Preaching Paraenesis

Tim Sensing

The Divinity School

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To Wanita White

A teacher who taught me to love the Word.

To Jamie Holland

A preacher who taught me to love proclaiming the Word.

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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

Preaching is in crisis. Every generation desires either to recover some "golden age" of preaching or constructively critique the present state of preaching. These past two decades have seen a similar critique and subsequent shift in homiletics.[1] People are thirsting for a message from God that speaks personally to them and to the issues that tear up their days. Preaching has come under considerable criticism in recent years for saying what no one needed to hear. Haddon Robinson muses; "No wonder sermons are occasionally mocked as 'the fine art of talking in someone else's sleep.'"[2] Although not all the blame can be laid at the feet of propositional preaching, the apologetic mindset of preaching must share its weight of the guilt.

Preaching the Word of the Lord has played a significant role throughout sacred history. God sent Moses to the Israelites saying, "I will help both of you speak and will teach you what to do."[3] This began the prophetic ministry that concluded with John the Baptist and the New Testament prophets.[4] Carrying on the tradition of the prophets, Christian preachers proclaim God's message to people. That preaching has a goal: That people can hear and believe the message of the Word of Christ.[5] Thomas Long develops

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[1]A few of those critics are: Richard L. Eslinger, A New Hearing: Living Options in Homiletic Method (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1987): 11; Fred B. Craddock, As One Without Authority (Enid, OK: The Phillips University Press, 1974): 1; Ralph L. Lewis and Gregg Lewis, Inductive Preaching: Helping People Listen. Westchester, IL: Crossway Books, 1983.

[2]Haddon Robinson, "Listening to the Listeners," Leadership 4 (Spring 1983):68.

[3]Exodus 4:15.

[4]Matt. 11:13.

[5]Rom. 10:14-17.

this further by elaborating on Augustine's formula for a good speech. "At the door of Augustine's parish, he would be pleased if people would say, 'I learned something today; I was moved by what you said; and, I intend to do something about it.'"[1]

It is my desire to carry forth this tradition with the best available strategies. The world is in a state of constant flux. Cultures evolve and patterns of consciousness change. The preacher often reacts by playing catch-up with the congregation. Frequently the two ships pass in the night. Some sermon strategies that communicated well yesterday, could miss the mark today. The new wave of homiletics centers on affecting today's audience with a message from God.[2] This becomes a message that lives today as it did originally both in form and function and cause the hearer to respond, "Were not our hearts burning within us while he talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?"[3]

No one claims to be preaching unbiblical sermons. Although this study will not propose a definitive definition of "biblical preaching," it will rethink preaching of one specific genre, allowing the text to speak for itself.

Related Literature: Recent Trends in Homiletics

In the past, preaching generally followed a deductive form. Even though the biblical text contained a wide variety of literary genres, most sermons forced the text into a limited number of sermon forms. Preaching spoke about texts rather than letting those

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[1]Thomas Long, The Senses of Preaching (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1988): 20. Long is commenting on the statement from, Saint Augustine, On Christian Doctrine, trans. D. W. Robertson, Jr. (New York: The Liberal Arts Press, 1958): 142. David Buttrick, in Homiletic: Moves and Structures (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1988): 16-17, also states the power of preaching saying, "Christian preaching tells a story and names a name. If narrative consciousness confers identiy, then preaching transforms identity. . . . What preaching may do is build in consciousness a new `faith-world' in which we may live and love!"

[2]Some homiliticians underplay the objective meaning of the text and focus more on impact. This is a result of the "New Hermeneutic" to which they have committed themselves. One need not accept the New Hermeneutic in the effort to preach with meaning and impact.

[3]Luke 24:32.

texts say things their way.[4] Eslinger argues that the difficulty with a thematic-deductive approach to the sermon is that "the form of the text is abandoned for a deductive model presumed to be normative apart from the form and function of the text."[2] Craddock also states:

> Why should the multitude of forms and moods within biblical literature and the multitude of needs in the congregation be brought together in one unvarying mold, and that copied from Greek rhetoricians of centuries ago?[3] Even if the adoption of Greek rhetorical forms for sermon outlines was a wise choice in the mission to the Hellenistic world, certainly after nineteen centuries the time has arrived for critical review of sermon form as well as content.[4]

He proposes that the form of the text should be the primary consideration in choosing the sermon form.[5]

Nelson has demonstrated that the post-New Testament era in homiletics has patterned itself after the rhetoric of Aristotle. He summarizes much of the literature concluding that the deductive method dominated the pulpit until recent years.[6]

Don Wardlaw agrees:

> Recent theological changes have made it possible to see how preaching since the second century has been clothed mostly in prosaic dress. Prior to that time the controlling structure of Christian preaching was narrative. . . . Narrative regulated sermon design. . . . Church Fathers from Origen to Chrysostom, while endued with the mind of Christ, exegeted and preached with the mind of Plato and Aristotle. . . The Fathers preached . . . with a rhetoric that Greeks over the centuries had developed into a science of persuasion.[7]

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[1]Don M. Wardlaw, ed., Preaching Biblically: Creating Sermons in the Shape of Scripture (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1983): 13.

[2]Eslinger, A New Hearing, 109.

[3]Craddock, Without Authority, 143-44.

[4]Craddock, Without Authority, 153.

[5]Ibid, 143. See also Fred B. Craddock, Preaching, (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1985): 118, 122-123.

[6]Dwight K. Nelson, "A Comparison of Receptivity to the Deductive and Inductive Methods of Preaching in the Pioneer Memorial Church" D.Min. (Andrews University, 1986): 77.

Nelson also surveys the most popular homiletic texts beginning with John Broadus in 1870.[1] He found the dominant method advocated by these texts is clearly the deductive method with the one exception of J. Fort Newton.[2] The popularity of the deductive method can also be seen in my homiletical training.[3]

David Buttrick warns that "stock sermon designs . . . may not be appropriate to forms of biblical thought."[4] Buttrick criticizes the deductive approaches, because in either "textual" preaching or biblical "topic" preaching, "preachers are forced to fabricate some sort of sermon design from their own minds."[5] As early as 1981, Buttrick analyzed these approaches describing them as "homiletic systems . . . what might be called a 'method of distillation' by which passages are reduced to single propositional 'truths.'"[6] He went on to suggest a different tactic: "let us propose questions which a preacher might ask of a

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[7]Wardlaw, Preaching Biblically, 11-12.

[1]John Broadus, On the Preparation and Delivery of Sermons, Rev. ed., ed. Jessie Burton Weatherspoon (New York: Harper, 1944).

[2]Nelson, "Comparison," 19-23. Other exceptions are: Ozora Davis, The Principles of Preaching (Chicago, 1924); and David J. Randolph, The Renewal of Preaching (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1969). Grady Davis, Design for Preaching (Phildelphia: Fortress Press, 1958) sorted out the general categories of sermons from the standpoint of functional forms and organic shapes. The fifth (and last) of the organic types of sermon falls under the classification of "A Story Told." He believed that not more than 10 percent of sermons being preached in the middle and late 1950s could be listed in this category.

[3]Charles W. Koller, Expository Preaching Without Notes plus Sermons Preached Without Notes (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1962); H. C. Brown, Jr., H. Gordon Clinard and Jesse J. Northcutt, Steps to the Sermon: A Plan for Sermon Preparation (Nashville, Tennessee: Broadman Press, 1963); James W. Cox, A Guide to Biblical Preaching (Nashville: Abingdon, 1976); J. Daniel Baumann, An Introduction to Contemporary Preaching (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1972); and Haddon W. Robinson, Biblical Preaching: The Development and Delivery of Expository Messages (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1980).

[4]Buttrick, Homiletic, 366.

[5]Ibid.

[6]David Buttrick, "Interpretation and Preaching," Interpretation 35 (January 1981):48.

passage, questions which may yield different results and which may indirectly suggest a different way of 'biblical preaching.'"[1] He summarizes his homiletic saying,

> In the past few decades biblical interpretation has moved from the historical-critical paradigm toward other critical approaches, for example, structuralist, phenomenological, rhetorico-poetical. Now homiletic theory is called to similar reconstruction. When a new homiletic, tuned to hermeneutic sensitivity and a tough phenomenological analysis of language, emerges and filters down to the pastor's study, we may see a generation of preachers who find Scripture exciting and who find speaking in grace an act of radical obedience.[2]

Should not biblical form and function influence the form and function of the sermon? At a minimum, the variety of biblical forms should engender greater variety of sermonic forms.

As early as 1962, Amos Wilder argued that form and content cannot be separated from each other, yet he observed that the history of biblical study and preaching has been primarily a history of the divorce of form from content.[3] Sidney Greidanus expresses a similar concern for the sermon: "In reshaping the form of the text, it may unintentionally distort the message of the text."[4] Craddock is even bolder: "The separation of form and content is fatal for preaching, for it fails to recognize the theology implicit in the method of communication."[5]

Wilder pointed to the homiletic possibilities inherent in the findings of Form Criticism:

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[1]Ibid, 50.

[2]Ibid.

[3]Amos Wilder, Early Christian Rhetoric: The Language of the Gospel (London: SCM Press LTD, 1964): 9-47. Davis, Design, vi, also argued that the relation of form to the content was woven together. Therefore, he noted, ". . . the man who is called to preach must be concerned about the form of what he says."

[4]Sidney Greidanus, The Modern Preacher and the Ancient Text (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1988): 147.

[5]Craddock, Without Authority, 128.

> The character of the early Christian speech-forms should have much to say to us with regard to our understanding of Christianity and its communication today. . . . We can learn much from our observations as to the appropriate strategies and vehicles of Christian speech and then adapt them to our own situation.[1]

David Randolph was one of the first to pick up on Wilder's thought by calling for a renewal in preaching and articulating several concerns.[2] He argued that the "intentionality" of the text and biblical forms should influence sermon design.[3] Craddock's work popularized these thoughts opening the floodgates of a "new homiletic." He stated, "The time has arrived for critical review of sermon form as well as content."[4] Leander Keck articulated the new emphasis in his often quoted statement, "preaching is biblical when it imparts a Bible-shaped word in a Bible-like way."[5] It took almost a decade for Craddock's emphasis to gain momentum. In time, subsequent authors brought forth a host of texts advancing the cause of inductive preaching, dialogical preaching, and narrative preaching stating that the literary form of the text should have an influence on preaching strategies.[6] It was a call for "Biblical Preaching."

