Malaysian Association
of Theological Schools Journal

1st Issue 2004 Pages 1-47

Understanding Shame in the Corinthian Correspondence

Silvia Jeanes

Sabah Theological Seminary

UNDERSTANDING SHAME IN THE CORINTHIAN CORRESPONDENCE

Sylvia Jeanes

Introduction

Understanding the Pauline correspondence has never been an easy task. Since the letters are occasional we don't know exactly what the historical situation was. Neither do we know enough about the world of ideas and the methods of conveying them in the first century. To what extent is Paul a rhetorician? What in his letters is irony, hyperbole, metaphor and so on? Nor do we adequately understand the social and cultural milieu in which the letters were written. To what extent were the writings culturally and sociologically conditioned? We have only the text and nearly 2,000 years in between. In the past we have depended on the criticisms of linguistics, theology, history, and archeology and have engaged these in the task of theological and historical-grammatical analysis in order to understand the text. However, in recent years other sciences such as sociology, psychology, and anthropology, have been employed by Biblical scholars to aid our understanding of the world and texts of the first century.

Many shame words and concepts appear in different contexts in the Pauline correspondence. These concepts are rooted in the social and cultural milieu of the first century world. We need to understand something of that world if we are to comprehend more exactly the meaning of this correspondence.

It is the task of this essay to enlarge the meaning of the "shame" words and concepts by means of the insights from the research of cultural anthropology and sociology. The method is descriptive and by survey of existing works. Only the Corinthian correspondence will be examined because there are more shame references there than in other books of the

New Testament and of 11 different issues 10 are behavioral[1] These issues are worked out in a society where shame and honour are pivotal values.[2] It is accepted that 1 and 2 Corinthians are undisputedly coming from the apostle Paul.

A brief overview of the research of the human sciences of psychology, anthropology and sociology highlights the new interest in shame is followed by an introduction to those who have applied the insights to the study of the *sitz im leben* of Paul's letters. Then the honour/shame value system of the world of the first century is seen from the Jewish standpoint and then from the Greco-Roman writings.

Secondly, the historical background of 1 and 2 Corinthians is surveyed. The social configuration of the city of Corinth sets the scene for the planting of the church by Paul the apostle to the Gentiles and the *raison d'être* of the letters Paul writes.

Thirdly, the semantic field of shame vocabulary is analysed and the behavioral problems are examined in the light of the honour/shame values of the surrounding society. Paul's answer to the problems and Paul's boasting are considered briefly followed by Paul's shame for the Gospel.

Honour, Shame, and Guilt in the Human Sciences

Until recently, studies in the human sciences concentrated on guilt and had little interest in shame. However, during this century, there has been a shift in focus from guilt to shame. Asian scholars have challenged the emphasis, presuppositions and conclusions of the western world-view that focus more on guilt than shame. P.M. Yapp, challenged the dichotomy between guilt and shame,[3] and Francis Hsu,[4] takes exception to the

---

[1]Gordon D. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987), 5.

[2]This is the term used by Pitt-Rivers, Peristany and others who have researched the field.

[3]David J. Hesselgrave, *Counselling Cross-Culturally*, (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1984), 206.

[4]David W. Augsburger, *Pastoral Counseling Across Cultures,* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1986), 120.

individualistic orientation of Freud and Erikson and maintains that the most important environment is the social environment.

Insights from Psychology

Theorists beginning with Sigmund Freud focussed on the individual identity of human beings, and contrasted guilt with shame which is based upon disapproval coming from outside, from other persons. Erik Eriksen, also focussing on the individual, supplements Freud's theory of periods of development and traces 8 stages of psycho-social development of personality. Each stage experiences a conflict between two extremes. The first stage he sees as a conflict between acquiring trust or mistrust, while the second stage is between acquiring autonomy against shame. The conflict between guilt and initiative follows as a higher and more advanced stage of development. From Eriksen's analysis, shame is distinguished from guilt and is experienced earlier.[5]

The dichotomy between guilt and shame has led psychologists such as Ruth Benedict to draw a distinction between outer-directed cultures which are controlled primarily by shame and inner-directed cultures which are shaped by guilt. This contrast has been applied to entire societies so that some have been called shame cultures (eastern) while others have been typed guilt cultures (western). However, this has shown to be somewhat of a false dichotomy because all cultures experience both guilt and shame.[6]

Insights from Anthropology

Anthropologists and sociologists see it a little differently. They tend to classify honour with shame rather than guilt. Secular anthropologists, beginning with British structuralists Julian Pitt-Rivers, and J.G. Peristiany, in the sixties, led the way in discerning the unity of a distinctive Mediterranean culture that focused around honour and shame. They conjured up a Mediterranean archetype, a paradigm of honour and shame. Jane Schneider (1971) led the way for American anthropologists whose work is reflected by Black-Mechaud, John Davis and others who have accepted the implicit assumption that the Mediterranean Basin represents

---

[5]Helen M. Lynd, *On Shame and the Search for Identity*, (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1958), 204-207.

[6]David W. Augsberger, 120.

a cultural unity, a bounded entity where the honour/shame syndrome is diacritical to this coherance and differentiation.[7] Since then, diverse approaches to the subject have been undertaken; by David Gilmore (psychoanalytic), Michael Herzfeld (semiotic), Carol Delaney (cultural-particularist) and others. All of these dimensions reinforce the central importance of honour and shame to the Mediterranean value system.[8]

However, this is not to presume that the honour/shame phenomenon as experienced now in the Mediterranean region is identical to that of the first century, to the world of St Paul. Cultures change with the passing of time and the change of circumstances. Howard Kee has warned us of the danger of "parallelomania", that is when a superficial analysis of two institutions in two different cultures suggests they resemble each other. It is an easy step from that to the conclusion that they are parallel phenomena.[9] Nonetheless, where the way of life has changed little, cultures have a way of sticking and being passed down from one generation to another.[10] So from a cultural-anthropological dimension, contemporary models and traces from the Mediterranean can help to point us in the direction of our search in the first century. Given that human nature is basically the same by the very fact of its humanness and fallenness, there will be some universals true to all generations. It is permissible to understand these universals from the texts without being guilty of eisegesis. Bruce Malina has put it this way. "All human beings are entirely the same, entirely different, and somewhat the same and somewhat different at the same time".[11]

---

[7]David Gilmore, *Honor and Shame and the Unity of the Mediterranean*, ed., David Gilmore, American Anthropological Association, (Washington, DC: nd), 2-3.

[8]Stanley Brandes, "Reflections on Honor and Shame in the Mediterranean", *Honor and Shame and the Unity of the Mediterranean*, ed., David Gilmore, American Anthropological Association, (Washington, DC: nd), 133.

[9]Howard Clark Kee, *Community of the New Age,* (S.C.M., 1977), 9, quoted by Derek Tidball, *An Introduction to the Sociology of the New Testament*, (Exeter: Paternoster, 1983), 21.

[10]David W. Augsberger, 120.

[11]Bruce Malina, *The New Testament World: Insights from Cultural Anthropology*, (Atlanta: John Knox, 1981), 7,23.

Bruce Malina drawing on the insights from cultural anthropology traces the outworking of the value of honour and shame in New Testament culture in relation to personality, possessions, kinship and purity. Although aware of the limitation of models, Malina uses models from various anthropologists who have studied Mediterranean society in order to understand various and broad areas of behavior. He invites us to validate the models to see if they do indeed explain, and to realize the spread of cultural difference that separates us from first-century Christians. A number of scholars have done this while others have drawn on Malina's insights to validate their work in one way or other. Some of these are A.J. Dewey[12] who examines the question of honour as a specific aspect of social status; Charles Muenchow acknowledges the work of Malina in his insightful discussion of Job 42:6.[13] David M. May,[14] reads Mark 3:20-35 with a sense of the social conditionedness of shame/honour setting in the life of Mark; Halvor Moxnes[15] traces the shame motif in Paul's letter to the Romans; Gregory Corrigan focuses on Paul's shame for the Gospel[16] and Anthony Phillips[17] skillfully shows how the shame motif is the clue to the purpose of the book of Ruth. We shall look again at Malina's model later in the essay.

Jerome Neyrey has studied Paul from the perspective of cultural anthropology and social psychology. He takes up just one aspect, that is the description of Paul's symbolic universe.[18] Neyrey confirms that the ancient Mediterranean culture was strongly structured around the pivotal

---

[12]A.J. Dewey, "A Matter of Honor: A Social-Historical Analysis of 2 Corinthians 10", *HTR* 78, (1985), 209-217.

[13]Charles Muenchow, "Dust and Dirt in Job 42:6", *JBL*, 108:4, (1989) 602-603.

[14]David M. May, "Mark 3:20-35 from the Perspective of Shame/honor", *Biblical Theology Bulletin,* 17:3, (July, 1987).

[15]Halvor Moxnes, "Honor, Shame, and the Outside World in Paul's Letter to the Romans", *The Social World of Formative Christianity and Judaism,* ed. Jacob Neusner and others, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1988).

[16]Gregory Corrigan, "Paul's Shame for the Gospel", *Biblical Theology Bulletin*, 16:1, (Jan, 1986), 23-27.

[17]Anthony Phillips, "The Book of Ruth - Deception and Shame", *Journal of Jewish Studies*, 37/1, (1986), 1-17.

[18]Jerome H. Neyrey, *Paul, in other Words*, (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1990), 14.

values of honour and shame. Honour and shame, moreover, explain the highly agonistic nature of Paul's culture. Honour, name, and reputation were the primary values of an individual, but ones that could be lost when challenged.[19] Much remains to be done if we would truly understand Paul in terms of his specific Mediterranean, first-century, non-elite culture. For example, some work has been done on the rural milieu but much is needed on the pre-industrial city and the social relations that took place in such an environment.[20]

Insights from Sociology

To understand how shame is a pivotal value regulating relationships in society we need to draw upon the resources from the field of sociology. Francis Hsu has noted that our most important environment is the social environment.[21] Sociologists' primary interest is in groups and collectivities, in the normal pattern of behavior, in structural homologies.[22] What binds any society together is a vast set of common assumptions about human origin and destiny, about values, limits, responsibilities. Jonathan Smith[23] outlined four areas in which sociology illuminates the New Testament. Those areas are the description of social facts in social context, a construction of social history, an examination of social forces and social institutions, and an investigation of the creation of a Christian's world view.

Howard Clark Kee[24] has outlined the contribution of scholars to Biblical studies from the sociological perspective. The beginning of serious efforts at historical reconstruction of early Christianity through critical analysis of the sources began in the early nineteenth century. The prime mover was Ferdinand Christian Baur (1792-1860) who was interested in the factors that shaped the understanding of the early Christian writers. Then came Adolf von Harnack[25] (1851-1930) who, influenced by pre-

---

[19]Jerome H. Neyrey, 222.

[20]Jerome H. Neyrey, 222.

[21]David W. Augsberger, 120.

