) PB Yoder and WM Swartley, trans. W Sawatsky, 213-33. Studies in Peace and Scripture, vol. 2. Louisville: Westminster John Knox.
- Frilingos, C 2000. 'For My Child, Onesimus': Paul and Domestic Power in Philemon. *Journal of Biblical Literature* 119(1):91-104.
- Garnsey, P and R Saller 1987. *The Roman Empire. Economy, Society and Culture*. London: Duckworth.
- Georgi, D 1991. *Theocracy in Paul's Praxis and Theology*. Trans. DE Green. 1987. Minneapolis: Fortress Press.
- Glancy, JA 2006. *Slavery in Early Christianity* (2002). Reprint. Minneapolis: Fortress.
- Hamerton-Kelly, RG 1992. *Sacred Violence. Paul's Hermeneutic of the Cross*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press.

- Hansen, GW 1997. Paul's Conversion and his Ethic of Freedom in Galatians. In *The road from Damascus. The impact of Paul's conversion on his life, thought, and ministry*, (ed.) Longenecker, RN, 213-237. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.
- Harman, W 2000. Meaningful Violence? Reflections on the Dynamics of Human Sacrifice. *Soundings* 83(1):119-35.
- Harrill, JA 2003. Paul and Slavery. In *Paul in the Greco-Roman World. A Handbook*, (ed.) JP Sampley, 575-607. Harrisburg: Trinity Press International.
- Harrill, JA 2006. *Slaves in the New Testament. Literary, Social, and Moral Dimensions*. Minneapolis: Fortress.
- Hengel, M 1977. *Crucifixion. In the Ancient World and the Folly of the Message of the Cross*. London: SCM.
- Johnson, WS 2006. *A Time to Embrace. Same-Gender Relationships in Religion, Law, and Politics*. Grand Rapids & Cambridge: Eerdmans.
- Konradt, M 2003. Die korinthische Weisheit und das Wort vom Kreuz. *Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft* 94:181-214.
- Kwok, P 1995. *Discovering the Bible in the Non-Biblical World. (The Bible and Liberation.)* Maryknoll: Orbis.
- Martin, CJ 2005. The Eyes Have It: Slaves in the Communities of Christ-Believers. In *Christian Origins*, (ed.) RA Horsley, 221-40. A people's history of Christianity, vol. 1. Minneapolis: Fortress.
- Martin, DB 1990. *Slavery as Salvation. The Metaphor of Slavery in Pauline Christianity*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Martyn, JL 1985. Apocalyptic Antinomies in Paul's Letter to the Galatians. *NTS* 31:410-24.
- Martyn, JL 2000. The Apocalyptic Gospel in Galatians. *Interpretation* 54(3):246-66.
- Matera, FJ 1993. The Death of Christ and the Cross in Paul's Letter to the Galatians. *Louvain Studies* 18(4):283-96.
- McCann, JC 2007. Toward a Nonretaliatory Lifestyle. The Psalms, the Cross, and the Gospel. In *Character Ethics and the New Testament. Moral Dimensions of Scripture*, (ed.) RL Brawley, 159-67. Louisville: WJK.
- Meech, JL 2006. *Paul in Israel's Story. Self and Community at the Cross*. AAR Academy Series. Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press.
- Morris, L 1979. *The Cross in the New Testament*. Mount Radford Reprints, vol. 40. Exeter: Paternoster.
- Neyrey, JH 1996. Despising the Shame of the Cross: Honor and Shame in the Johannine Passion Narrative. *Semeia* 68:113-37.
- O'Collins, G 1992. Crucifixion. In *Anchor Bible Dictionary*, vol 1, (ed.) DN Freedman, 1207-1210. New York: Doubleday.
- Osiek, C 2005. Family Matters. In *Christian Origins*, (ed.) RA Horsley, 201-20. A people's history of Christianity, vol. 1. Minneapolis: Fortress.
- Patterson, O 1982. *Slavery and Social Death: A Comparative Study*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Peterson, BK 1998. Conquest, Control, and the Cross. Paul's Self-Portrayal in 2 Corinthians 10-13. *Interpretation* 52(3):258-70.

- Punt, J 2004. The female as weaker vessel in the household code of 1 Peter 3:7. *South African Baptist Journal of Theology* 13:46-56.
- Punt, J 2009a. Paul, power and Philemon. A postcolonial reading. (forthcoming).
- Punt, J 2009b. Violence in the New Testament, and the Roman Empire. Ambivalence, Othering, Agency (forthcoming)
- Reid, BE 2004. The Cross and Cycles of Violence. *Interpretation* 58(4):376-85.
- Scaer, PJ 2005. *The Lukan Passion Narrative and the Praiseworthy Death*. New Testament Monographs, vol. 10. Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix.
- Schotroff, L 1992. The Dual Concept of Peace. In *The Meaning of Peace: Biblical Studies*, (eds.) PB Yoder and WM Swartley, (trans.) W Sawatsky, 156-63. Studies in Peace and Scripture, vol. 2. Louisville: Westminster John Knox.
- Seeley, D 1989. *The Noble Death: Graeco-Roman Martyrology and Paul's Concept of Salvation*. JSNT Supplement Series, vol. 28. Sheffield: JSOT.
- Sugirtharajah, RS 2002. *Postcolonial Criticism and Biblical Interpretation*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Tsang, S 2005. *From slaves to sons. A new rhetoric analysis on Paul's slave metaphors in his letter the Galatians*. Studies in Biblical Literature 81. New York: Lang.
- Vorster, JN 1997. The Body as Strategy of Power in Religious Discourse. *Neotestamentica* 31(2):389-411.
- White, LM 2003. Paul and *Pater Familias*. In *Paul in the Greco-Roman World. A Handbook*, (ed.) JP Sampley, 457-87. Harrisburg: Trinity Press International.
- Wright, NT 2005. *Paul: In Fresh Perspective*. Minneapolis: Fortress.
- Zerbe, G 2003. The Politics of Paul: His Supposed Social Conservatism and the Impact of Postcolonial Readings. *Conrad Grebel Review* 21(1):82-103.