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[1]Wilder, Early Christian Rhetoric, 12-13.

[2]Randolph, Renewal.

[3]Ibid., 28-32; 123-24.

[4]Craddock, Without Authority, 153.

[5]Leander E. Keck, The Bible in the Pulpit (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1978): 106.

[6]Elizabeth Achtemeier, Creative Preaching, Abingdon Preacher's Library Series (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1980); Fred B. Craddock, Overhearing the Gospel (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1978); Richard L. Eslinger, A New Hearing: Living Options in Homiletic Method (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1987); Donald E. Gowan, Reclaiming the Old Testament for the Christian Pulpit (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1980); Sidney Greidanus, The Modern Preacher and the Ancient Text (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1972); Richard A. Jensen, Telling the Story: Variety and Imagination in Preaching (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1980); Leander E. Keck, The Bible in the Pulpit (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1978); Ralph L. Lewis and Gregg Lewis, Inductive Preaching: Helping People Listen (Westchester, Ill.: Crossway Books, 1983); Academy of Homiletics, Preaching and Story (Des Plaines, Illinois: Cabrini Contact Center, 1979); Edmund A. Steimle, Morris J. Niedenthal and Charles L. Rice, Preaching the Story (Philadelphis: Fortress Press, 1980); Edmund A. Steimle, "The Fabric of the Sermon," Luther Theological Seminary Review 17 (Spring 1978): 50-55; Thomas G. Long, Preaching and the Literary Forms of the Bible (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1988); Eugene L. Lowry, Doing Time in the Pulpit, (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1985); Eugene L. Lowry, How to Preach a Parable: Designs for Narrative Sermons, Abingdon Preacher's Library (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1989); Eugene L. Lowry, The Homiletical Plot (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1980); William D. Thompson, Preaching Biblically,

Texts began to appear that proposed a process of sermon development sensitive to the literary genre of the text. These new trends called for biblical preaching based on the "relatively simple idea that the literary form and dynamics of a biblical text can and should be important factors in the preacher's navigation of the distance between text and sermon."[1] Thomas Long presented a methodology for taking the literary characteristics of the text into account. He applied that methodology to large literary classifications (i.e., psalms, proverbs, narratives, parables, and epistles).[2]

Due to the newness of the study of how form and function of literary genres influence sermon design, there are many forms that have received little attention. The purpose of this thesis is to investigate what effect the literary form of paraenesis should have on the homiletical process.

This thesis will investigate how paraenesis functions within the text. It is assumed that this relationship will have definite implications for preaching. It is expected that a relationship exists on three fundamental levels. (1) The exhortations of scripture do not function in isolation to the indicative statements in scripture; (2) The imperatives of scripture function as more than just an addendum to the indicative but draw their authority from the cross itself. The paraenetic commands call forth the presence of the Lord in his church describing what it means to live in obedience to God's will in Christ; and (3) Connections exist between seemingly isolated commands and specific situations. There is a definite social setting in which the paraenesis originated.

Abingdons Preacher's Library Series (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1981); and Don M. Wardlaw, ed., Preaching Biblically: Creating Sermons in the Shape of Scripture (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1983). Dialogical preaching is seen in Reuel L. Howe, Partners in Preaching (New York: The Seabury Press, 1967). Howe is one of the few authors who precede Craddock. Richard Lischer calls for balance in "The Limits of Story," Interpretation 38 (Jan. 1984): 26-38.

[1] ?Thomas G. Long, Preaching and the Literary Forms of the Bible (Atlanta: Fortress Press, 1988): 11.

[2] ?See also, Greidanus, Modern Preacher, for another example of one who combined biblical study of genre with that of homiletics.

The purpose of this descriptive analysis is to explore the form and function of paraenesis in the New Testament and offer a prescription for homiletics. More specifically, an answer to the following question is sought: How does the form and function of paraenesis affect the form and function of the sermon?

Methodology

The initial section of this thesis will define the form and function of paraenesis in the New Testament. The relationship between New Testament paraenesis and the literary environment from which it arose will be explored. Finally, an examination of how Paul employed paraenesis in his letters will narrow the focus of this investigation.

The second section will propose homiletical strategies for preaching pauline paraenesis. It is a basic assumption of this project that the function of the sermon should imitate the original function of the text. It is also assumed that the form of the text should influence the form of the sermon. This theological assumption contends that if the preacher utilizes another medium for preaching than the one used in the biblical text, then the message is somehow altered. Although the preacher may at times use other forms in sermon design, even then the function of a text must agree with the function of the sermon.

Finally, the strategy will be demonstrated with the exegesis of one text and modeled with an example sermon. A running dialogue explaining the strategy being employed will accompany the manuscript.

CHAPTER II

DEFINITION OF PARAENESIS

> The paraenetic style is that in which we give someone paraenesis. . . persuading. . . him to pursue something or to avoid something. Paraenesis . . . is divided into two parts, i.e., persuasion and dissuasion.[1]

In David Aune's The New Testament in Its Literary Environment, he identifies three basic structures found commonly in Greek letters. These basic structures are: prescript; body; and conclusion.[2] Aune notes that Paul modified this basic form by adding two new parts, namely, thanksgiving and exhortations or paraenesis.[3]

There is a lack of consensus about the demarcation line between formal parts because some authors have a wider view of paraenesis than others.[4] It is therefore

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[1]Jerome D. Quinn, "Paraenesis and the Pastoral Epistles: Lexical Observations Bearing on the Nature of the Sub-genre and Soundings in its Role in Socialization and Liturgies," Semeia 50 (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1990): 191, quoting pseudo-Libanius (300-600 A.D.). For a detailed discussion of Libanius (the first to identify and describe paraenesis) see Stanley K. Stowers, Letter Writing in Greco-Roman Antiquity, Library of Early Christianity (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1986): 94-127 and Abraham Malherbe, "Ancient Epistolary Theorists," Ohio Journal of Religious Studies 5 (1977).

[2]David Aune, New Testament in Its Literary Environment (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1987): 162-164.

[3]Ibid., 177, 186.

[4]David G. Bradley, "The 'Topos' as a Form In the Pauline Paraenesis," Journal of Biblical Literature 72 (1953): 239-46; J. Bradley Chance, "Paul's Apology to the Corinthians [1 Cor. 1:4-6:20]," Perspectives in Religious Studies 9 (Summer 1982): 145-55; Raymond F. Collins, The Birth of the New Testament: The Origin and Development of the First Christian Generation (New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 1993); Raymond F. Collins, "The Unity of Paul's Paraenesis in 1 Thess. 4.3-8: 1 Cor. 7.1-7, A Significant Parallel," New Testament Studies 29 (July 1983): 420-29; William G. Doty, Letters in Primitive Christianity (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1973); Troels Engberg-Pedersen, "1 Corinthians 11:16 and the Character of Pauline Exhortation," Journal of Biblical Literature 110 (Winter 1991): 679-89; Robert W. Funk, Language, Hermeneutic, and Word of God (New York: Harper & Row, 1969); Victor P. Furnish, Theology and Ethics in Paul (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1968); James Gaffney, "On Paraenesis and Fundamental Moral Theology," Journal of Religious Ethics 11 (Spring 1983): 23-34; David Hill, "'To Offer Spiritual Sacrifices . . .' (1 Peter 2:5): Liturgical Formulations and Christian Paraenesis in 1 Peter," Journal for the Study of the New Testament 16 (October 1982): 45-63; Dan Jenkins, "Realized Ecclesiology: Exhortation," Searching Together 12 (Spring 1983): 45-8; Abraham J. Malherbe, "Paul: Hellenistic

necessary to have a working definition of paraenesis. Most scholars commenting on paraenesis are either building on or correcting Martin Dibelius.[1] Dibelius notes that paraenesis is made up of disconnected sentences that cannot be interpreted as a connected discourse. Since there is a lack of coherence, there is also a lack of theological content. He states, "It would be difficult for someone to distill from them any 'theology' at all, and quite certainly the theology of Paul cannot be gathered from them."[2] Dibelius started two lines of investigation: (1) literary analysis of formal, stylistic, and linguistic features; and (2) discovery of parallels and antecedents in Jewish and Hellenistic sources. Dibelius concluded, there is no particular situation that paraenetic sections address, but only a general guide to everyday affairs.[3]

Philosopher or Christian Pastor? American Theological Library Association Proceedings 39 (June 1985): 86-98; Wayne A. Meeks, "And Rose Up to Play: Midrash and Paraenesis in 1 Corinthians 10:1-22," Journal for the Study of the New Testament 16 (1982): 64-78; Darryl W. Palmer, "Thanksgiving, Self-defence, and Exhortation in 1 Thessalonians 1-3," Colloquium 14 (October 1981): 23-31; Leo G. Perdue, "Paraenesis and the Epistle of James." Zeitschrift fur die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft 72 (1981): 242-6; Leo G. Perdue and John G. Gammie, "Paraenesis: Act and Form," Semeia 50 (1990): 1-271; J. Quinn, "Paraenesis and the Pastoral Epistles," De la Tôrah au Messie: Melanges Heni Cazelles. pp. 495-501, ed. by J. Doré, P. Grelot, and M. Carrez. Paris: Desclee, 1981; S. Stowers, Letter Writing in Greco-Roman Antiquity. Library of Early Christianity, ed. by Wayne A. Meeks, Philadelphia: Westminster, 1986; Stanley D. Toussaint, "The Eschatology of the Warning Passages in the Book of Hebrews," The Grace Theological Journal 3 (Spring 1982): 67-80; J. L. White, "New Testament Epistolary Literature in the Framework of Ancient Epistolography," Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt. vol. 2, ed. Wolfgang Haase and Hildegard Temporini. Berlin: de Gruyter, 1984; and Roy Yates, "The Christian Way of Life: The Paraenetic Material in Colossians 3:1-4:6," Evangelical Quarterly 63 (July 1991): 241-51. A summary of some the major contributions by some of these authors is given by Steven John Kraftchick, Ethos and Pathos Appeals in Galatians Five and Six: A Rhetorical Analysis (Ph.D. diss. Emory University, 1985): 4-28.