[22]John H. Schutz, "Introduction", Gerd Theissen, *The Social Setting of Pauline Christianity*, (Edinburgh, T & T. Clark, 1982), 3.

[23]Jonathan Swift, "Chicago lecture", (1973), quoted by Derek Tidball, *Sociology of the New Testament*, (Exeter: Paternoster, 1983), 14.

[24]Howard Clark Kee, 11-27.

[25]Howard Clark Kee, 14.

vailing liberal idealism, treated Jesus as a Jew of his time and culture and extracted from that socially conditioned setting the timeless essence of universal religion. By the middle of the twentieth century Rudolf Bultmann, influenced by the existential thought of Martin Heidegger, and Martin Dibelius, by means of form-critical analysis appealed to the social setting (*sitz-im-leben*) of the tradition as the clue to understanding its function in primitive Christianity. Interestingly, neither gave adequate attention to what the setting might be.[26]

In America, Shirley Jackson Case[27] urged that Christian origins be studied as social process rather than as literary or institutional history. Later, Max Weber, Peter Brown, E.R. Dodds, Abraham Malherbe, John Gager pursued this approach to the historical study of early Christianity. In Germany, the work of Gerd Theissen[28] has been monumental in his sociological analyses of Palestinian Christianity and of the Pauline churches. Theissen has demonstrated that one can expose the social structures that transcend individuals by the analysis of conflicts, events that yield basic attitudes, customs, and social assumptions.[29]

The research of the social sciences thus has it's contribution to make in understanding the world of St Paul, and the social matrix of the documents coming from first century. However, a danger lies in using the sociology research itself. Sociology tends to look for the common thread between movements. In so doing it is possible that it overstresses the similarities and underplays the differences between one movement and another.[30] Likewise, the risk of becoming reductionistic is always present. Both the tasks of historical reconstruction of Christian origins and the interpretation of the literature which emerged from that movement require a comprehensive approach.

---

[26]Howard Clark Kee, 14-15.

[27]Howard Clark Kee, 17.

[28]Howard Clark Kee, 17

[29]Arthur J. Dewey, 120; see also John Schutz, "Introduction" to Gerd Theissen, 2.

[30]Derek Tidball, *Sociology of the New Testament*, (Exeter: Paternoster, 1983), 19.

The Meaning of Shame

Shame is a multi-faceted word. "Shame has been one of the least known and understood dimensions of human experience and is paradoxically one of great significance"[31] Shame has a wide range of meaning. What is a shame to me may not be a shame to you, and there are linguistic difficulties. The Indo-European root *skem* or *sham* from which the English word is derived means "to hide". In English the word "shame" is synonymous with being "ashamed", and the German word (*scham*) combines the meaning of shame in one's own eyes with shame in the eyes of others. French and classical Greek each have two words for shame, connoting respectively its more private and its more public aspects. The Greek word αἰδώς as used by Homer made little distinction between private and public shame. Later, αἰσχύνη was differentiated from αἰδώς. Αἰσχύνη became associated with dishonour, with the emphasis on man-made codes. "Shameless" is a term of opprobrium. To be shameless is to be insensible to one's self; it is to be lacking in shame, unblushing, brazen, incorrigible.[32] Other cognate words include "shameful", "unashamed", "shamelessness". We shall look more closely at the Greek words used in the Corinthian correspondence later.

Definitions from Various Perspectives

Definitions vary according to the point of view of the one who is making it. Some definitions will be considered.

From Psychology

> Shame becomes inevitably bound up with the process of identity formation which underlies man's striving for self, for valuing, and for meaning. The experience of shame is a fundamental sense of being defective as a person, accompanied by fear of exposure and self-protective rage. The shame-inducing process involves one significant person breaking the inter-personal bridge with another.[33]

---

[31]Gershen Kaufman, "The Meaning of Shame: toward a self-Affirming identity", *Journal of Counseling Psychology* 21:6, (1974), 568.

[32]Helen M. Lynd, 24.

[33]Gershen Kaufman, 568.

Tomkins (1963) defined shame as the affect of indignity, or defeat, of transgression and of alienation. Shame is felt as an inner torment, a sickness of the soul.[34]

From Sociology

> In shame cultures, individuals are controlled by public threats to personal reputation and honour. Public shame reflects not only on the individual but on his family and kin, and there are strong familial sanctions on deviations from communal norms. Shame as a mechanism of social control can only operate in small groups where visibility and intimacy are prominent, and is thus characteristic of village rather than urban existence.[35]

From Philosophy

From a philosophical sense, shame can be considered natural and good.

> Fully faced, shame may become not something to be covered, but a positive experience of revelation.[36]

From Theology

> Shame is our ineffaceable recollection of our estrangement from the origin; it is grief for this estrangement, and the powerless longing to return to unity with the origin; shame is more original than remorse.[37]

From Anthropology

Julian Pitt-Rivers, a pioneer in the honour-shame phenomenon in the Mediterranean area defines shame in the context of honour.[38] Honour is a sentiment, a manifestation of this sentiment in conduct, and the evalua-

---

[34]Gershen Kaufman, 569.

[35]"Shame", Penguin Dictionary of Sociology.

[36]Gershen Kaufman, 569.

[37]Dietrich Bonhoeffer, cited by David W. Augsberger, 111.

[38]Julian Pitt-Rivers, "Honor", *Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*, No. 6, 503-511.

tion of this conduct by others, that is to say, reputation. Then follows a definition of dishonour (shame).

> Dishonour is the withdrawal of respect. To be put to shame is to be denied honour, and it follows that this can only be done to those who have some pretension to it. Honour and dishonour provide the currency in which people compete for reputation and the means whereby their appraisal of themselves can be validated and integrated into the social system, or rejected, thus obliging them to revise it.[39]

Some common strands in the above definitions include humiliating exposure before an audience, hiding, inter-relatedness, evaluation by significant others, the loss of personal honour, loss of face, physical sensations such as blushing, bowing the head, related to the private parts of the body. Shame is also a positive value in that it is a disposition to virtue.

A Closer Look at Bruce Malina's Model[40]

Bruce Malina draws upon anthropological models to understand the socio-cultural world of the New Testament. The purpose is to understand the why of their behaviour. Malina defines honour succinctly. It is the "value of a person in his or her own eyes (that is, one's claim to worth) *plus* that person's value in the eyes of his or her social group". Honour as a pivotal value in a society implies a chosen way of conduct undertaken with a view to and because of entitlement to certain social treatment in return.

Honour, Ascribed and Acquired

Ascribed honour derives from the fact of birth, family connections, or endowment by notable persons of power, by God, by the king and others of rank. Jesus is utterly shamed yet He is ascribed honour by the highest authority, God Himself.

---

[39]Julian Pitt-Rivers, 504.

[40]This review of Malina's thesis is summarised from pages 25-50 of his book.

Acquired honour is obtained by excelling over others in the social interaction called challenge and response, which is a sort of social game in which contestants compete according to socially-defined rules. The game can only take place between equals and is played publicly. The game opens with a challenge, in a positive way by a word of praise, the giving of a gift, the request for help, or the promise of help; or in a negative way by an insult, a physical affront, a threat, and an attempt at fulfilling it. Then the receiver perceives the message according to the norms of judging. The third step is the reaction to the message, through acceptance of the message to a negative refusal to act. When his honour is impugned, a man of valor will attempt to restore it. When a counter-challenge is offered, the game goes on.

An Agonistic Culture

In the first-century Mediterranean world, every social interaction that takes place outside one's family or one's circle of friends is perceived as a challenge to honour. Thus gift-giving, invitations to dinner, buying and selling, arranging marriages are interactions that take place according to the patterns of challenge-response. To be unable to respond is to be shamed, or dishonoured. Because of this constant challenge and counter-challenge, anthropologists call it an agonistic culture. "*Agon*" is Greek for an athletic contest or a contest between equals.

Symbols of Honour

Honour is symbolized by blood, (blood relations, etc.) and a good name and prestige are the most valuable of assets. Attempts to damage reputations are constantly made, yet great stress is laid on face-to-face courtesy in terms of formalities. Other symbols include the head and the face. For example, honour is shown when the head is crowned, and dishonour shown when the head is slapped. Just as the head symbolizes a person's honour, so also does the head of a group symbol the honour of that group. In honour societies, actions are more important than words, and how one speaks is more important than what one says.

Individual and Collective Honour

Honour-shame can be individual or it can be collective. Collective honour is to be found in natural groupings such as the family and voluntary groupings such as the Pharisees. The heads of both natural and vol-

untary groupings set the tone and embody the honour rating of the group. It is considered highly dishonourable and against the rules of honour to go to court. By going to court, he aggravates his dishonour by publicizing it. Moreover, satisfaction in court does not restore one's honour. Honour demands restoration or satisfaction by oneself or extended self (e.g. a family member taking revenge).

Male and Female Components

Honour has a male and a female component. Honour and shame become sexually specific. The male is to defend both corporate honour and any female honour embedded in the corporate honour, e.g. a male intrudes upon the family space and desecrates the daughter of the family. The family as a group is shamed. It is up to the men-folk to restore the honour of the family in some way. The female symbols the shame aspect of corporate honour, that positive sensitivity to the good repute of individuals and groups.

Malina's further insights include reference to the honourable man as one who avoids the appearance of presuming on others, lest such presumption be interpreted as trying to take something that belongs to another. He does not borrow so as not to upset the community balance. He never admits to initiating bonds or alliance with others. He never compliments his fellows, or expresses gratitude, for to do this is to be guilty of aggression. To express gratitude is to close off reciprocal relationship.

Weaknesses of Malina's Model

Malina's thesis is very helpful and insightful. However, there are some weaknesses. Firstly, his model presumes honour to be more emphatic. However, shame figures strongly in the first-century Mediterranean world and may be even more accentuated than honour.

Linguistically there is a fairly even weight in the both semantic fields of honour and shame in the New Testament documents. However, the use of the honour cognates in the New Testament documents δόξα, δοξάζω, ἐνδόξος, τιμή, τιμάω, τίμιος, ἔντιμος, and shame words αἰδώς, αἰσχρός, αἰσχύνη, ἀτιμία, ἀτιμάζω, αἰσχύνομαι, ἐπαισχύνομαι, καταισχύνομαι, καταισχύνω, ἀνεπαισχύντος, ἀσχημόσυνη, ἐντρόπη, ἐντρέπω have a wider and more diverse meaning than the confines of Malina's thesis.

Further, his model is inclined to be too rigid. His use of superlative adverbs, "always", "every", and "only" closes off the meaning and does not leave room for other possibilities. He stresses that the conflict for honour can only be between equals, and that honour is collective, in groups as well as individual. He has not mentioned the possibility of the competition for honour within the family itself, internal rather than externally controlled. Also, when fathers provoke their children to anger they shame their children. Paul tells them not to do this, so presumably they did (Ephesians 6:4). If the child retaliates, the father will be shamed because of his rebellious children. Presumably they did, for children had to be told to obey their parents (Ephesians 6:1). The model has not made room for this dimension of shame.

Thirdly, his model is an hypothetical one. It is not based on the evidence of the New Testament itself, or other manuscripts from the period. He has not told us from where he got his ideas. His argument is inductive to be validated rather than deductive, that is created from a study of the texts themselves.

Fourthly, he invites us to validate the model by examining the New Testament. Such validations run the risk of being reductionistic, encouraging eisegesis rather than exegesis, pressing every conflict into the model, when it may not fit well at all. They may also be anachronistic and interpret the documents by contemporary understanding.

However, Malina's model is a very useful one and opens up an investigation of the culture and society of the world of the first century. It may be used with caution, but it is not the sum of all there is to say on the matter.

Shame in the First Century

Jewish Thinking

The background to Jewish thinking is to be found in the Old Testament. The Old Testament is rich in references to shame. There are over 150 occurrences of shame and its derivative words.[41] The semantic field of the shame references in the Septuagint include αἰσχύνη, the sense of disgrace, the feeling of shame which attends the performance of a dis-

[41]David W. Augsberger, 138.

honourable deed; ἐντρόπη, a turning in upon oneself, causing a recoil from what is unseemly or impure; and ἀτιμία dishonour, disgrace.

For the Jew, the sense of shame is portrayed as the first effect of sin against God. The pursuit in life was to avoid shame and return to the pristine shamelessness of the pre-fall experience of Adam and Eve in the Garden. David Daube has observed the Book of Deuteronomy's affiliation with wisdom whose ideal was to find favour and avoid disgrace.[42]

The Wisdom literature both from the Proverbs and also from Ecclesiasticus in the Apocrypha, and the writings of Philo and Josephus abound in reference to acts of discretion to avoid shame or disgrace (e.g. Proverbs 5:14).

Begging was shameful and it was demoralizing to live on another man's food. Only when he has lost all sense of shame does he speak as if begging were sweet (Ecclesiasticus 40:28-30). Lies, crime, dishonesty, theft, were also causes for shame (Ecclesiasticus 41:17).

For Jews, "freedom is honourable and slavery a disgrace; no person of true worth is a slave."[43] Josephus gives advice in regard to "youths who scorn their parents and do not pay them the honour due."[44] "Not taking care of one's parents was a shameful thing and to dishonour ones parents was to dishonour also the Lord.[45] No shame was worse than the degradation of the body.[46] Brothel-keeping was forbidden, for all the world condemns this as shameful, upon brutishness and lust."[47] It was a shame to be found guilty of fornication by one's parents (Ecclesiasticus 41:17) and to eye another man's wife, or meddle with his slave-girl (Ecclesiasticus 41:21-22). A daughter was a secret anxiety to her father. His fears were that she would not marry, may lose her husband's love, may be seduced and become pregnant in her father's house, may misbehave, may be barren. A headstrong daughter may give your enemies cause to gloat, making you the talk of the town and a byword among the people,

---

[42]David Daube, 356.

[43]Philo, *quod omnis probus, 136*, cited by F. Gerald Downing, *Strangely Familiar*, (Manchester: 1985), 30.

[44]*Antiquities*, 260, Gerald Downing, 59.

[45]Philo, *de decal*, 118 ff, Gerald Downing, 58.

[46]Josephus, "Antiquities", IV, 206, Gerald Downing, 61.

[47]"Dio Chrysostom 7", 133, Gerald Downing, 66.

and shaming you in the eyes of the world. It is the woman who brings shame and disgrace (Ecclesiasticus 41:9-14).

To be beaten by one's enemies was indeed shameful and the frequent prayer of the psalmist was "do not let me be put to shame; do not let my enemies exult over me" (Psalm 25:2).

The most important source of shame is to shun God's wisdom (Proverbs 3:35) and devotion to false idols. The prophets warn that in the long run trusting idols leads to shame (Isaiah 42:17; 44:9-11; Hosea 4:7,19; 10:6). Ezekiel and Jeremiah warn that the worst shame of all is to fall under God's judgment (Ezek. 5:14-15; 7:18; Jeremiah 2:14-19,36; 12:13).[48]

Greco-Roman Thinking

There is abundant reference to what constitutes shame and disgrace in the writings of the philosophers. In Homer, αἰδώς is what one felt when confronted with the things nature tells one to revere and not violate such as shame related to sexual matters. αἰσχύνη was differentiated from αἰδώς and was associated with dishonour with the emphasis on man-made codes.[49] It was to have a sense of modesty in all things. Friedrich (1973) and Redfeld (1975:160-223) discuss Homeric honour in terms of integrity and purity.[50] "That honour can be more important than life itself is pointed out by Tacitus, who wrote in *Agricola* (ch.33) 'an honourable death would be better than a disgraceful attempt to save our lives'".[51]

Aristotle in his Nicomachean Ethics, Book 2, chapter 7 points out that honour and dishonour are bound up with the necessity of intermediate means in all behaviours. To incur passions is to be shameful and shame is not a virtue. The bashful man is ashamed of everything; while he who is not ashamed of anything at all is shameless.[52] Epictetus taught that to commit adultery with the neighbour's wife was to bring disgrace

---

[48]Tom Goodhue, "Shame", *Quarterly Review*, 4/2 (1984), 57-65.

[49]Helen M. Lynd, 25.

[50]Anton Blok, "Rams and Billy-Goats: A Key to the Mediterranean Code of Honour", *Man* 16, (1981), footnote 9, p. 437.

[51]Anton Blok, footnote 14, p. 438.

[52]Robert Hutchins, (ed.), Great Books of the Western World, *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, Inc., (London: William Benton, nd,) 1108-9.

not only upon the man of modesty, but on the whole neighbourhood, and the community.[53]

Αἰσχύνη is also a sense of disgrace or ignominy which comes to someone. Ample evidence of this meaning in seen in the writings of Diodorus, (S.2, 23, 2); Appian, Samn.4:11; in the Oxyrhynchus Papyrus (271, 78) and in the Elephantine Papyri.[54] Sexual matters were integrally related to the shame-honour matrix in the ancient world. Both Jews and Greeks associated women with shame. To be a woman was to be ashamed. The woman was but the receptacle for the regenerative seed that comes from males. In Aischylus' drama *The Eumenides*, it is stated that "the mother is not the parent of that which is called her child, but only the nurse of the new planted seed."[55] It is the male that contributes the generative and formal principle of life. This was the opinion of Aristotle.[56] Hence the female reproductive organs were inward and hidden, whereas the male reproductive organ was his glory. Both for the Greco-Romans and for the Jews, castration and the crushing of the testicles were shameful. At puberty, a woman is under the protection of her father and brothers until transferred to her husband upon marriage. Her long hair was symbolic of the entanglements by which men are ensnared and therefore must be covered. In Tarsus, all women went veiled.[57] Male honour is vulnerable through women. A man is shamed by an adulterous woman.

It is clear that the world of the first century included the values of honour and shame which controlled much of the life of an individual and of society.

---

[53]Epictetus, "Discourses", Book II, Chapter 4, *Encyclopaedia Brittanica*, 142.

[54]Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and other Early Christian Literature,* (trans.) William F. Arndt and F. Wilbur Gingrich, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, ^{2}1979), 25.

[55]Carol Delaney, "Seeds of Honor, Fields of Shame", *Honor and Shame and the Unity of the Mediterranean,* David Gilmore, (ed.), (Washington, DC; American Anthropological Association, nd.) footnote 6, 47.

[56]Carol Delaney, footnote 5, 46.

[57]Dio, Discourse 33:48, Gerald Downing, 68.

The Historical Background of 1 and 2 Corinthians

The City of Corinth

Situated at the southern end of Greece, Corinth was a new city. The original Greek city had been destroyed by the Romans in 146 BC and had laid waste for a hundred years before being re-established by Julius Caesar in 44 BC. The Roman colony became the seat of provincial government under the direction of a pro-consul answerable to the Senate of Rome. As a Roman colony, Corinth took on Roman customs and political structures.

The city prospered by its commerce, its banking, bronze artistry, and government bureaucracy. There were all kinds of cottage industries including leather working and tent-making. There were many shops and markets. Most of the people had their roots elsewhere. They had come from the four corners of the empire. No doubt when they reached the city they looked for their own kind and congregated according to their language groups, and their socio-economic levels. A great number were there on business. Those of the same trade banded together into guilds or *collegia*. It is likely that Aquila belonged to such a group, and this would have provided contacts for Paul's ministry and ideas for a *koinonia* beyond the individual household.[58] Some were rich, and as much as two-thirds of its estimated population of 600,000 were slaves.[59] The rich had access to the courts, the slaves had none. The poor were often protected by a patron in a patron-client relationship. According to Strabo, the majority of the new settlers were freedmen. Public celebration of marriages and other events were well catered for by special dining areas attached to the temples such as that of Asclepius. Other religions also had their sanctuaries there. The ruins of temples dedicated to Hera Acraea, Aethena, Fortune, Tyche, Apollo, Aphrodite, Isis, Asclepius, Poseidon, and Artemis, have been located there indicating the multi-cultural, multi-religious, and pluralistic nature of the city.[60]

---

[58]Vincent Branick, *The Housechurch in Paul's Theology of Church*, Zacchaeus Studies: New Testament, (Delaware: Michael Glazier, 1989), 61.

[59]Vincent Branick, 58.

[60]Jerome Murphy-O'Connor, 147-158.

Latin predominated as the language of inscriptions. Nonetheless the predominant Greek culture was to be seen in its Greek people, the use of Greek as the *lingua franca*, and in many religious shrines and temples especially the worship of Aphrodite, in the theatre and sports.[61] Social attitudes were seen in the appreciation of rhetorical speakers, love of philosophy, and love of sport. The Isthmian games were held every two years and attracted visitors from all over the Mediterranean world. Social class was based on birth rather than wealth. Patron-client, and friendship relationships were sustained by mutual obligation.

Some Jews had congregated there and a broken lintel with the crude inscription "synagogue of the Hebrew," was found.[62] Philo reminds us that Corinth had been a prominent city in the Jewish Diaspora.[63] Paul begins his ministry in the synagogue (Acts 18:4) and both Jews and Greeks were in attendance. When Paul experienced opposition, he moved next-door into the house of Titius Justus who was a "God-fearer" a "worshipper of God". Later, Crispus, the official of the synagogue and his household became believers (Acts 18:1-17). Paul's letters to the church there have about 30 Old Testament quotations from 11 different books including Isaiah, Psalms, Deuteronomy, Genesis, Exodus, Numbers, Zechariah, Job, Jeremiah, Hosea, Malachi. About 25 are in substantial agreement with the LXX. Other verses more resemble the Hebrew form.[64] This would indicate that it is likely the early church had a distinctive Jewish background.

Paul in His Society

Troeltsch's assessment of Paul as an "unliterary person who was spiritually gifted and rose out of his class"[65] cannot be sustained in view of the Scriptural evidence. Paul was born in a Greco-Roman city of Tarsus, educated in Jerusalem under Gamaliel, and socialised as a Pharisaic Jew. As a Jewish Rabbi, he was at home in the synagogue among teach-

---

[61]Gordon D. Fee, 1-4.