[1]Martin Dibelius, A Commentary on the Epistle of James, trans. M. A. Williams, Hermeneia (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1976): 3. On pages 19-23, Dibelius describes five characteristics of the literary form paraenesis: (1) eclectic; (2) absence of context; (3) catchword connections; (4) repetition of the same motif in different places; and (5) not related to a particular situation. He is supported by W. D. Davies, Paul and Rabbinic Judaism (London: SPCK, 1948): 136; and Hans Conzelmann and Andreas Lindemann, Interpreting the New Testament: An Introduction to the Principles and Methods of New Testament Exegesis, trans. Siegfried S. Schatzmann (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publications, 1988): 102. A summary of Dibilius' contribution to paraenetic studies is given by Furnish, Theology and Ethics, 259-69.

[2]Dibelius, James, 21.

[3]Ibid., 145. E.g., he states, "To attribute all of the sins enumerated in the vice lists to particular churches would be a mistake."

Sydney Gredainus questions, "If exhortations do indeed exist in virtual isolation, the question must be raised whether one may select such an exhortation and interpret and preach it without any concern for its literary context."[1] Gredainus himself disagrees with the definition of the first type of exhortation given by Dibelius stating that paraenesis does not exist as unrelated moral maxims.[2] The following questions will be discussed in order to bring clarity to the definition of paraenesis. Does the isolated exhortation have any relationship with its immediate context? Is the context of a paraenetic section connected to the larger literary work which contains it? How does paraenesis address, if at all, the historical situation to which it was given?

Theodore C. Burgess, in "Epideictic Literature," surveys the ancient literature in detail.[3] In his section on protreptikos and paraenetikos he notes the overlapping nature of terms. The technical distinctions do have nuances of meaning yet at times are fully interchangeable in their use by many ancients.[4] Paraenesis is one category in the larger protreptikos logos genre.[5] Paraenesis is defined as a series of precepts which will serve as a guide for conduct under fixed conditions.[6]

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[1]Greidanus, Modern Preacher, 326.

[2]Ibid., 326-27.

[3]Theodore C. Burgess, "Epideictic Literature," The University of Chicago Studies in Classical Philology, vol. III (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1902): 89-248. He outlines the pre-history of paraenesis in philosophy and rhetoric on pages 226-28. He states, "Philosophy had helped to destroy the old beliefs, and now assumed to supply their place. The entire field of morals was taken under its care. There were those who devoted themselves chiefly to theory, but others must pass about among the masses of the people and publish in popular form the teachings of philosophers, applying them to pratical questions of everyday life. . . . Wandering preachers proclaiming the teachings of the great leaders to the people in forms of compositions, expositions, sermons from a text, . . . and moralizing paraenesis. . . ."

[4]Ibid., 229n.

[5]Ibid., 232n. He gives as a definition of protreptikos logos: an exhortation to some general course in philosophy, rhetoric, virtue. It gives a comprehensive view setting forth the advantages and removing the objectives to a course of action or attitude.

[6]Ibid., 230n.

David Aune defines this larger genre form, protreptikos logos, as exhortations to take a particular way of life as one's own and instructions on how to live.[1] Protreptic belongs to the rhetoric of the assembly which tries to shape the future decisions or actions of the audience.[2] He quotes Epictectus as being one of the earliest to define this genre.[3]

> But isn't there such a thing as the right style for exhortation? . . . Why yes, who denies that? Just as there is the style for refutation . . ., and the style for instruction. . . . Who, then, has ever mentioned a fourth style along with these, the style of display. . . ? Why, what is style for exhortation [ho protreptikos]? The ability to show to the individual, as well as to the crowd, the warring inconsistency in which they are floundering about, and how they are paying attention to anything rather than what they truly want. For they want the things that conduce to happiness, but they are looking for them in the wrong places. . . . There is nothing more effective in the style for exhortation than when the speaker makes clear to his audience that he has need of them.
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> He, then, who can show to each man the contradictions which cause him to err, and can clearly bring home to him how he is not doing what he wishes, and is doing what he does not wish, is strong in argument, and at the same time effective both in encouragement [protreptikos] and refutation [elegktikos]. For as soon as anyone shows a man this, he will of his own accord abandon what he is doing.

Abraham Malherbe, after analyzing literary and non-literary features of paraenesis found in the writings of the Hellenistic Moralists, defines these historical uses of paraenesis as a style of exhortation used to influence conduct rather than teach something new. Paraenesis sought to modify the conduct of the audience.[4] Malherbe identified the following features of paraenesis: (1) paraenesis tends to consist primarily of material that is traditional and unoriginal;[5] (2) paraenesis involves the general applicability of the precepts presented; (3) paraenesis is often addressed to one who knows or has heard them

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[1]David E. Aune, "Romans as a *Logos Protreptikos* in the Context of Ancient Religious and Philosophical Propaganda," 91-124, in Martin Hengel & Ulrich Heckel, Paulus und das antike Judentum (Tubingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1991): 93.

[2]Ibid., 94.

[3]Ibid., 94-95. Quoting Epictetus 3.23.33-35 and 2.26.4-5.

[4]Abraham J. Malherbe, "Paul: Hellenistic Philosopher or Christian Pastor? American Theological Library Association Proceedings 39 (June 1985): 92-93.

before; (4) paraenesis often employs examples of virtue who possess the qualities and behavior being advocated; and (5) paraenesis assumes a close personal relationship between author and recipient of the letter which would set the tone and justify the advice.[1]

James McDonald defines paraenesis as follows:

> Paraenesis . . . tends to brevity and to a simple succession of imperatival units. Moreover, it is concerned with intimate, personal counsel on moral and spiritual issues, with down-to-earth practical advice as part of the education of the recipient. According to Aristotle, [Rhetoric 2:21] it was the kind of teaching appropriately given only by the more elderly teacher, on matters of which he has some experience. Its dominate characteristic is its adherence to the popular, gnomic wisdom, passed on from generation to generation and frequently embodied in ancient poetry and other traditions.[2]

There are three types of paraenesis: (1) lists of vices and virtues; (2) a prolonged exhortation or extended homily on a particular topic (e.g., the household code); and (3) a cluster of unrelated moral maxims strung together like beads on a string. This repeats Dibelius' thesis that there is little to hold exhortations together except their similarity in

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[5]C. H. Dodd, Gospel and Law: The Relation of Faith and Ethics in Early Christianity (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1951): 19, notes, the paraenetic sections of various New Testament passages are alike in style but differ from the style of their authors. "They are marked by a concise staccto style. They use the fewest words possible. They have a kind of sing-song rhythm that helps the memory." W. D. Davies, Paul and Rabbinic Judaism: Some Elements in Pauline Theology (London: SPCK, 1955) explored the hortatory use of Old Testament materials and expanded the insights of David Daube concerning Paul's relationship with Rabbinic Judaism. Davies notes on pages 140-44, Paul also was familiar with the teachings of Jesus. Rom 12:9-21 contains eight possible allusions alone. These investigations have led scholars to believe Paul and other New Testament writers were familiar with a common sourse that had already compiled many of Jesus' teachings into a paraenetic code. See also David Daube, The New Testament and Rabbinic Judaism (London: Athlone Press, 1956): 102; and "Participle and Imperative in I Peter," 467-88, in Edward Gordon Selwyn, The First Epistle of St. Peter (London: MacMillan & Co., 1946). In this later article, Daube notes that the participle occasionally stands for the imperative thus demonstrating a Hebrew origin. Charles H. Talbert, "Tradition and Redaction in Romans xii.9-21," New Testament Studies 16 (October 1969): 83-93, builds upon Daube's work by reconstructing possible Christian redaction of Semetic codes. This has helped clarify some possible exceptions to Daube's thesis. Dale C. Allison, Jr., "The Pauline Epistles and the Synoptic Gospels: The Pattern of the Parallels," New Testament Studies 28 (January 1982): 1-32, explores how Pauline Theology is informed by the historical Jesus. He establishes a connection with Pauline allusions and Q. See also Victor P. Furnish, "The Jesus-Paul Debate: From Baur to Bultmann," Bulletin of the John Rylands Library 47 (1965): 342-81.

[1]Ibid. See also Abraham Malherbe, Moral Exhortation, A Greco-Roman Source Book, Library of Early Christianity (Philadelphia, PA: The Westminster Press, 1986): 124-25.

[2]James I. H. McDonald, Kerygma and Didache: The Articulation and Structure of the Earliest Christian Message (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980): 70.

form, or perhaps a catch-word carried over from one to another (e.g., a proverbial ethical saying found in the topoi).[1] This paper addresses this third category.

The recognition that isolated moral maxims are found in the topoi brings the dimension of literary unity to these exhortations. This is the first step to correct the use of a qualifier like "isolated" or "unrelated." David G. Bradley defines topoi as brief and pithy admonitions on a variety of subjects. They are self-contained units of teaching with only a loose if any connection with the immediate context.[2] He goes on to say, the "distinctive characteristic is that it is composed of more than one sentence dealing with the same subject.[3] Unity is found in the common subject matter. This unity is often strengthened by the use of a recurring word which binds the other elements together."[4] Or as William Doty states, "The topoi are miniature essays of stereotyped good advice."[5]

Terrence Mullins expands Bradley's thesis by identifying a recognizable form. The topos form contains the following elements: (1) an injunction urging that a certain course of behavior be followed or avoided; (2) a reason for the injunction; and (3) a

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[1]Calvin J. Roetzel, The Letters of Paul: Conversations in Context (Atlanta: John Knox, 1975): 34-35. He offers Romans 12:9-13 as an example of this third type noting it has thirteen different injunctions discussing twelve different topics. Roetzel, page 36, will qualify this definition noting that Paul does knit together the body of the letter with paraenesis for specific relevance for a particular church. See also, Roy Yates, "The Christian Way of Life: The Paraenetic Material in Colossians 3:1-4:6," Evangelical Quarterly 63 (July 1991): 242.