[62]Jerome Murphy O'Connor, 153.

[63]Barbara Ellen Bowe, *A Church in Crisis*, Harvard Dissertations in Religion 23, (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1988), 9.

[64]Archibald Robertson and Alfred Plummer, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the First Epistle of St Paul to the Corinthians*, (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1914), lii-liv.

[65]Derek Tidball, 92.

ers of the Law. He was well-versed in the Scriptures and oral tradition of the scribes. At the same time, it is likely that he received a Greek education at Tarsus that included training in rhetoric, and knowledge of Greek philosophy and poetry. His style of argumentation, use of metaphor, quotation of Greek poets and so on would indicate this. To cap it all off, Paul enjoyed the privileges of Roman citizenship, which put him among the social elite of the empire. Paul therefore belongs very much to the pluralistic world of his day. As such, a proper sense of shame was interwoven in his life, both from the Jewish standpoint and also of the Greco-Roman world around him. He is aware of challenges to his honour. He knows how to respond to these challenges.

Paul in Corinth

It is generally agreed that the church in Corinth was founded by Paul in A.D. 50-51 (1 Cor 4:15; 2:1-5; Acts 18:1-11). While in Corinth, he supported himself by manual labour (1 Corinthians 9:3-19) as a tent-maker (Acts 18:3) and worker in leather. While there, his first converts were the household of Stephanus (1 Cor 16:15) whom he baptised followed by Gaius, and Crispus. His preaching of the Gospel brought a church into being from the diverse strata of people in the city. His preaching also brought much opposition from the Jews which culminated in his being brought before the tribunal of the Proconsul Gallio (Acts 18:12-17). The charges could not be sustained, and after a while Paul left the brothers and set sail for Syria.

The Christian Community in Corinth

Gerd Theissen assesses the size of the Christian community in Corinth to be about 100 persons at the time of Paul. He identifies 17 persons, nine of whom belong to the upper classes, based on the criteria of houses, travel, and services rendered. He thus implies a high social status. Half the persons connected with the Corinthian church had Latin names, the other half, Greek.[66]

---

[66]Wayne Meeks, *The First Urban Christians; The Social World of the Apostle Paul,* (New Haven: Yale UP, 1983), 48.

An inscription bearing the name of Erastus would indicate that he was a man of some wealth. This Erastus has been identified with one of Paul's converts in Romans 16:23 who Paul called the treasurer of the city. Erastus is the only person whose status is mentioned. Prisca and Aquila, tent-makers or leather-workers (Acts 18:3), were probably Christians already in Corinth before Paul reached there (Acts 18:3. Later, they are responsible for house churches in Ephesus (1 Cor 16:19) and Rome (Rom 16:3). After Paul left Corinth, their house was a place of Christian instruction, at least for Apollos (Acts 18:26). Prisca is usually named before her husband, and may indicate a higher social status.

Another house-holder was Titius Justus whose house next-door to the synagogue became the meeting place for Paul after he left the synagogue. Then there was Gaius. Paul sends greetings to the Christians in Rome from Gaius and Erastus. At that time Gaius is Paul's host and that of the whole church (Rom 16:23).

Nine kilometers away, the nearby town of Cenchreae had a Christian community directed by Phoebe (Romans 16:2). Phoebe is described as a benefactor (*prostatis*) of many and also for Paul. *Prostatis* is often translated as "patron", and Phoebe may have been a wealthy patron of Paul, someone who has put her property at the service of Paul and many others. Her ability to make the long journey to Rome shows an economic status consistent with the picture of her as a patron of the church.[67]

Contrary to Troeltsch, Deissman, and Marxists Engel and Kautsky, a close study of the Christian community at Corinth makes clear that the church were not just those "from below" who rose to conquer classical society as an internal proletariat as has been the orthodox view of the beginnings of Christianity cultivated alike by ecclesiastical and Marxist historians.[68] The social stratification of this community as analysed by Theissen and Meeks[69] seemed to be a very diverse group, mainly consisting of middle class persons. They included neither "the landed aristocrats, senators and decurions nor the destitute poor". The community was made up of slaves, free artisans and traders, people of varying de-

---

[67]Vincent Branick, 66.

[68]E.A. Judge, *The Conversion of Rome, Ancient Sources of Modern Social Tensions*, (Sydney: The Macquarie Ancient History Association, 1, 1978). See also Derek Tidball, 92.

[69]Gerd Theissen, 69-119; Wayne Meeks, 51-73.

grees of wealth, Jews and Gentiles.[70] This seems to be underlined by the way Paul appeals to them for the Jerusalem collection (1 Cor 16:1-4). On the first day of every week, they are to put aside and save whatever extra they earn, so that collections need not be taken when Paul comes (1 Cor 16:2). This directive would seem to be more appropriate to those with regular income. That they are people with money seems to be supported too by the fact that Paul seems to have offended some of them by earning his own living and not accepting their support (1 Cor 9:12-15; 2 Cor 11:7-12; 12:13) as was the usual practice for the wandering philosophers. As pointed out by Vincent Branick[71] this attitude sounds like a group which wants to display its resources and acquire the power that comes from patronage. Going to court also needed sufficient funds for a good lawyer.

The basic unit of society was the household with the father as the *pater familias*. Both the Greeks and Romans placed much importance on the household system. Under Augustus, the household reflected in microcosm what the Empire was in macrocosm. The household was bound together under the authority of a senior male. Under him was an hierarchy of authority beginning with the eldest son. Included were members of the immediate family, friends, clients, and slaves. The solidarity of the household was expressed in a common religion, which marked off the family boundary from others who worshipped different gods. For any one member to choose another god was to bring shame on the whole family. It was important then to convert the household head to avoid bringing shame on the family. It is likely that Crispus, Gaius, and Stefanus who were the few baptized by Paul were household heads (1 Cor 1:14-16) and became patrons and leaders of the church.[72]

The House Church in Corinth

We are indebted particularly to the recent studies of Wayne Meeks and Robert Banks for the illumination they have shed on the details of house churches where Paul's converts assembled. The most likely place of assembly was in the dining room and the atrium just outside which probably measured no more than 50 square metres, reduced by the area taken up by furniture. No more than 40-50 people could meet comforta-

---

[70]Wayne Meeks, 73.
[71]Vincent Branick, 59.
[72]Derek Tidball, 79-81.

bly. Some would be able to recline at ease in the triclinium while the rest had to stand or sit in the atrium.[73] Therefore as the number of believers grew, a network of house churches developed in a city. Robert Banks suggests that Paul's allusion to "the whole church" implies that smaller groups existed in the city.[74] Although there was a relatedness to each other so that Paul sends only one letter for all groups, these smaller groups would be prone to a competitiveness which would lead to divisiveness.

Paul in the Corinthian Correspondence

It is likely that Paul wrote four letters to the Corinthian church and received at least one letter from them. Also there were reports back and forth.[75]

In A.D. 55, three years after Paul's visit, while on his second missionary journey, Paul writes directing them not to associate with those who call themselves "brother" and are guilty of immorality, greed, or idolatry (1 Cor 5:9). This first letter has been lost. Some time later, news came from Chloe's people (1 Cor 1:11) that there were serious divisions in the church. Also Paul received a letter from them probably in reply to the letter he had previously sent (1 Cor 7:1). The letter sought his guidance on various matters such as marriage and related issues, food sacrificed to idols, spiritual gifts and the relief fund. The bearers of the letter probably told him more of the alarming practices in the church, the illicit sexual relations (chapter 5), the taking of another before pagan courts (6:1-11), their misuse of the Lord's supper (11:17-34) and certain disagreements over the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead (15:12-57). Paul deals with these problems in 1 Corinthians which he writes from Ephesus during his last year in that city.

---

[73]Jerome Murphy O'Connor, 157.

[74]Robert Banks, *Paul's Idea of Community*, (Homebush West: Anzea, 1981), 38.

[75]The most widely held position suggests four letters from Paul; one that was lost and three found in the canonical lists. Some commentators see two sections in 2 Corinthians. Chapters 10-13 represent a harsh letter coinciding with the "painful visit" (2 Cor 2:1-11) while chapters 1-9 are filled with words of reconciliation.

Later Paul writes another "tearful letter" (2 Cor 2:3-4:9; 7:8-12), and, the situation in Corinth changed for the worse. The church opposed him in favour of "superlative" apostles[76] (2 Cor 11:5). Paul sends Titus down as a middle man to straighten things out and to organise the Jerusalem collection. Titus returns to Paul who has now moved on to Macedonia and assures him that all is well (2 Cor 7:6, 13). With a great sigh of relief, Paul writes 2 Corinthians in which Paul reveals himself and defends his apostleship. He urges them to get on with the collection and he intends himself to come down to collect it with some brothers from Macedonia (2 Cor 12:14, 13:1).

The Shame Motif in the Corinthian Correspondence[77]

The pursuit of a shame background in Corinthians has more to do with the context than the contents. A sense of shame, disgrace and embarrassment permeates the whole of the Corinthian correspondence. A range of words, metaphors, concepts, events, depict the shame aspect. Words from the αἰσχύνη word group occur 10 times; those from the ἀτιμία word group 6 times; those from the ἐντρόπη group 3 times; from ἀσχημόσυνη 3 times; and others. The semantic field of shame terminology can be grouped around the following words.

The Semantic Field

Αἰσχύνη; shame, disgrace, the cause or source of shame, those things which shame conceals; it is associated with dishonour and the emphasis is on man-made codes.

Αἰσχυνόμαι; αἰσχυθήσομαι; always used in the passive voice, the feeling of shame that arises from something that has been done, to be disappointed in a hope; 2 Cor. 10:8. Paul uses this passive word of himself.

Καταισχύνω; καταισχύνει; καταισχύνετε; καταισχυνθῇ; καταισχυνθῶμεν; to cause someone to be much ashamed; to humiliate, to disgrace, to be put to shame; to put to the blush; with κατα an inten-

---

[76]Just who the superlative apostles were is one of the unsolved problems of Biblical research.

[77]See the Bibliography for the various dictionaries and lexicons that have been used in the search for definitions and meanings.

sive or perfective form of αἰσχυνω (1 Cor 1:27; 11:4,5; 11:22; 2 Cor. 7:14; 9:4). This intensive form is used more than the lesser term αἰσχύνω. Ἐπαισκύνω does not occur at all. This word group is used as verbs. When active, the subjects are God (1:27); a man and a woman (11:4,5); the richer members of the church (11:22); When passive Paul, the Macedonians, and the Corinthians are the ones who are humiliated (2 Cor 7:14; 9:4).

Αἰσχρόν; opposed to καλόν; indecorous, indecent, dishonourable, vile, base; 1 Cor 11:6; 14:35. In both verses, this strong word applies to women.

Ἀσχρημοσύνη; ἀσχρημονεῖν; ἀσχήμονα; ἀσχρημονεῖ; indecorous, indecent, naked; to behave in an uncomely manner open to censure. (1 Cor 7:36, 12:23, 13:5). Applied to conduct of a man towards a woman (7:36); to the private parts of the body (12:23); love does not act in this way (13:5).

Ἄτιμος; ἀτιμοτέρα; ἀτιμία; ἀτιμίαν unhonoured; without honour; (1 Cor 4:10; 11:14; 12:23; 15:43; 2 Cor 6:8; 11:21). The words describe the state of Paul (4:10, 2 Cor. 6:8); a man (11:14); members of the body (12:23); the dead body (15:43). This word is not applied to women. These words are used as adjectives or nouns.

Δειγματίζω; This is a rare word meaning to exhibit, make public, bring to public notice. It has this sense in 1 Cor 4:9 where ἀπέδειχεν refers to the spectacle of the apostles as those being condemned to death.

Εντροπε; ἐντρέπω; ἐντρέπων; ἐντρόπεν; a composite word from εν + τρεπω lit. to turn one upon himself and so produce a feeling of shame, a wholesome shame which involves a change of conduct; to put to shame; to bring to reflection; in the passive, to be ashamed; as a noun, shame that is a recoil from what is unseemly or vile, a feeling of embarrassment resulting from what one has done or failed to do; embarrassment. (1 Cor 4:14; 6:5; 15:34). These words differ from αἰσχύνη and αἰσχύνομαι in seeming to focus upon the embarrassment which is involved in the feeling of shame. Paul is the subject in each case. In 4:14, he does not wish to shame, but in 6:5 and 15:34, this is the purpose of what he is saying. His initial cordial approach turns to rebuke when he thinks of their sins of taking one another to court and eating and drinking gluttonously.

Ταπεινόω; ταπεινώσει; metaphorically used in a good sense meaning to humble; In 2 Cor 7:6 God comforts the humble, the downcast (ταπεινούς). It can also mean to humiliate, to put to shame. In 2 Cor 11:7, Paul humbles himself while in 12:21, it is God who will humble Paul if when he comes to Corinth on his next visit, he finds those who are still unrepentant.

Θέατρον a public display; a spectacle implying shame in 1 Cor 4:9, where it applies to the apostles doomed to death. A similar meaning is conveyed metaphorically by θριαμβεύοντι leading in triumph in 2 Cor 2:14.[78] Both Scott Hafemann and Peter Marshall pick up the metaphor of social shame implied in this word. Hafemann concludes that the metaphor θριαμβεύοντι applies to Paul as a conquered slave of Christ who is led to death. Marshall concludes in a more general way that the metaphor refers to the shame Paul felt because of his enmity with the Corinthians.

Other Related Words

Shame (ἀτιμία) is contrasted with glory (δόξα), which usually has to do with God rather than man. δοξα words occur more than 22 times. There are more shame-related words than there are glory words. These include weak (ἀσθένεια) more than 26 times and permeating the whole letter, 1:25, 2:3, 8:7, 9:22, 2 Cor 12:9-1, 13:4, 13:9; foolish (μωρία) 1:20,23; 2:14; perishing 1:18, 10:9-10, 2 Cor 4:9; lowly, despised, things that are not, abolish, fear, trembling, labour, naked, reviled, off-scouring, refuse, fornicators, failure, wronged, deprived, adulterers, prostitutes, homosexuals, slave, falls, denounced, uncovered, to be shorn, shaven, feeble, smell of death, mad, out of mind, and others.

Contrasted with these and glory/honour related are wisdom and wise σόφος (10 times) and σοφία (16 times) each time with a slightly different shade of meaning. Also strong (ἰσχυρός), influential, noble, excellence, rich, held in honour, receiving the prize, standing firm, praise, play the man, authority and others.

---

[78]Scott Hafemann, *Suffering and the Spirit, An Exegetical Study of II Cor.2:14-3:3 within the Context of the Corinthian Correspondence,* [Tubingen: J.C.B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1986], 39, and Peter Marshall, "A Metaphor of Social Shame: 'ΨΡΙΑΜΒΕΥΕΙΝ' in 2 Cor. 2:14", *Novum Testamentum* XXV, 4, (1983), 317.

Thus by the prevalence of specific words that are spread out through the text, it can be seen that the shame motif is important and needs to be examined in order to comprehend more fully the meaning in social context. Not only is this motif carried by the specific vocabulary but with the help of sociological and anthropological research, fresh light is thrown onto the behavioral problems Paul addresses.

The Shameful Situations in Corinth and Paul's Radical Response in the First Letter to the Corinthians

Divisions in the Church (1 Cor 1-4)

Since Paul left the city of Corinth, in A.D. 51, three years had elapsed before his correspondence with them was written. Not that he had forgotten them, as he prayed for them. No doubt, he would pray that they would continue in his teaching and so discover their new identity in Christ Jesus. However there were problems in establishing the community. They were faced with establishing a life together, of agreeing to common beliefs and values, of forming a collective conscience. They had become a sub-culture within the wider society. They continued to share in the norms of the larger society but formed some norms of their own. They needed to learn not only how to relate to each other, but how to relate to society around them which came to despise them. Instead of forging a unity, the church was marked by a contentiousness among its various members. The sources of this contentiousness were different apostolic allegiances (1 Cor 1:10-13), conflicting theological positions (1 Cor 1:18-31), different views of freedom and perfection (1 Cor 8:7-13), different socio-economic positions (1 Cor 1:10-13), and conflicting claims to superiority on the basis of spiritual gifts (1 Cor 12).[79] The implication of their contentiousness was to divide the body of Christ into many pieces or to apportion out Christ to one of the many groups.[80]

Their divisions are not just personal preferences but they had ramifications for the Gospel. Fee suggests that they were 'modifying the gospel

---

[79]Barbara Ellen Bowe, 11.

[80]Gordon D. Fee contra: Leon Morris concludes that the more natural meaning is that Christ is apportioned out as only one among many which is absurd.

towards Hellenism'[81] and that their actions were akin to a return to their pagan ways (6:9-11; 8:7; 12:1-3). They were beginning to think of their faith in terms of the teaching of the wandering *sophists*. Bruce Winter favours the idea that the Sophistic movement was at the back of the divisions.[82] The Sophists were popular travelling lecturers. They were eloquent teachers of Wisdom. The desire for good meat was replaced by the entertainment of the Sophists skill. Paul rebukes and appeals to the Corinthians to come back to centre, to realise the profundity and power of the Gospel does not consist of this world's wisdom. It is not clever verbal tricks that will save people but only the power of the Gospel, the truth of God applied to an honest conscience. Their behaviour of favouring one teacher over against another was worldly, and in the pattern of their former competition for honour and recognition.

We can see the honour/shame culture displayed in these divisions. Perpetuating such divisions is to return to the agonistic world around them (1 Cor 3:3). As believers in Christ they have been lifted above and they are called to live supra-culturally. Those who think they are wise need to choose the way of foolishness for they belong to Christ (1 Cor 3:18-23).

Sexual Immorality (1 Cor 5)

The city of Corinth was famed for its sexual laxity. The reputation of the city was so well-known that a term to "Corinthianize" meant to live in sexual freedom from the restraints of normal decency. Most of the pagan temples had their prostitutes to serve their devotees. Likewise the prevailing philosophy advocated freedom.

The Cynic, Diogenes, declared that marriage, like all social institutions, was artificial, invented only by society, and therefore dangerous because it was contrary to nature. The life lived according to nature demanded the abandonment of marriage. The Stoic philosopher, Zeno, held that community of wives was itself a law of nature which had been suppressed by civilization imposing monogamous limits on it. However,

[81]Gordon D. Fee, 10.

[82]Bruce Winter, *lecture notes*, (Singapore: Trinity College, 1986).

only the wise, Zeno thought, were capable of realizing in practice the community of wives.[83]

We are not sure exactly what the sexual problem was that outraged Paul, except that it has to do with a man and his father's wife. Since there were those in Corinth who were puffing themselves up because of their claim to wisdom, and were wrongly understanding their freedom in Christ, it is possible that this philosophy lay behind this man's sin. However, Paul called to witness the pagans themselves to whom this was a gross aberration. Barrett cites Lightfoot who quotes the Latin writers, Cicero and Gaius.[84] Gaius writes, "Neither can I marry her who has aforetime been my mother-in-law or step-mother, or daughter-in-law or step-daughter".[85] Cicero likewise condemns the practice of marriage of a woman with her son-in-law: "Oh! to think of the woman's sin, unbelievable, unheard of in all experience save for this single instance!"[86]

If such an action was a shameful thing in the eyes of the world, how much more in the community of Christ's followers. Paul's outrage calls for a denouncement in the strongest terms. They are to put the person outside, typified as the world under Satan's control. To commit someone to Satan was to strip them of all claims to status. Life in the new community calls for holy living, and all former sexual license must be put away.

Going to Court (1 Cor 6)[87]

It is considered highly dishonourable and against the rules of honour to go to court and seek legal justice from one's equal. In the case of the Corinthians this was one's fellow believer (1 Cor 6:1). The going to court only serves to aggravate the dishonour by publicizing it. Furthermore legal satisfaction failed to restore one's honour because it demonstrated vulnerability, allowed others to gloat over your predicament, and

---

[83]E.A. Judge, "St Paul as a Radical Critic of Society", *Interchange: Papers on Biblical and Current Questions* 16, (1974), 191-203.

[84]C.K. Barrett, *A Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians,* (London: Adam & Charles Black, 1968), 121.

[85]Gordon D. Fee, footnote 24, 201.

[86]Gordon D. Fee, footnote 24, 201.

[87]The general thought of the following paragraph is taken from Bruce Malina, 39.

involved asking for an apology from another which in itself is dishonouring. If this was the case in society, how much more it is out of place in the new society.

Paul, aware of society's norms acknowledges that it is already a defeat for them (1 Cor 6:7). Paul lays down the theological reason for them not to do this. It is that they the saints will judge the world (6:2-3). His paranesis is to urge them rather, to be willing to be wronged and to be defrauded by another. A radical change in their attitude towards their brother is needed, a complete reversal of what they had been used to.

Problems concerning Marriage (1 Cor 7)

In chapter 7, Paul begins to answer the questions they wrote about. The difficulties of interpreting this chapter are left to the commentators, grammarians, and lexicographers. Attention is drawn to only a few items in the chapter that are linked with the shame/honour values in society at large. For the Jew it was obligatory to be married. For a Rabbi to be unmarried was most rare. Opinions differ as to whether Paul was ever married, or if he was a widower. He seems to be not married at the time of writing. However, he was not an ascetic. Asceticism has been seen to be behind verse 1 and this may be so if the Christians were competing against one another in terms of their degree of spirituality (πνευματικός). If it was considered more "spiritual" to abstain from sexual relations, and so gain ascendancy over those less spiritual, then Paul gives no ground for boasting. The only concession he allows for remaining in one's state of singleness is so that one may be free to do the work of the Lord. Paul refrains from saying anything to indicate that there is something morally higher about celibacy.[88]

Neither is his answer to their questions solely for the future. Morris[89] disagrees with Barclay who said that "Paul's whole outlook was dominated by the fact that he expected the Second Coming of Christ immediately and at any moment"[90]. Paul's answer relates to the present circumstances and are to be acted upon in the here and now.