[2]David G. Bradley, "The Topos as a Form In the Pauline Paraenesis," Journal of Biblical Literature 72 (1953): 240. Bradley argues that the paraenetic items Paul discusses are only connected loosely with their context. His treatment is inadequate and is in need of supplementation. Besides the discussion below, see also, J. C. Brunt, "More on the Topos as a New Testament Form," Journal of Biblical Literature 104 (September 1985): 495-500. Brunt critiques the use of term topos due to the confusion between today's usage and that of the ancient classical rhetorical usage. His primary concern is how Bradley's definition of the term has clouded subsequent scholarship. Yet, the term topos as used in this paper has wide acceptance and is virtually synonymous with the term "motif." The definition given by Bradley has been successfully modified so that it now corresponds with the ancient usage.

[3]McDonald, Kerygma, 70, states, "A minimal topos may consist only of a sentence or so, devoted to one subject and including an imperatival or gnomic sentiment. For a greater discussion of this type of rhetorical form see Aristotle's discussion of maxims in, On Rhetoric: A Theory of Civic Discourse, trans. George A. Kennedy (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991): 2:21.

[4]Bradley, "Topos," 243.

[5]William G. Doty, Letters in Primitive Christianity, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1973): 39.

discussion of the logical or practical consequences of the behavior. He then adds two optional elements: (4) An analogous situation to the one dealt with in the topos; and (5) a refutation of a contrary way of thinking or acting.[1]

McDonald's definition is helpful,

> The word *topos* is used in rhetoric to denote a commonplace−the proper subject of dialectical and rhetorical syllogisms−which may deal with such questions as justice or politics and may be of various, identifiable types. In relation to paraenesis, it denotes a particular topic of moral concern.[2]

McDonald also sees the cohesion of a topical unit by observing the common repetition of the sentiment of the first line. He lists the following features: imperatives, causal extensions, similes, conditional clauses, and questions.[3] The limitations of topoi are their generality. The advantages exceed the disadvantages, for topoi appeal directly to the audience with practical advice in a clear and concise manner without equivocation. They assume authority. They assume unity of thought and action. They stimulate the mind into active thought. Therefore, topos is a flexible unit of paraenesis capable of addressing various subjects on matters of practical living.[4] Therefore, isolated maxims do exhibit a relationship with the immediate context in a coherent and unified way. Each isolated maxim functions to contribute to the whole purpose of the topoi.

There is also a larger literary context and a historical context for each exhortation.[5] Hans Dieter Betz states, "Paraenetic sayings ordinarily address themselves

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[1] Terrence Mullins, "Topos As a New Testament Form," Journal of Biblical Literature 99 (December 1980): 542. Vernon K. Robbins, in "A Socio-Rhetorical Response: Contexts of Interaction and Forms of Exhortation," Semeia 50 (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1990): 261-71, introduces a taxonomy concerned with topics and persuasive figures.

[2] McDonald, Kerygma, 70.

[3] Ibid., 71.

[4] Ibid.

[5] Brunt, "More on the Topos," 499-500. Brunt argues against appealing to the topos form to show that advice is not directed to a specific situation. The better alternative is to examine each text's context in order to determine if the topos is situational. See Funk, Language, 255-56.

to a specific (though perhaps fictional) audience, or at least appear in the form of a command."[1] Betz, while still maintaining that paraenesis applies to a single audience and a single set of circumstances, goes on to doubt the possibility of reconstructing one single frame into which all the paraenetic sayings will fit.[2] Betz' qualification of finding the historical context brings a needed caution in the reconstructing of social backgrounds from limited information; however, recent sociological studies have brought promising results that have contributed to some convincing reconstructions of historical settings.[3]

Paul's situational paraenesis is designed to help believers to work out individually and corporately what the 'law of Christ' is for them in the midst of their struggles to live out the implications of their faith. Even though Paul wants these communities to acquire moral insight, he also points them towards relevant traditions and teachings. If all else fails, Paul will finally rely upon his own apostolic relationship and authority rooted in Jesus Christ.[4]

The most comprehensive description and classification of paraenesis has been published by Leo G. Perdue and John G. Gammie.[5] Perdue's article deals primarily with

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[1]Hans Dieter Betz, Galatians: A Commentary on Paul's Letter to the Churches in Galatia, Hermeneia (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979): 3.

[2]Ibid., 11.

[3]Recent sociological study of Paul has renewed interest in the historical context to which Paul wrote. These studies sharpen our awareness of the social dimensions of Paul's work that increases our understanding of the nature and function of roles in his letters. By investigating the relationship of Paul's symbolic world, greater insight is gained in understanding Paul's relationship with his addressees. See especially W. A. Meeks, The First Urban Christians: The Social World of the Apostle Paul (New Haven, CN: Yale University Press, 1983); B. Holmberg, Paul and Power: The Structure of Authority in the Primitive Church as Reflected in the Pauline Epistles (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1978); Norman Peterson, Rediscovering Paul: Philemon and the Sociology of Paul's Narrative World (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985); and Robin Scroggs, "The Sociological Interpretation of the New Testament. The Present State of Research," New Testament Studies 26 (1980): 164-79.

[4]McDonald, Kerygma, 93.

[5]Leo G. Perdue and John G. Gammie, Paraenesis: Act and Form, Semeia 50 (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1990).

function.[6] Paraenesis either "orders" (obedience is the motivation of most actions in order to preserve the existing social order), or "conflicts" (seeking to change social order so a new social order will emerge).[2] Within the variety of forms found in paraenesis, the overriding purpose is to provide guidance for the moral life of the community.[3] This is done by either preserving/confirming the social order or by converting/subverting the old social order in favor of a new one. The community is exhorted on the basis of duty and self-interest to follow and conform to social expectations within that community. Immoral behavior will only produce chaos and become a threat to both communal and individual life.[4] Perdue notes that paraenesis often addresses the point of entrance or anticipation of entrance into a new stage of life, role, or group. Moral exhortations are often repeated to remind recipients of expected behavior and reconfirm the validity of the guidance given when one formerly entered into the new stage of life, role, or group.[5]

John G. Gammie divides paraenesis into sub-genres.[6] Gammie sees previous attempts to define paraenesis as "too neat." He contends paraenesis is more inclusive and covers broader categories due to pluralistic audiences.[7] He defines paraenesis as "a form of address which not only commends, but actually enumerates precepts or maxims which

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[1]Leo G. Perdue, "The Social Character of Paraenesis and Paraenetic Literature," Semeia 50 (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1990): 5-40. Perdue illustrates his methodology in, "Paraenesis and the Epistle of James." Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft 72 (1981): 242-6.

[2]Ibid., 5. It all depends upon who is in power or who is oppressed.

[3]Ibid., 6.

[4]Ibid., 8.

[5]Ibid., 19. He details the social functions of paraenesis on pages 23-26. These are protrepsis (for purposes of conversion), paraenesis (for purposes of confirmation), socialization, legitimatization, and conflict.

[6]John G. Gammie, "Paraenetic Literature: Toward the Morphology of a Secondary Genre," Semeia 50 (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1990): 41-81.

[7]Ibid., 43.

pertain to moral aspiration and the regulation of human conduct."[8] He identifies the following formal characteristics: (1) a collection of precepts, maxims; (2) the validity of these maxims is commended by using exhortations frequently accompanied by motive clauses; (3) admonitions; and (4) encomia (praises) of righteous persons. All of these characteristics are in the context of a personal relationship of author and audience.[2]

One of the most detailed classifications of paraenesis has been done by Walter Wilson.[3] He identifies the paraenesis materials as containing "gnomic sayings" coming from the "sapiential" tradition.[4] Every culture practiced the coining, use, and preservation of wisdom sayings.[5] Wilson's proposal connects this earlier literary form with Paul, who also employed common rhetorical categories not only to express his theology but also accomplish pragmatic aims in service to the Christian community.

Gnomic sayings would be contextualized in five common ways: (1) maxims may be personalized; (2) maxims may be supported by reasons or epilogues; (3) maxims may be supplemented with examples or illustrations; (4) maxims may be employed as evidence or proof; and (5) maxims may operate at the beginning or conclusion of a distinct section of text.[6] These maxims become invaluable as tools of oratory. They are

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[1]Ibid., 51.

[2]Ibid., 55. On pages 58-61, Gammie gives several definitions. The following definitions relate specifically to this paper. Exhortation: an invitation, an encouragement, a command, a directive to follow a given course of action or adopt a given attitude. Admonition: a warning against a given course of action or attitude. Precept: a sentence in the indicative which instructs and contains an implied or obvious directive for conduct.

[3]Walter T. Wilson, Love Without Pretense: Romans 12.9-21 and Hellennistic-Jewish Wisdom Literature, Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 2. Reihe 46 (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1991).

[4]Ibid., 3. These wisdom sayings are useful for making practical decisions about day-to-day life. They functioned as a means of preserving the insight of other cultures and previous generations.

[5]Ibid. 9.

[6]Ibid., 41. Many letters that are non-sapiential genre may often take advantage of gnomic forms since they are of use in achieving their broader objectives, 51.

vivid, memorable, and convincing. What is more important, they help to clarify the moral purpose of a speech and the moral character of the speaker.[1]

Three gnomic formal distinctions are identified by Wilson as gnomic poetry, gnomic anthologies, and wisdom instructions.[2] These different distinctions contain the following similarities: (1) they draw on the same pool of ideas and topics; (2) they are set in a didactic and ethical setting; (3) they draw on pre-existing sapiential material with which the readers are familiar; (4) these maxims figure as basic components in the composition of each; and (5) there is a logical and literary structure that is often based upon a distinct theme woven throughout the section.[3]

Each of the gnomic categories follows a formal structure. First, there is a programmatic statement which expresses the ethical objectives of the entire passage. It is in the form of direct address and challenge. It is followed by a descriptive section which depicts some model of ethical behavior related to the programmatic statement. Finally, a prescriptive statement concludes the section which contains the moral exhortations.[4]

The descriptive paraenesis does not stand in isolation of its literary context. Within a larger literary context, paraenesis contributes to the overall argument and aim of the author. Wilson connects paraenesis with his discussion of maxims by noting how paraenesis employs wisdom sayings. Paraenesis does not introduce a significant quantity of new information or call upon the audience to pursue a different or unaccustomed way of life but contains familiar material that is presented in such a way as to serve the

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[1]Ibid., 52. See Aristotle, Rhetoric, 2.21. Aristotle notes that maxims are persuasive because they appeal to the emotions of the audience in so far as they are pleased to hear their own views expressed in such general terms.