---

[88]Leon Morris, *1 Corinthians, An Introduction and Commentary*, (London: The Tyndale Press, [R]1966),123.

[89]Leon Morris, 116.

[90]William Barclay, *Letters to Corinthians*, The Daily Study Bible, (Edinburgh: The Saint Andrew Press, Rl975),77.

That honour is all male and shame is all female, that only the husband has the authority in the marriage is repudiated by Paul who addressed equally both men and women who have conjugal rights and responsibilities in the marriage. The equalisation of men and women in marriage was not something new. The Roman Stoic Musonius Rufus maintained that women have the same reasoning as men, and they should have the same education in philosophy.[91] However, Rufus's view was not to last, and the doctrines of Greek humanism that women are by nature inferior to men, and that the husband owns the wife are expressed by Seneca who sees women as the corrupters of men.[92] Cato the Elder stated that the husband's power has no limit and he can do with his wife what he chooses.[93] In contrast, Paul in no way deprecated women and both husband and wife are equally addressed.

That women were a commodity to be traded in the competition for honour was an attitude that had to change radically in the new community. As for seeking any change of status by way of marriage, Paul 's advice is "Let each of you remain in the condition in which you were called" (1 Cor 7:20). Fee,[94] identifies this as the controlling motif, the guiding principle of Paul's answer. God's call to be in Christ (1:9) transcends their social setting, and they are called to live in this new dimension and not under the fashion of the world (7:31) which is passing away.

Women in the Church (1 Cor 11:5; 1 Cor 14:34-36)

It is beyond the scope of this paper to discuss the seeming contradiction between 1 Cor 11:5 where woman as well as men are praying and prophesying in church and 1 Cor 14:34-36 where in the strongest language (αἰσχρόν) women are to keep silent in churches. Suffice it to say that what is obvious is that men and women are in church together and both sexes are active in the worship together. This was quite a radical departure from the culture around them.

In Jewish synagogues, women were isolated from men. According to the Talmud it was a shame for a woman to let her voice be heard among men, even in the street. Also a woman who did not cover her

---

[91]E.A. Judge, "St Paul as a Radical Critic of Society", 201.
[92]E.A. Judge, "St Paul as a Radical Critic of Society", 201.
[93]Howard Clark Kee, 89.
[94]Gordon W. Fee, 268.

head was liable to be shorn, which was the greatest shame possible for a Jewish woman. In the mystery cults, women's participation was limited. For example in the cult of Isis, a woman's role was subsidiary and their participation was limited.[95] Paul's appreciation of his fellow-workers, for example Phoebe (Rom 16:1), and other women who had a church-planting role to play, for example Lydia (Acts 16:13-15), shows that women had an important part to play in the new community.[96] Robin Scroggs maintains that in the early church women were accepted as equals with men.[97] The former boundaries were redrawn to include the liberation of women in the church. However, as the new community had to exist within the context of the surrounding society, the decorum of hair-styles consistent with gender role should be adhered to. To break with these roles will bring shame and disorder. Verses 34-39 function as an inclusio bracketed by verse 33 "for God is a God not of disorder but of peace" and verse 40 "but all things should be done decently and in order". The issue is order and not theology.

Public Dining - Food Offered to Idols and the Lord's Supper (1 Cor 8; 1 Cor 11:17-34)

Here are two occasions when the Christians are outside of their own homes and engaged in eating. Both of the feasts are in the context of religious observance. In the first instance, the food has been offered to idols (1 Corinthians, chapter 8). The question is, may a Christian eat in the temple of an idol, presumably in the dining rooms attached where the social functions, for example the celebration of a birth or marriage would be held? Sacrificial meat would have been part of the meal.[98] Surprisingly Paul says "Yes". There was no prohibition on joining one's friends for their social celebrations. To refuse their invitation would have brought shame on the one inviting. However, there is a condition. Paul requires of them, that is to "take care that this liberty...does not become a stumbling block to the weak" (1 Cor 8:9). Their behaviour is conditioned by the weaker brother. If previously they used the weak as a stepping-stone to self-glory it was to be so no more.

---

[95]Howard Clark Kee, 91, and Derek Tidball, 85.

[96]Derek Tidball, 85.

[97]Robin Scroggs, "Women in the New Testament", *Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, Supplement, Nashville: Abingdon, 1972, 966-967.

[98]Jerome Murphy O'Connor, 156.

Likewise in the feast of the Lord's Supper (11:17-26), those who had nothing were humiliated by the opulence of the rich (11:22). The new ceremony was not conditioned by the previous style of conducting a feast, but it was something completely new. It was something Paul had been handed down from the Lord either by tradition or through direct revelation. Either way, it was not Paul's idea, and he could not boast of being the originator of it. The meal was to go on being celebrated regularly until the Lord comes back from heaven (1 Cor 11:26). All ethical instruction is in this context. The future dimension is ever present throughout the letters. All injunctions to conform and yet not to conform are interpreted in the tension of the now and not yet, of the present and the coming age. The value-system of this world is under condemnation and as such Christians, if they are to survive beyond the judgment are called to live differently. How then must they live?

Paul's Answer (1 Cor 12-14)

Paul's answer to the dilemma of living in the world and yet not of the world is simple and profound. Paul explains the theological base for his answer in chapter 12. The new community called out from many strata of society have become one body. The powerful metaphor of the human body conveys the truth of unity in diversity. This ideal can only be achieved by the quality of love. Paul's dominant ethic is "love-patriarchalism" (*liebespatriarchalismus*).[99] By that Theissen means that the value-system of the world around the Christian community with its emphasis on status, competition for honour and avoidance of shame has to be acknowledged. However, the Christian community is one ruled by loving relationships and mutual submission.

[99]Theissen adapts this term from Troeltsch's "patriarchalism". By this term Troeltsch conveys the basic idea of willing acceptance of given inequalities and of making them fruitful for the ethical values of personal relationships. Theissen adds "love" which reduces friction within the differentiated structure. Theissen, *The Social Setting of Pauline Christianity*, Edinburgh: T.& T.Clark, 1982, 10-11.

PAUL'S HONOUR AND BOASTING
THE SECOND LETTER TO THE CORINTHIANS

Paul's Honour, Ascribed and Acquired

According to Malina, honour is the "value of a person in his or her own eyes (that is, one's claim to worth) plus that person's value in the eyes of his or her social group".[100] Honour can be ascribed or acquired.[101] Applying Malina's insights to Paul, we can see that he has much ascribed and acquired honour. If his ascribed honour is by virtue of his birth, he can boast that he was born a Hebrew, an Israelite, a descendent of Abraham (11:22). As a Roman, he can boast of having Roman citizenship by birth (Acts 16:38), a citizen of no ordinary city, that is Tarsus (Acts 21:39). His ascribed honour would also include his calling as an apostle (1 Cor 1:1; 2 Cor 1:1).

His acquired honour was gained by excelling over others in his education both in Greek and in Hebrew, in Tarsus and in Jerusalem. He had become highly respected as a Jewish rabbi and leader and was able to carry out his own inquisition of the Christians (1 Cor 15:9). His Greek education would have consisted in training in rhetoric, and his knowledge of Greek language and rhetoric is evident in his speeches and letters. He is able to ask and answer questions in the style of Plato and Socrates, uses metaphor, contrast, hyperbole, sarcasm, irony. He is familiar with various popular *topoi* (1 Cor 8:1; 10:23) and Stoic codes of ethics such as the *haustafel* (Ephesus 6:1-4). He is able to quote from the Greek poets (Acts 17:28; 1 Cor 15:33) and the Sophists arguments from nature (1 Cor 11:14). Nonetheless, he admits that he was not a trained speaker, but he does have knowledge (2 Cor 11:6).[102]

In a worldly sense, he enjoyed status both as a Jew and as a Roman citizen in a Greek environment. He is not among the noble-born, but as a free-born he enjoys civil liberties, and respect in his own society. His acquired honour also consisted in his spiritual experiences, (2 Cor 12:1-7), his conversion on the Damascus road, his escape from Damascus (2

---

[100]Bruce Malina, 27.

[101]Bruce Malina, 29.

[102]See E.A. Judge "Paul's Boasting in Relation to Contemporary Professional Practice", *The Tyndale Paper,* XII: 4 (Melbourne: September, 1967) for a discussion on Paul's ability as a rhetorician.

Cor 11:32-33), his successful ministry with the true signs of an apostle, that is of wonders, signs, and miracles (2 Cor 12:12), his sufferings and hardships as an apostle (1 Cor 15:9,30-32; 2 Cor 1:9, 4:10, 6:3, 7:5; 11:23-29).

His acquired honour is obtained by his work in Corinth, his planting of the church. Three years later at the time of writing the letters, his honour has been challenged, and in the eyes of the Corinthians he has lost face, and so incurred shame. Paul sets that right by entering into the contest of honour, by playing the game. How then has Paul's honour been challenged? It is challenged by their judging of and insults towards him. They accused him on theological, educational and ethical grounds. Some among them said he was misrepresenting God because he testified that God had raised Christ from the dead (1 Cor 15:15), and they desired proof that Christ was speaking in him (2 Cor 13:3). Others accused him of vacillating in regard to his plan to visit them (2 Cor 1:17), that he came unrecommended (2 Cor 3:1), that he was humble to their face but bold when away, (2 Cor 10:1) and in the same vein, that his letters were weighty and strong, but his bodily presence weak and contemptible (2 Cor 10:10), that he was an imposter (2 Cor 6:8). Others criticised him for being untrained in speech (2 Cor 11:6), that he was crafty and deceitful and took advantage of them (2 Cor 12:16b), that he did not conform to the pattern of a wandering philosopher because he did not accept any physical support from them (2 Cor 11:7). To each of these negative challenges Paul responds in order to restore his honour.

Paul Plays the Game of Challenge and Response

Paul plays the game of challenge and response not only by defending himself, but by sending his own provoking comments to them, some of which are negative rebukes, but many of which are positive. He commends them for remembering him and maintaining the traditions just as he handed them on to them (1 Cor 11:2), for standing firm in the faith (2 Cor 1:24), for their godly grief which led to repentance (2 Cor 7:7-9), for their obedience and welcome of Titus (2 Cor 7:15), for their excellence in faith, speech, in knowledge, eagerness (2 Cor 8:7; 9:2). Paul gives himself to them. His emotions are involved with them. His love is overflowing for them (2 Cor 2:4, 6:2-4; 8:7, 11:11; 12:15; 12:19). He rejoices over them, has confidence in them, and often boasts of them (2 Cor 6:4, 7:9, 13:9). He anguishes and weeps for them (2 Cor 2:4). Everything

that he does is for building them up and not tearing them down (2 Cor 12:19).