[2]Wilson, “Love,” 88.

[3]Ibid., 89.

[4]Ibid., 92-94.

author's special aim.[1] Much of paraenesis follows the formal distinctions of gnomic sayings. He states,

> Once the readers have been engaged in evaluating and internalizing this model of behavior, the author is in a position to resume the direct address, teaching, exhorting, and encouraging them. Wisdom admonitions predominate, though wisdom sentences, examples, promises, and so forth may also be key elements, in the third, or prescriptive, section. This segment is normally the longest and most varied, and it exhibits the clearest gnomic features and didactic intentions. Here the author identifies certain concrete ethical strategies and specific patterns of behavior that drive from the general plan that had been announced in the programmatic statement and illustrated in the descriptive model. The prescriptive section affords the author an opportunity to articulate some of the fundamental presuppositions, principles, and motivations of the ethical program being presented, and to appeal for the audience to accept these as the basis of their future ethical decision-making. The various precepts and admonitions of the section reveal the ethical perspective and moral ideals that the author desires for the audience, but they accomplish this not so much through the exhaustive treatment of a particular topic or theme but by suggesting a number of different actions and attitudes that typify the author's ethical program.[2]

He lists eight basic formal and structural characteristics found in prescriptive sections: (1) the section opens with a "protreptic maxim;" (2) a series of coordinated statements that specify the implications and consequences (often ethical) of the maxim; (3) a central statement that states a goal or motivation of the ethical program; (4) this statement will be followed by a number of concrete injunctions, motivations, examples and the like; (5) the number of imperative statements will decrease as the section progresses while indicative statements will increase; (6) the author will often employ common literary and poetic devices; (7) the author will regularly quote, modify, or

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[1]Ibid., 53.

[2]Ibid., 94.

allude to certain traditional sources reminding the audience of a shared cultural tradition; and (8) the section will often conclude with another maxim forming an inclusio.[1]

Paul's theology also influenced his exhortations. His use of rhetorical devices was modified and molded to fit his specific agenda. Douglas Alan Low and Hieronymus Cruz have both contributed to the exploration of the theological motivations for Paul's exhortations.[2] These authors explore fundamental motivations that reflect the church's perception of reality. These motivations can be attached to individual paraenesis or found in larger hortatory pericopes. They are designed as deliberative rhetoric to encourage and persuade the audience to accept the behavioral and attitudinal advice about future decisions. Ethos, pathos, and logos all function together to motivate the audience.[3] Although paraenesis is "traditional, reflecting conventional wisdom generally approved by society," self-evident, and available to any philosopher to use, Paul puts it in a Christian context based upon the nature of the gospel.[4] Paraenesis, therefore calls for a proper understanding of the Christian tradition and faith and not merely Pauline demand.[5] In other words, based on the knowledge of the message that led them to embrace Paul's

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[1]Ibid., 95.

[2]Douglas Alan Low, Apocalyptic Motivation In Pauline Paraenesis (Ann Arbor, MI: University Microfilms International, 1988); and Hieronymus Cruz, Christological Motives and Motivated Actions in Pauline Paraenesis, European University Studies 23 (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1990).

[3]Low, Apocalyptic, 2-3. See also Aune, Literary Environment, 198-200. Low will omit Rom 12:9-21 saying it "contains not a single additional phrase to encourage the believers to accept and practice these pastoral admonitions."

[4]Low, Apocalyptic, 6-7. See also Aune, Literary Environment, 191.

[5]Low, Apocalyptic, 6-7.

message originally and of what it means to be in the Christian community, Paul exhorts them with reminders and appeals to act in the present.[1]

Cruz summarizes the theological teachings that provide the motivation for Pauline ethical exhortations. He states,

> The Christians are urged to do certain things or to keep off from others because of Christ i.e. because of his words, examples, second coming, especially because of his passion, death, and resurrection in which we have participated through baptism and thereby becoming 'new men' we are intimately united with him as members of his body, possessing the Spirit. Thus Christ is the real power behind Pauline exhortations.[2]

Paul forcefully moves his readers to action by use of Christian imperatives which flow smoothly from the Christological indicatives of the Christ event.[3]

Only a few exegetes have taken advantage of recent studies concerning paraenesis. The following limited survey is intended only to hint at the possibilities that are available by understanding paraenesis in its literary and historical environment.[4] Abraham Malherbe set the standard in recent understandings of paraenetic literature as applied to New Testament literature.[5] Malherbe begins by reviewing the nature of paraenesis found in the "Hellenistic Moralists" demonstrating clearly that Paul's letters

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[1]Ibid., 8.

[2]Cruz, Christological Motives, 30-31. This concept is crucial in my interpretation of Rom 12:9-21.

[3]Ibid., 427, 434, 436. Although Cruz recognizes other theological and practical motives, he convincingly argues, that for Paul, these cannot be separated from God's action done through Christ.

[4]These articles were chosen because they demonstrated connecting the paraenesis of a New Testament epistle to the historical context, literary context, or theological context.

[5]Abraham J. Malherbe, Paul and the Thessalonians: The Philosophic Tradition of Pastoral Care (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987); "Exhortation in First Thessalonians," Novum Testamentum 25 (1983): 238-56; and "Gentle as a Nurse': The Cynic Background to I Thess ii," Novum Testamentum 12 (1970): 203-17.

exhibit the same literary characteristics.[1] He notes the affectionate relationship and pastoral concern Paul has for this church. It is only after he praises them for their response to the gospel, and reminds them of his example in light of that gospel that he gives advice on matters of conduct related to their particular circumstances.[2] Paul's paraenesis in 1 Thessalonians is rooted in God's action and their eschatological future.[3] Malherbe has demonstrated that Paul has written a letter that not only imitates the familiar form of a paraenetic letter, but has addressed the church as though he is present. The letter functioned then as a sermon serving his pastoral purpose.[4]

Leo Perdue applied Malherbe's methods to the Epistle of James.[5] He was especially interested in exploring the question of the social setting in which the paraenesis originated.[6] This task is complicated due to the fact that James is silent about such a setting. Therefore, Perdue argued from the evidence of other paraenetic literature that is explicit about social setting.[7] He concludes from the literature,

> The social settings are varied. . . . However, the unifying factor is the instructional situation involving an experienced teacher and an immature novice who either is in the process of initiation into a group, is being

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[1]Malherbe, Paul and the Thessalonians, 70-80.

[2]Ibid., 74, 76.

[3]Ibid., 80.

[4]Ibid., 78. The paraenesis of 1 Thessalonians deals primarily with relationships. Paul is now absent. He is unable to continue his pastoral work among them. This letter serves to overcome the distance and meet pressing deficiencies in their faith while providing the means for greater social stability. Finally, the Thessalonians are exhorted to continue the work of Paul and be responsible for their own faith.

[5]Perdue, "Paraenesis and the Epistle of James," 241-56.

[6]Contra Dibelius.

[7]Perdue, "Paraenesis," 247. Much of this material is discussed above and functioned as a precursor to his later article.

> elevated to a new status, or has recently achieved group membership or a new status.[1]

In other words, the primary function of paraenesis is socialization.[2] Perdue concludes his article by making some suggestions as to how the social settings and social functions of paraenesis within the context of both the Hellenistic Moralists and Jewish Wisdom Literature may be applied to James.

Jerome D. Quinn builds upon Perdue's article and makes the following observations concerning the Pastoral Epistles.

> Paraenesis is particularly appropriate for the public recommendations and charges that accompany entrance into the community as such (the primary socialization) or entry into special social roles within the community (secondary socialization). . . . The process of socialization aims at palpable change in the individual as he or she crosses the threshold into a new mode of existence. This change becomes evident in the conduct and then the character of the person whose life is being 're-created' by entering this group or assuming a new role within it. Paraeneses, positive and negative, are among the means used to urge this transformation, particularly of conduct. It is given, not to be argued with, but to be acted upon. . . . The justification or legitimization of the new world of order into which the neophyte is being inducted is particularly important when the old order still advertises attractive alternatives. [That is why paraenesis often appeals to authority and ethos.]. . . . Finally, paraenesis aims at reinforcing a sense of identity with a group and sense of separation from those who do not believe or do not conduct themselves as the group does. Paraenetic exhortation sketches in black and white, with clear lines between those inside and those outside. Thus the hearer is forewarned and forearmed for conflict. In a Christian setting, paraenesis looks to the parousia with its definitive revelation of who is 'in' and who is 'out' of the new world.[3]

He concludes that the Pastoral Epistles exhibit these characteristics.

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[1]Ibid., 250.

[2]Ibid., 251.

[3]Quinn, "Paraenesis," 195-97.

Roy Yates identifies the antecedents of the ethical lists, household codes, and paraenesis in Colossians.[4] More important for Yates, though, is the theological setting in which this material is found in Colossians. Paul did not add this material as an "appendix," to the main argument of the epistle. The theology of dying and rising with Christ has implications for the Christian who has participated with Christ. Christ's death and resurrection becomes reality for the Christian life in the ethics of everyday living.

In summary, paraenesis has often been defined as isolated moral maxims unrelated to either its literary or historical context. At first glance, New Testament paraenesis seems to fall into this paradigm. However, recent studies have clearly demonstrated that both historical and literary contexts are essential when interpreting Pauline paraenesis. Finally, Pauline paraenesis is intricately connected to Pauline theology.[2]

[4]Yates, "Christian Way of Life," 241-51.

[2]This final point will be developed in chapter IV.