He claims a relationship with them as a father (1 Cor 4:14-15). They are to him like his children, and his admonishment comes to them as beloved children (2 Cor 12:14). He is willing to be spent and to spend his money for them for parents ought to provide for their children (2 Cor 12:15), but they are ungrateful children and have restricted their love for him (2 Cor 6:12). Above all, and this is his most powerful metaphor depicting his shame, he is a father to the bride-to-be (2 Cor 11:2-3). As such he is deeply shamed because he suspects his virgin daughter flirting with another husband. Paul has pledged them in marriage to one husband, to present them as a chaste virgin to Christ, but he fears that they will be led astray from a sincere and pure devotion to Christ. In this Paul is deeply shamed and his heart is deeply wounded.

Paul suffers loss of face when the Corinthians go off track. He is shamed by their immoral behaviour. It is as if all that he taught them when he was with them for a year and a half three years previously had been forgotten (Acts 18:11). He was humiliated by the corruption that had entered the church. His first response to this challenge is to write them a letter (1 Cor 5:9-11). However, his letter is not heeded and Paul's shame increases. His second letter comes in answer to their first and Chloe's visit. In his letter Paul addresses the various shameful situations in Corinth. He sends this letter with Timothy, but despite his appeal to treat him well, Timothy has to return to Ephesus unsuccessfully. A tone of exasperation and anger in his letter (1 Cor 4:19-21) and his warning of a visit does not bode well for the forthcoming visit. This visit it would seem was a disaster for both sides (2 Cor 2:1, 12:14; 13:1-2). Both sides suffered a loss of face, and Paul's honour as an apostle was in decline. He follows up the visit with a harsh letter (2 Cor 2:3-4,9; 7:8-12) which proved to be like pouring oil onto the fire. During that time other superlative apostles descended upon the city, and Paul's honour was severely challenged. Paul's fierce invective against their claim to equal honour takes the form of hurling insults at them. However, he doesn't do this directly, but through his letter to the church. He cuts the ground from beneath their feet before the rest of the church by calling them false apostles, deceitful workman, masquerading, agents of Satan (2 Cor 11:12-

13).[103] Titus is the middle man, and his efforts paid off in securing their allegiance once again for Paul, and thus restoring his honour (2 Cor 7:6-9). The ultimate loss of face will be when he comes to visit them and to pick up the collection they are organising for the saints in Judea. He fears that he may find many who have not repented of impurity, sexual immorality, and licentiousness that they have practiced, in which case God will humble (ταπεινοσει) him.

One of the dishonours Paul suffered was to be called deceitful (2 Cor 12:16b), to be considered a liar, to be treated as an imposter (2 Cor 6:8). In a shame-honour society, it was not required of a man of honour to be sincere. Lying and deception can be honourable and legitimate. To deceive by making something ambiguous is to deprive the other of respect, to humiliate him. Thus Paul meets this challenge by stating again and again his sincerity (2 Cor 1:12, 2 Cor 2:7). He is not a peddler of God's word and he refuses to practise cunning and falsify God's Word (2 Cor 2:7; 4:2). He has spoken frankly (2 Cor 6:11) and has wronged no one (2 Cor 7:2). He has not taken advantage of anyone, and he intends to do what is right not only in the Lord's sight but in the sight of others (2 Cor 8:21). He cannot do anything against the truth, but only for the truth (2 Cor 13:8).

This shaming from the Corinthians was intended to enslave Paul to their opinions and attitudes and force him to conform to their pattern, but Paul refused to do that. He refused to be dominated by anything (1 Cor 6:12), to be free with respect to all (1 Cor 9:9). In honour societies, actions are more important than words. Paul came to the Corinthians in demonstration of the power of the Spirit (1 Cor 2:4). His apostleship was attested by signs, wonders, and mighty works (2 Cor 12:12). He is ready to punish every disobedience (2 Cor 10:5), to come to them with a stick (1 Cor 4:21), that he will not be lenient (2 Cor 13:2). He assures them that what he says by letter when absent, he will also do when present (2 Cor 10:11). Since witnesses are crucial for the acquisition and bestowal

[103]Jerome Neyrey (*Paul, in Other Words*, 203-207) makes much of this accusation. He claims that accusations of demonic possession tend to occur in groups characterized by intense, disorderly competition for leadership. The function of witchcraft accusations as an act of social aggression is to discredit his rivals and reduce their status.

of honour[104] Paul calls on the highest ascriber of honour, that is God to be his witness (2 Cor 4:2, 8:21).

Paul's Boasting

"To desire honour is acceptable, but if one should desire it to excess, he would be called ambitious".[105] To desire honour to excess would incur boasting of one's own supposed worth and to go beyond the bounds of what is acceptable. Boasting (καύχημα) is prominent all the way through the Corinthian correspondence. This practice is best understand in the context of a society with shame/honour as pivotal values.

"The word-group καυχαομαι–καυχησις–καυχημα occurs 55 of 59 times in Paul in the New Testament; 39 of the 55 occur in 1 Corinthians, the vast majority of which are pejorative".[106] Those boasting in these letters are the schismatic groups whose boasting had gone beyond a recital of their own self-admiration. They were arrogant, puffed up (4:6,19, 5:2, 8:1,4,7) by knowledge and their own sense of superiority. The superapostles (2 Cor 11:12-13) also boasted themselves to be superior to Paul. It is here that Paul boasts according to human standards, even though he recognises that is not what the Lord would have him to do. He boasts as a fool (2 Cor 11:17). However Paul's boasting contrasts with the boasting of others. His own claims to glory are the opposite of what is normally boasted of. His boasting consists of a recitation of his sufferings, his weakness, his ordinariness. He recognises the temptation to become conceited and therefore does not go beyond the limits as done by others. He therefore boasts about his weaknesses (2 Cor 12:9).

He also boasts of the Corinthian Christians to Titus (2 Cor 7:14) and to the Macedonians (9:2-3). He hopes that he will be able to boast of them on the day of the Lord Jesus Christ, and that they will be able to boast of them too (2 Cor 1:14). He also boasts of the authority the Lord

---

[104]Bruce Malina, 36.

[105]"The Works of Aristotle, Vol II" *Great Books of the Western World, Encyclopaedia Brittanica,* Inc., London: William Benton, 352-353.

[106]Gordon D. Fee, 84. καυχάομαι - 1 Cor 1:29,31; 3:21; 4:7; 2 Cor 5:12; 7:14; 9:2; 10:8,13,15,16,17; 11:12,16,18,30; 12:1,5,6,9,11; καύχημα - 1 Cor 5:6; 9:15,16; 2 Cor 1:14; 5:12; 9:3; καυχησιν - 1 Cor 15:31; 2 Cor 1:12; 7:4,14; 8:24; 9:4; 11:10.

has given for building up and not tearing down the church and of this he is not ashamed (2 Cor 10:8).

Ultimately the only boast one can have is in the Lord. He opens his boasting (1:29-31) with a paraphrase of Jeremiah 9:23-24. The whole of the world's values are turned on their head by the Lord. That which is considered to be wise is made to look foolish. Even the Stoic philosophers could concede this point and admit that no one truly wise ever actually existed.[107] The most foolish event ever to occur in history and the most shameful was the death of Christ Jesus on a cross, as a common criminal (1 Cor 1:23). By this foolishness, God chose to save those who believe. Christ is the power of God and the wisdom of God. It was because of the preaching about Christ that the Corinthian church had come into being. The encounter with the resurrected Christ was the turning point of Paul's life, and from that moment on he gave his life for the proclamation of Christ. He willingly embraced the revolutionary turnabout in this own life, and this was enabled him to wear the other face of shame.

Paul's Shame for the Gospel

The other face of Paul's shame is that which He bears for the sake of Christ and His gospel. Paul considers himself in the same way as Jesus Christ. He calls himself an imitator of Christ (11:1). Just as Christ submitted in weakness to the ignominy of the cross, so weakness is the hallmark of Paul's life (1 Cor 2:3, 9:22, 2 Cor 11:29-30, 12:9-10). He submits himself to the same slander, and persecution Christ suffered. He is reviled, afflicted, perplexed, persecuted, struck down (1 Cor 4:13, 2 Cor 4:7). He suffered hardships, calamities, beatings, imprisonments, riots, labors, sleepless nights, hunger (2 Cor 6:4), thirst, nakedness, being homeless, weariness, (1 Cor 4:11-12) floggings, shipwreck, all kinds of dangers, toil, hardship, cold (2 Cor 11:23-27). He acknowledges that the sufferings of Christ are abundant for him (2 Cor 1:5). He identifies with Christ's death in that he is exhibited as though sentenced to death, a spectacle to the world, to angels, and to mortals, (1 Cor 4:9). He claims to despair of life (2 Cor 1:8), to die every day (1 Cor 15:30), to be in the triumphal procession being led to his death and in so doing spreading the aroma of Christ among all along the way. For those who are being saved

---

[107] Everett Ferguson, *Backgrounds of Early Christianity*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987), 286.

it is an aroma of life, but for those who are perishing it is an aroma of death (2 Cor 2:14). He is always carrying in his body the death of Jesus and is always being given up to death for Jesus' sake (2 Cor 4:10-11).

He considers himself a slave (1 Cor 9:19, 2 Cor 4:5, 9:27),[108] the rubbish of the world, the dregs of all things (1 Cor 4:13),[109] as a fool for Christ's sake (1 Cor 4:10). He considers himself to be the least of the apostles because he persecuted the church of God (1 Cor 14:8), as a servant of God and of the church (1 Cor 3:9, 4:1, 2 Cor 6:4).

Paul's Honour Ascribed by God

For Paul to boast of these things is too much. He shows himself to be utterly shameless. Yet, he glories in these things for he knows that glory awaits him on the Day of the Lord (1 Cor 3:13, 17-18, 2 Cor 1:14). His moment of vindication will be on the day of the Lord. So he does not lose heart, for this slight momentary affliction is preparing him for an eternal weight of glory (*δοξα*) beyond all measure (4:17), being transformed from one degree of glory to another (2 Cor 7:18). In this life there is a longing to be clothed with the heavenly dwelling. On the day when he puts off his earthly body, he will not be found naked, that is he will not be shamed (2 Cor 5:3). He will be "in place" and not "out of place".[110] This is a redemptive shame and Paul does nothing to vindicate himself. He makes no apology for this shame. He is not ashamed of this shame. This shame is not something to be covered but a positive experience of revelation. Acceptance of this shame is the ultimate in his commitment.[111]

Conclusion

Shame as a psychological phenomena is a feeling associated with disgrace and humiliation. As such it is an experience of all humans everywhere since Adam's sin. Therefore it is closely associated with guilt

---

[108] Both to Jew and Greek, to be a slave was to be at the bottom of the social ranking, the lowest class, and a disgrace.

[109]Here Paul uses the strongest words for the foulest rubbish one could possible think of, περιψεμα, περικαθάρματα.