CHAPTER III

HOMILETICAL CONSIDERATIONS:

A STRATEGY FOR PREACHING PARAENESIS

The "New Hermeneutic"[1] provides interesting possibilities for preaching paraenesis. The traditional (rational) homiletic of the past falters. "Point-making," "situational" sermons, and "conversational" sermons miss the power of the original "language event." To reduce the paraenesis to a single "point" turns it into a static propositional truth, frustrating its intentional force. Although first impressions may lead one to surmise propositional preaching will be well suited for preaching paraenesis, it altogether fails by ignoring theological, literary, and historical contexts.

The language event is first a historic event that cannot be stripped of its context. The historical form is not accidental and neither is the setting coincidental. "What is meant" and "How it functioned" must be the first step before "What it means." Exegesis comes before hermeneutics and certainly homiletics. Without this, the language event

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[1]A simple definition of the New Hermeneutic is: The interpreter enters into dialogue with the text in order to be subjectively confronted by language and events from a different historical context. The interpreter seeks the original "language event" so that it can be translated to today with the same impact. When the language from a biblical context touches one's life in a meaningful way, it becomes truth for that person. A detailed explanation can be found in, Anthony C. Thiselton, "A New Hermeneutic," New Testament Interpretation: Essays on Principles and Methods, ed. I. Howard Marshall (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1977): 308-33. Thompson, Preaching, 66, states: "One of the most valuable insights of the `new hermeneutic' is its emphasis on the text as `language event.'. . . The concerns of Gerhard Ebeling and Ernst Fuchs, seminal thinkers in the `new hermeneutics' school of thought, lift the principle of language to that of prime importance of understanding the Scriptures. Both the presuppositions and the elaborations of the `new hermeneutics' view of language raise serious questions about its conclusions, but it has provoked biblical interpreters into a useful study of the role of language." Funk, Language, on pages 20-77 summarizes the works of Fuchs, Ebeling, and language event.

only becomes a creation of the exegete. Also, without the historical background, the interpreter will only yield theological utterances or moral demands that may or may not be equal to the original meaning or intent. The modern setting will often interfere and prejudice interpretation by clouding the original meaning of the text.

The avoidance of the historical context opens the doors for a host of interpretations. The historical setting places boundaries and gives direction for crossing that cultural bridge. Edgar Krentz summarizes the historical-critical method and maintains it is the best alternative for interpreters.[1] "Historical criticism respects the historical gap and uses a method to determine as precisely as possible the significance of the words for the people then."[2] Next, he places this interpretation into our history so the impact of the message is made relevant.[3] He introduces this field of study by stating:

> The fundamental rule of biblical exegesis is that the interpreter must be obedient to the text itself; that is, he or she must allow the texts to determine their interpretation. . . . History and exegesis are by no means the same: history tries to reconstruct the past while exegesis attempts to unfold the meaning of texts.[4]

Richardson and Schweitzer summarize the steps of the historical-critical method as follows: (1) the determination of the text; (2) the literary form of the passage; (3) the historical situation, the Sitz im Leben; (4) the meaning which the words had for the original author and hearer or reader; (5) the understanding of the passage in the light of

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[1]Edgar Krentz, The Historical-Critical Method (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975): 61, 87-88. See pp. 63-67 for the fruits of the historical-critical method. He recognizes that this method is not the only valid way to read a book. To answer the historical-critical question does not exhaust every possiblility or question. Meaning can be found in a variety of ways. Meaning always comes in the context of a community's own history of interpretation. Since these documents are seen as Christian Scripture, there is value in recognizining a texts past and present ongoing life as a living Word to the community.

[2]Ibid, 61.

[3]Ibid.

[4]Ibid, v-vi.

its total context and the background out of which it emerged.[1] These steps are necessary for all historical documents, not just the biblical ones.

The goals of the historian are: (1) to present a "corpus of ascertained fact" that answers the questions "What actually happened, and why?"[2] (2) to understand the events in order to interpret them.[3] The historian is handicapped by his sources and cannot know all there is to know. Sources lead to a selection of what can be known. This selection is guided by what questions are being asked.[4]

> Historical criticism serves the historian's need for valid, reliable evidence by enabling him to establish whether or not testimony actually was given by a competent and reliable witness. It is a method for collecting all possible witnesses to an era or event, evaluating what they say, relating the findings to one another in a coherent structure, and presenting the conclusion with the evidence.[5]

The historian cannot be deluded by thinking that she can see anything in its original frame of reference. The historian does not have the objectivity of the natural sciences. She must look through the lenses of her age.[6] Therefore, she must follow rules (which is called criticism) subjecting evidence to questions. The goal is to hear the original sense of the witnesses to determine the meaning of the text had for its first

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[1]A. Richardson and W. Schweitzer, ed., Biblical Authority for Today (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1951): 241-44.

[2]Krentz, Historical-Critical, 35.

[3]Ibid.

[4]Ibid, 37.

[5]Ibid, 41. For greater depth in the historical methods see, Marc Bloch, The Historian's Craft, trans. Peter Putnam (New York: Vintage Books, 1953). He defines the task on p. 23, "Modern scientific history is systematic knowledge of the past, its object is man's activities in time, space, and society, expressed in a coherent report. It deals with real events and real men (not abstractions), and the causes of their activities and their influence."

[6]Ibid, 42, 47.

hearers at the time of original composition (intended sense).[1] By using the techniques of textual criticism, philological studies, literary criticism, form criticism, redaction criticism and historical criticism, the dynamics that are at work in the production of the texts can be understood.[2]

E. D. Hirsch[3] argues for the author as the primary standard in determining interpretation. If words do not reflect the author's meaning, then whose?[4] The critic becomes the author of the meaning.[5] Meaning is an affair of consciousness, not words. Almost any word combination can represent more than one complex of meaning. Meaning derives either from somebody meaning something by it, or understanding something from it.[6] Hirsch demonstrates that validity of interpretation is found by saving the author and showing that the prevailing arguments against the author are questionable and vulnerable.[7]

Authors write to communicate ideas so what they mean will be accessible.[8] Hirsch states: there is a difference between knowledge of an author's meaning and knowledge of the subject area. Correct interpretation of some hidden meaning would

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[1]Ibid, 44.

[2]Ibid, 49-51. The interpreter must recognize his limitations. See Rudolf Bultmann, "Is Exegesis Without Presuppositions Possible?" Existence and Faith, ed. Schubert Ogden (New York: Meridian Books, 1960): 291.

[3]E. D. Hirsch, Jr., Validity in Interpretation (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1967).

[4]Ibid, 3.

[5]Ibid, 5.

[6]Ibid, 4.

[7]Ibid, 6, 13.

[8]Ibid, 18.

require authorial confirmation to be valid.[1] "What has been denied here is that linguistic signs can somehow speak their own meaning−a mystical idea that has never been persuasively defended."[2] Linguistic norms at the very least impose limitations on verbal meaning. "Verbal meaning is whatever someone has willed to convey by a particular sequence of linguistic signs and which can be conveyed (shared) by means of those linguistic signs."[3] The goal of interpretation, after considering all the evidence and the conclusions the evidence requires, is to increase the probability that this is what the author meant.[4] Then the interpreter can determine what it means for today.[5]

The language of the 20th century has changed. The biblical allusions (points of reference) no longer reach by themselves to today. Although the passages have been passed down, the language event has not. The pulpit must find a way to repeat the same language event. The paraenesis should once again challenge so decision will occur. This is the task of exposition. Historically, how did the language event affect the original hearers? What were the points of reference that touched their lives? Christian preaching seeks to imitate that event in the lives of present day believers. When the Word of God comes alive, the change of existence is possible. The listener moves from unbelief to faith. In paraenetic preaching, the socialization function will be accomplished.

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[1]Ibid, 20-21.

[2]Ibid, 23.

[3]Ibid, 29. Hirsch does allow unconscious meaning as long as it lies within the boundary that determines the particular verbal meaning that is being considered, 51, 220-21. See also his concept of "horizon" which defines in principle the norms and limits which bound meaning represented by the text, 223.

[4]Ibid, 207.

[5]Ibid, 209.

How can the modern preacher create the same awareness of a direct and personal message? Although imitating the logic and form of the paraenetic text may be helpful, there is great latitude to the homiletical craft that gives ample opportunity to seek a dynamic equivalent. Sometimes other sermonic forms or logical approaches may speak to a particular congregation more effectively without reshaping the message. The pulpit needs to keep the function of paraenesis as it contributes to the ongoing argument of the text in mind so the effect is not lost in translation.[1] A dynamic equivalent of the language event is needed to bridge the cultural barrier so the original dynamic is felt by the modern audience. Therefore, aim, theme, and relevance of the original text should influence aim, theme, and relevance of the sermon.

The text speaks with authority because of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus. The church confesses its faith that these are its Scriptures for life and doctrine. Today, the preacher can only witness to that authority. Properly understood, paraenesis will be as demanding, threatening, rebuking, encouraging and promising today as it was then.

When considering paraenesis, pathos, ethos, and logos are all involved in the original language event. As noted above, paraenesis is written by one who has relationship with the audience already and knows the situation to which he writes. The content of the paraenetic section is bound to the message the audience has already received and accepted. The exhortation is for the purpose of reinforcing identity or bringing about a transformation in conduct due to a preexisting transformation in existence. The audience is faced with resolving specific moral problems and conflicts that arise from coming out of the world and entering into new social structures. The

[1]David H. Kelsey, The Uses of Scripture in Recent Theology (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975): 185-192 warns against the use of the term “translation” when moving from Scripture to theology.

reality of their new life is addressed specifically in paraenesis that insists on concrete ways in which the gospel impinges on the their new existence while still "in the flesh."[1]

Exegesis of the text will enable the preacher to place the sermon in its proper historical, literary, and theological context thus establishing logos. The preacher will also need to know the congregation and the occasion of the present message to establish pathos. Some of the possible occasions noted above dealt with the entrance or anticipation of entrance into a new stage of life, role, or group. When the connection is made between the congregation and the message, ethos will derive. Ethos will be maintained when the preacher gives the sermon with confidence and authority.

Paul's authority is based on his understanding of apostolic authority. This authority should not overemphasize the commanding nature of paraenesis, neither should paraenesis be reduced to "recommendations and good advice."[2] Since the gospel contains both demand and mercy, Paul gave binding directives for moral life for both the individual and the community. He used the authority of the gospel for his authority. The same authority that enabled him to preach initially, enabled him to correct, admonish, encourage, and command.[3] Out of Paul's concern that the community be grounded in the indicative of the gospel, he did not primarily issue decrees, but rather argued with deep theological passion. He sought to convince these communities of the fundamental

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[1]Furnish, Theology and Ethics, 92.

[2]Gerhard Lohfink, Jesus and Community: The Social Dimension of Christian Faith, trans. John P. Galvin (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984): 117.

[3]Ibid., 117-18.

implications of the gospel so they could participate in the decision to conform their will to God's.[1]

Foremost, a paraenetic sermon will be rooted in the theology of the text. Whether one starts with a text or the life situation, the immediate occasion must be woven into the theology of the text. Although the preacher does not want to dull the unique theology of a particular pericope or letter, the context of the canon must also be considered. The paraenetic passages are always bound to a larger framework often discussed as the "indicative" of the gospel.

The indicative of Scripture always implies an imperative. It is part of the essential nature of the gospel. Doctrine is not taught for its sake alone so that it may be known; it is taught in order that it may be actualized in practice. The imperative has a dialectical relation to the indicative in Paul because it actualizes what the indicative makes possible.[2] The relationship of the indicative and the imperative must be understood in term's of the Christ event. The old age is gone, yet still continues. The new age is here, but not fully. In the present, Christians are free from the old age with its powers yet still live in the world. "Therefore, now we stand with both gift and demand of the gospel."[3]

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[1]Ibid. Lohfink goes on to say on p. 119, that paraklesis is directive instruction, but by assessing Pauline usage, it is also appeal, encouragement, admonition, consolation, invitation, and even request.

[2]J. Christiaan Beker, Paul the Apostle: The Triumph of God in Life and Thought (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1980): 276. See also, Herman Ridderbos, Paul: An Outline of His Theology, trans. John Richard DeWitt (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1975): 254-55, 258-65, Furnish, Theology and Ethics, 9-13; J. S. Stewart, A Man in Christ (London: Hodden & Stoughton, 1935): 199; and Oscar Cullmann, Christ and Time, trans. F. V. Filson (London: SCM Press, 1951): 224. Dodd, Gospel, 3-5, 9-13, 66-67, would opt for the virtual irrelation of the indicative to the imperative.

[3]Allen Verhey, The Great Reversal: Ethics and the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1984): 104.

Rudolf Bultmann connects the power of experiencing a new reality by expounding upon the integral relationship of the indicative and imperative in Scripture. The power of the gospel and the Christ event must be a continual event in one's life. The Christian must maintain a continual response to the Word of God proclaimed in Christ.[1] The indicative gives expression to the new self-understanding of the believer. Since this existence includes the will, the imperative reminds the believer that there is freedom from sin, provided that there is also renewal in obedience to the command of God.[2] For Paul, this freedom from sin is rooted in baptism. The old self was crucified with Christ through baptism. The sinful self was rendered powerless. Enslavement to sin is no longer possible.[3] Bultmann asks, how can "you shall not sin" be reconciled with the indicative "you are freed from sin?"[4] He finds the answer in the inner connection between the indicative and the imperative.[5]

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[1]Rudolf Bultmann, Jesus Christ and Mythology (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1958): 76. Bultmann's work is crucial in understanding the indicative and the imperative as the basic structure of Pauline ethics. Some may want to stress the indicative over the imperative or vice versa, but his balanced presentation is the best course. A comprehensive review of the literature on the indicative and imperative is found in William D. Dennison's article, "Indicative and Imperative: The Basic Structure of Pauline Ethics," Calvin Theological Journal 14 (April 1979): 55-78; and Michael Parsons, "Being Precedes Act: Indicative and Imperative in Paul's Writing" Evangelical Quarterly (April 1988): 99-127. He argues for a middle road in understanding the relationship of the indicative and the imperative between Bultmann and Dodd and is summarize simply by his title "Being Precedes Act." See also Georg Strecker, "Indicative and Imperative According to Paul," Australian Biblical Review 35 (1987): 60-72; Richard E. Howard, "Some Modern Interpretations of the Pauline Indicative and Imperative" Wesleyan Theological Journal 11 (1976): 38-48; and Joel Marcus, "Let God Arise and End the Reign of Sin: A Contribution to the Study of Pauline Paraenesis" Biblica 69 (1988): 386-95.

[2]Ibid., 77.

[3]Ibid., 48.

[4]Ibid., 49.

[5]Ibid.

This relationship is also found in the teachings of Jesus.[1] Jesus proclaimed the will of God, which is God's demand, the demand for the good. He demanded that all be obedient to God. He protested against the delusion that one's duty to God can be fulfilled by obeying certain external commandments.[2] For Jesus, the demand of the God's liberating salvation is found in the reality of the reign of God.[3] All of Jesus' ethical instructions, too, must be interpreted against the indicative of the reign of God.[4]

Since the preacher cannot proclaim the imperative in isolation from indicative, literary interpretive methods are needed to establish the connection between the two. When one is preached without the other you have either legalism or libertinism. Allen Verhey comments,

> The indicative mood has an important priority and finality in the proclamation of the gospel, but the imperative is by no means merely an addendum to the indicative or even exactly an inference drawn from the indicative. Participation in Christ's cross and resurrection (the important priority of the indicative) and anticipation of the new age of God's unchallenged sovereignty (the important finality of the indicative) are constituted here and now by obedience to God's will (the imperative)."[5]

E. P. Sanders reveals that for Paul, "participatory language of being 'in the body of Christ' or being 'in Christ' are the themes Paul appeals to most often in paraenesis and polemic."[6]

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[1]McDonald, Kerygma, 72-87, reviews the use of paraenesis in the Old Testament, John the Baptist, and Jesus. He states, "The early Christians inherited a tradition of paraenesis from Jesus."

[2]Bultmann, Jesus, 17.

[3]Lohfink, Jesus, 59. See also James G. Williams, "Paraenesis, Ethics, and Excess: Matthew's Rhetoric in the Sermon on the Mount," Semeia 50 (1990):163-88.

[4]Ibid.

[5]Verhey, Great Reversal, 104-5.

[6]E. P. Sanders, Paul and Palestinian Judaism: A Comparison of Patterns of Religion (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1977): 256. See also, Furnish, Theology and Ethics, 91. Furnish goes on to describe this on

The fundamental feature of Pauline paraenesis is that it is governed by God's act of salvation in Christ. It explains the implications and consequences of faith in Christ.[1] "It elucidates the imperative implied in the indicative of God's action in Christ. It describes the way followed by those who truly know Jesus Christ as Lord."[2] McDonald lists the motifs that influence paraenesis the most. They are: (1) baptism ("putting on Christ," "rising and dying with Christ," and participation with Christ); (2) eschatology (summed up in the love of Christ and his parousia); and (3) the new life in Christ.[3]

Our righteousness will not be dependent upon our accomplishments. Our righteousness depends solely on God's grace.[4] Faith is our response to grace in obedience. The Pauline concept of grace is inclusive of the Pauline concept of obedience. Obedience, moral and ethical acts, does not bring righteousness; rather, these acts are the expression of our radical call.[5] Therefore, exhortations are more than a list of 'do's' and 'don'ts.' The demand in Scripture is the embodiment of the gospel in God's

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p. 107 and 110, as the impossibility of separating the "didache" and "kerygma" in Paul's terminology. They have and overlapping function. Therefore, the theological affirmations of Paul carry within themselves the moral imperative.

[1]McDonald, Keryma, 87.

[2]Ibid.

[3]Ibid., 88-89. McDonald expounds further on pages 90-100, describing different types and forms of paraenesis that operated in the early Christian teaching. He identifies traditional paraenetic topics, situational paraenetic topics, and ecclesiastical paraentetic topics. Many of these topic overlap.

[4]Sanders, Paul and Palestinian Judaism, denies the twin theses that first century Judaism was legalistic and that its soteriology was simply a matter of merits and demerits. Judaism recognized the gracious act of God in the gift of the covenant. Judaism saw human obedience as a matter of accepting the responsibilities of the covenant and not earning entry into the covenant. Obedience will maintain one's position but not earn that position. Therefore, Sanders concludes, ethics for Paul, is not so much a response to justification as it is because of the believers participation with Christ. See also, Paul, the Law, and the Jewish People (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1983).

[5]Joseph A. Fitzmyer, Paul and His Theology: A Brief Sketch (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1989): 99.

people. The church is therefore confronted by the gospel with relevant moral choices about life and relationships.[1] Commands call forth the presence of the Lord in his church. These exhortations provide a vivid description of what it means to live in Christ and to have Christ living in his people.[2] Therefore, Pauline paraenesis must be interpreted in light of Pauline theology for it is within this context that paraenesis functions.

Paul Scherer[3] understood well this connection between theology and ethics; between the indicative and the imperative; between the gift of the gospel and the demand of the gospel. Scherer began with the "offense" of the gospel. There is no gospel at all without understanding first this offense. The preacher must find that which offends.[4] The gospel cannot be distilled either by "whittling down the imperatives" due to the "thoroughly radical transactions. . . . The demand of the gospel cannot be separated from the comfort."[5] The gospel challenges and summons the Christian to "ceaseless participation in God's creative and redeeming act."[6] Therefore, the gospel comes to us both as "conflict" and "demand."[7] He states,

> . . . the gospel comes to us not just as history, but as conflict. Another, that it comes to us not alone as succor, but as the succor which is inseparable from demand, and in such a way that the demand itself is the succor. And still another, that therefore it comes to us not primarily as solace, an invitation to patient reliance upon God−faith is more than that! −but primarily as challenge, the summons to ceaseless participation in

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[1]Furnish, Theology and Ethics, 75.

[2]Greidanus, Modern Preacher, 332.