[110]Jerome Neyrey studies Paul from the viewpoint of his symbolic universe. He uses these phrases to decribe shame and honor.

[111]Helen M. Lynd, 20.

and of theological prominence in the Bible. The message of the Bible is about how God covers people's shame.

However, as we look more closely another dimension of shame seems to be implied in many texts. This dimension is closely related to cultural values. It is to be found in societies whose values are honour/shame biased. Frequent references in the literature of the first century to what is shameful and honourable, or what is good and what is bad, support the assertion that the values of the Greco-Roman-Jewish world of the first century were dominated by shame and honour. Recent sociological and cultural-anthropological research with some psychological study of the first century further support the claim that the society in the context of which Paul wrote his letters was agonistic competing for honour and avoiding shame.

A study of the Corinthian correspondence reveals that the prevailing world views of the Corinthians were associated with a competition for precedence. The behavioural issues have shame overtones. It is important they leave behind all shameful behaviour and strive for holiness. Paul is eager that the church imitate him, their father, and change their attitudes. The new attitudes involve a different kind of shame linked with the anomaly of the cross. The new standard is radical. They are to be in the world but not of it. They are to be identified with God's foolishness, and to bear the ignominy of the cross until the Day of the Lord, that is the resurrection when they enter into their glory. This is the way of Christ; this is the way of Paul and a no lesser way is required for those who would belong to the community of Christ in Corinth or anywhere else.

Bibliography

Augsberger, David W., *Pastoral Counseling Across Cultures*, Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1986.

Bailey, Kenneth E., *Poet and Peasant and Through Peasant Eyes*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1976.

Banks, Robert, *Paul's Idea of Community, The Early House Churches in Their Setting,* Homebush West: Anzea, 1988.

Bauckham, Richard, "Weakness - Paul's and ours", *Themelios*, (April, 1982).

Benedict, Ruth, *The Chrysanthemum and the Sword,* Tokyo: Charles E. Tuttle, 1946.

Blackwell, Philip, "Be not ashamed", *Criterion*, Vol. 23, (1, 1984), 25-26.

Blok, Anton "Rams and Billy-Goats: A Key to the Mediterranean Code of Honour", *Man* 16, (1981), 427-440.

Bruce, F.F., *Paul: Apostle of the Free Spirit,* Exeter: Paternoster Press, 1977, ch. 3 and 4.

Burton, Laurel Arthur, "Original Sin or Original Shame", *Quarterly Review*, (Winter, 1988-89), 31-41.

....., "Respect: Response to Shame in Health Care", *Journal of Religion and Health,* Vol. 30, (2, Summer, 1991), 139-148.

Catchpole, David R., "Q and 'the Friend at Midnight' (Luke 11:5-8/9)" *Journal of Theological Studies*, N.S., Vol. 34, (2, October, 1983), 407-424.

Chung Song Mee, *Honour and Shame Interaction in Galatians*, an unpublished term paper, Central Baptist Theological Seminary, Kansas City, Kansas, 15.3.1990.

Clapp, Rodney, "Shame Crucified", *Christianity Today*, (March 11, 1991), 26-28.

Corrigan, Gregory M., "Paul's Shame for the Gospel," *Biblical Theology Bulletin*, Vol. 16, (1, Jan.86), 23-27.

Daube, David, "Shame Culture in Luke", *Paul and Paulinism: Essays in Honour of C.K. Barrett, ed. M.D. Hooker and S.G. Wilson, London: SPCK, 355-372.*

Dewey, Arthur J., "A Matter of Honour: A Social-Historical Analysis of 2 Corinthians 10", *Harvard Theological Review 78*, (1985), 209-217.

....., "A Re-hearing of Romans 10:1-15", *Society of Biblical Literature 1988 Seminar Papers,* (29.1990), ed. David J. Lull, Atlanta: Scholars Press, 273-282.

Downing, Gerald F., *Strangely Familiar*, Gerald Downing (writer and publisher), Manchester: 1985.

Ellis, Earle E., *Pauline Theology, Ministry and Society,* Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989.

Fee, Gordon D., *Toward a Theology of 1 Corinthians*, SBL Seminar Papers, (1989), 265-281.

Ferguson, Everett, *Background of Early Christianity*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987.

Gager, John G., *Kingdom and Community: the Social World of Early Christianity*, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1975.

Goodhue, Tom, "Shame", *Quarterly Review* 4, (2, 1984), 57-65.

Gilmore, David D., "Anthropology of the Mediterranean Area", *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 11, (1982), 175-205.

Gilmore, David D., ed., *Honour and Shame and the Unity of the Mediterranean*, American Anthropological Association Special Publication 22, Washington, DC: American Anthropological Association. nd.

Hafemann, Scott J., *Suffering and the Spirit, An Exegetical Study of II Cor.2:14--3:3 within the Context of the Corinthian Correspondence*, Tubingen: J.C.B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck) 1986.

Hay, David M., "The Shaping of Theology in 2 Corinthians: Conviction, Doubts, and Warrants", *Society of Biblical Literature Seminar Papers,* (29, 1988) ed. David J. Lull, Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1990, 257-272.

Herzfeld, Michael, "Honour and Shame: Problems in the Comparative Analysis of Moral systems", *Man*, Vol. 15, (1980), 339-351.

Hesselgrave, David J., *Counselling Cross-culturally*, Grand Rapids: Baker, 1984.

....., "Missionary Elenctics and Guilt and Shame", *Missiology: An International Review,* Vol.XI, No. 4, (October, 1983), 461-482.

Jeffers, James S., "The Influence of the Roman Family and Social Structures on Early Christianity in Rome", *Society of Biblical Literature Seminar Papers,* (27, 1988), ed. David J. Lull, Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1988, 370-384.

Judge, E.A. "Cultural Conformity and Innovation in Paul: Some Clues from Contemporary Documents", *Tyndale Bulletin 35*, (1984), 3-24.

....., "Paul's Boasting in Relation to Contemporary Professional Practice", *The Tyndale Paper,* Vol. XII, Melbourne: (4, September, 1967).

....., "St Paul and Socrates", *Interchange: Papers on Biblical and Current Questions 14,* 1973, 106-116.

....., *The Conversion of Rome, Ancient Sources of Modern Social Tensions,* Sydney: The Macquarie Ancient History Association, No.1, 1978.

Kaufman, Gershen, "The Meaning of Shame: Toward a Self-Affirming Identity", *Journal of Counseling Psychology,* Vol. 21, (6, 1974), 568-574.

Kee, Howard Clark, *Christian Origins in Sociological Perspective: Methods and Resources*, Philadelphia: Westminster, 1980.

Kopping, Elizabeth, *Shame, a non-negotiable value in a Borneo village*, an unpublished research paper presented at an inter-cultural communication conference in San Giminiano, Italy, 1983.

Lynd, H.M., *On Shame and the Search for Identity,* London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1958.

Malina, Bruce, *The New Testament World: Insights from Cultural Anthropology*, Atlanta: John Knox, 1981.

Marshall Peter, "A Metaphor of Social Shame: "thriambeuein" in 2 Cor. 2:14", *Novum Testamentum XXV, 4,* 1983, 302-317.

Martin, Ralph, *New Testament Foundations,* Vol. 2, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978.

....., "Theological Perspectives in 2 Corinthians: Some Notes", *Society of Biblical Literature Seminar Papers,* (29,1988), ed. David J. Lull, Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1990, 240-256.

May, David, "Mark 3:20-35 from the Perspective of Shame/Honour", *Biblical Theology Bulletin,* Vol. 17, (3, July, 1987), 83-87.

Meatheringham, Deane, *Naked, Yes, but not Ashamed,* Adelaide: New Creation Publications, 1978.

Meeks, Wayne, *The First Urban Christians, The Social World of the Apostle Paul,* New Haven: Yale UP, 1983.

Moxnes, Halvor, "Honour, Shame, and the Outside World in Paul's Letter *to the Romans", The Social World of Formative Christianity and Judaism,* ed. Jacob Neusner, Ernest S. Frerichs, Peder Borgen, Richard Horsley, Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1988, 207-218.

Muenchow, Charles, "Dust and Dirt in Job 42:6", *Journal of Biblical Literature,* 108, (4, 1989), 597-611.

Murphy O'Connor, Jerome "The Corinth St Paul Saw", *Biblical Archaeologist,* 47 (3,1984), 147-158.

Neyrey, Jerome H., *Paul, in Other Words,* Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1990.

Patton, John, "Human Forgiveness as Problem and Discovery", *The Christian Century,* (September 11-18, 1985), 795-797.

Peristany, J.G., ed., *Mediterranean Family Structures,* Cambridge, CUP, 1976, 1-26.

Phillips, Anthony, "The Book of Ruth - Deception and Shame", *Journal of Jewish Studies*, Vol. 37, (1 Spring, 1986), 1-17.

Ryan, Dale & Juanita, *Recovery from Shame*, Life Recovery Guides, Illinois: IVP, 1990.

Sasson, Jack M., "w lo yitbosasu (Gen 2,25) and its implications", *Biblica*, Vol. 66, No. 3, 418-421.

Stambaugh, John, and Balch, David The Social World of the First Christians, London: SPCK.

Theissen, Gerd, *The Social Setting of Pauline Christianity*, ed., trans., and Introduction, John H. Schutz, Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1982.

Tidball, Derek, *Sociology of the New Testament*, Exeter: Paternoster, 1983.

Wikan, Unni, "Shame and Honour: A Contestable Pair", *Man* 19, (1984), 635-652.

Commentaries, Lexical Helps, Dictionaries, Bibles

Barclay, William, *The Letters to the Corinthians*, Edinburgh: The Saint Andrew Press, [10]1975.

Barrett, C.K., *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, Black's New Testament Commentaries, ed. Henry Chadwick, Edinburgh: R. & R. Clark, 1968.

....., *A Commentary on the Second Epistle to the Corinthians*. Harper's New Testament Commentaries. New York: Harper and Row, 1973.

Bauer, Walter,	*A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and other Early Christian Literature,* trans. and adapted by William F. Arndt and F. Wilbur Gingrich, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, ^{2}1979, 25.
Fee, Gordon D.,	*The First Epistle to the Corinthians,* The New International Commentary on the New Testament, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987.
Hutchins, Robert (ed.),	Great Books of the Western World, *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, Inc., London: William Benton.
Kittel, G., and Friedrich, G., (eds.)	*Theological Dictionary of the New Testament,* abridged in one volume, G.W. Bromiley, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1985.
Louw, J.P., and Nida E.,	Greek English Lexicon, United Bible Society.
Morris, Leon,	*1 Corinthians,* Tyndale NT Commentaries, Leicester: IVP, ^{4}1966.
Pitt-Rivers, Julian,	"Honour", *International Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences* No. 6, New York: Macmillan Co., 503-511.

The New English Bible with Apocrypha. Cambridge: OVP, 1970.

The New Revised Standard Version. Grand Rapids: Zonderan, 1989.