[3]Paul Scherer, The Word God Sent (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1965).

[4]Ibid., 75.

[5]Ibid., 76.

[6]Ibid.

[7]Ibid., 83.

> God's creative and redeeming act, as he shares with us his own dangerous life, moving day in and day out toward the accomplishment in us and through us of his eternal purpose.[1]

Scherer opposes many popular forms of preaching paraenesis. He notes that there are no substitutes for the disturbing gospel of a redeeming God.[2] This would include: morals or moralizing, exhortations, pastoral counseling en masse, positive thinking, pop-psychology, emotionalism, or self-help theology.

> The Christian religion is not a life-adjustment technique, which assumes that both the questions and answers are to be found in the situation itself. It is not a situation-overcoming technique, which assumes that the questions posed by the situation are resolved in the answers provided by the Christian faith. If is not a correlating-technique, which assumes that for any given situation, with the questions it puts, the primary significance of the faith consists in its answering quality. Christianity is not a technique at all. The situation becomes for faith the occasion for both question and answer−the questions which are God's questions, and the answers which lie in the indicatives of his gospel and in the imperatives of his will for our lives. On other terms can it be profoundly understood that Christianity is intended to create situations which were not there before.[3]

Flexibility is the key when imitating the form of the text. Commanding alone, independent of the indicative of Scripture, will abuse the language event and will tend toward legalism. Indicative alone, will also violate the nature of the radical gospel. One legalistic sermon is too much, and a steady diet of such will lead to shallow and unhealthy congregations. There is not enough paraenesis in the world to make one good enough or to make one holy. Holiness is rooted in the mercies of God, the indicative of the gospel. Only the grace of God can preserve such preaching from shattering the

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[1]Ibid., 76.

[2]Ibid., 71.

[3]Ibid., 88.

gospel itself. Although, the immediate pericope might seem to be absent of theological content, the wider context will always reveal the power of the Christ event.

The following three examples demonstrate the possibility of locating the connection between theology and paraenesis. Philippians 4:4-9 is a favorite paraenetic section filled with preaching treasures. The text contains five imperatives, namely, "rejoice," "do not be anxious," "present," "think," and "put." Each of these exhortations has provided rich soil for numerous sermons. The text is controlled by the indicative of verse 5, "The Lord is near." The modifying phrases of each imperative also are rooted in God. The pericope concludes, "And the God of peace will be with you" bringing closure to the paragraph. The themes of each of these imperatives do not originate in this pericope. Each will have antecedents earlier in the letter. Although these themes find an imperitival expression here, they are each rooted in earlier indicative sections.[1] The theology is the tie that binds this pericope together and therefore influences the theme of the sermon.

The paraenetic section in Ephesians is well documented. Although it is often overemphasized,[2] the indicative of Ephesians seems clearly separated from the imperative. It is seen that only one imperative verb is found in chapters 1-3, namely, 2:11 (mnemoneuete). There are over forty in the rest of the letter. One example is the imperative in verse 18, "Be filled with the Spirit" (plerousthe). Although some are

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[1]E.g., to consider, have this mind, or think occurs in various forms around fifteen times in the letter. Chapter 2 clearly roots the thinking of the Philippians in their own experience of being "united with Christ" and imitating the example of Christ who "did not consider" himself more highly than he ought. Chapter 3 gives the example of Paul considering his relationship with Christ of paramount importance compared to all else. "All of us who are mature should take such a view of things" (3:15).

[2]Furnish, Theology and Ethics, 68-69, notes, paraenesis is interwoven into the total context of the letters. Paraenesis is expressed in a variety of ways throughout each letter. Therefore, Pauline letters should not be neatly divided into doctrinal and ethical sections.

tempted to rummage in the book of Acts for what it means to "be filled with the Spirit," the immediate context must be kept in view. Such consideration will prevent early exodus to Acts. A grammatical analysis of the text reveals that this imperative is modified by five participles that describe what it means to be filled with the Spirit. These participles are, "speaking," "singing," "making," "giving," and "submitting."[1] This small section is part of a whole paraenetic section that must be viewed as a whole modified by the theme "walk a life worthy of the calling you have received" (Eph 4:1). The theme of "walking" is repeated seven times in the letter, five of which are in the paraenesis just prior to this imperative. It is inseparable from the "calling" proclaimed in the indicative of the earlier chapters.

Finally, an example from the vice list in 2 Corinthians 12:20-21 reveals the connection between the paraenesis of Paul and his earlier situational concerns. This vice list deals with divisive behavior (bickering, pettiness, arrogance, etc.), antisocial acts. (anger, selfishness, slander, gossip, etc.), and sexual immorality. All of these behaviors characterize Corinthian behavior mentioned elsewhere. The historical context in this case connects what otherwise would be seemingly isolated exhortations.

The preacher must know the purpose of using paraenesis. First, how is the author using paraenesis in this text? Furthermore, how do I intend to use paraenesis in this sermon for these people? Is the sermon design to bring about social order by encouraging a continuation of behaviors and attitudes already accepted by the community? Or is this sermon designed to bring about a rejection of behaviors or attitudes that need casting aside by the community? The overriding purpose is to provide guidance for the moral life of the community.

[1]The final participle also functions as a verb for the next section.

The text and the sermon must be addressing analogous situations. In the letters of Paul, that will usually mean a pastoral concern. In paraenesis, that will usually involve a socialization function. If the selected text does not address the local concern, then another text can be chosen or another life situation addressed. The sermon must maintain the same function as the text was originally intended. Confidence in making connections between then and now can be garnered by remembering that the church is a continuation of God's activity among his people. Also, the letters of Paul speak to many of the same concerns with immediacy that affect the church today. The task of the preacher will be to maintain relevant and concrete applications so that people's lives can be affected by the truth in the text.

The paraenetic sermon may take various forms. The logic of the text may dictate the logic of the sermon or the preacher may adapt the arrangement of materials to meet specific needs. However, each sermon should contain the following elements:[1] (1) Use of traditional material and familiar maxims that are generally applicable, clear, vivid, memorable, and that directly address the congregational situation. Authority will arise naturally by use of these features. Much of the power of the original language event will be carried by these sayings.[2] (2) A theme that unites the section together in a coherent whole. Often, in paraenetic sections of the New Testament, the theme of the text can serve as the theme of the sermon. (3) Examples of the actions or attitudes that are to be commended or rejected. (4) Motivational clause rooted in both eschatology and christology. (5) Explanations of the maxims. (6) A repeating of the maxim to form an

[1]Although some elements are not found in every passage and are optional in their employment in the sermon, the preacher will want to be aware of why they are omitted.

[2]One possible source for maxims today is found in the hymnal. Much of this literature speaks not only with authority but also to the heart.

inclusio. These elements taken as a whole will have an explicit connection to the kerygma.

Paraeneses are not an exhaustive list or cataloguing of Christian moral responsibilities. They primary serve as representative lists that address the immediate context. In reality, there is no limit to the gospel's demands. There is neither a limit to the good by one transformed by the gospel nor the evil that is possible by one who is not.[1] The preacher may add to a paraenetic section another exhortation from Scripture that may be appropriate for this particular setting. However, caution needs to be exercised so that neither the delicate balance between indicative and imperative nor the literary structure is disturbed in such a way that the language event is robbed of its power.

Two possible extremes are prevalent in pulpits. First, many exhortations are isolated from their original contexts and preached as topical admonitions. If the paraenetic section contained seven separate admonitions, the preacher would preach seven separate sermons. Furthermore, the preacher may be tempted to preach each admonition in the same sermon, like unrelated pearls on a string. This sermon would resemble a rapid fire propositional machine gun. "Line 'em up. Shoot 'em dead." Instead, the balance between the "didache" and "kerygma" needs to be maintained. The sermon must have a theological unity based upon God's saving work in Jesus Christ.

In summary, the paraenetic sermon, therefore, must begin with theological, literary, and historical exegesis so that the original language event can be properly understood. The primary theological intent of a letter must control how one looks at

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[1]Furnish, Theology and Ethics, 75. He notes Gal 5:19 and Rom 1:32 that indicate the lists are endless. Furnish goes on to describe the vice lists, stating on p. 76 that of the six vice lists, there are forty-two terms of which thirty-nine are distinct. None of the terms appear in all six lists. Twenty-five appear only once. And on p. 86, he notes twenty terms used for virtues, sixteen of which are distinct.

individual passages within the letter. This exegetical step should bring coherence and power to the message. The preacher needs to be sympathetic to original theological intent for the community of faith then so that faithful correspondence between then and now will be maintained. Otherwise, the preacher may need to be doing something else besides preaching. Second, the preacher will explore analogous situations that are present in the local community of faith. It is from the community that the preacher rises to proclaim the message to the community. Although the text may address several competing needs, there is always another Sunday to preach another sermon. Therefore, a single theme or focus should be chosen from the text for each sermon as it addresses a single issue. Finally, the preacher will construct a sermon that will imitate the function of that original language event. For this sermon to be called a paraenetic sermon, it will contain the elements described above.[1]

[1]For detailed descriptions on preaching epistles see, Greidanus, Modern Preacher, 323-36;and Long, Preaching Literary Forms, 107-26.

CHAPTER IV

EXEGESIS OF ROMANS 12:9-21

"Parakalõ oun hymas, adelphoi, dia ton oiktirmõn tou Theou, ..." *I appeal to you therefore, brothers, on account of the mercies of God, ...* Paul's appeal to practical matters in the paraenesis of Romans 12:1-15:13 is based upon his previous discussion in chapters 1-11. These are the instructions of how this newly redefined people of God should live. These exhortations are consequences of Paul's doctrine "the righteous will live by faith" (1:17).

It is not Paul's intent to lay down a comprehensive ethical system for all of Christianity. If that were the case, he failed. There are too many issues not addressed in Romans for this to be true. These appeals presuppose that those addressed have been baptized into Christ and belong to him (Rom 6:1ff); and are faced with specific ethical issues and conflicts that need to be addressed in light of their relationship with Christ.[1] These ethical imperatives follow from the indicative and participate with the indicative to accomplish God's eschatological future.[2] When Christians act in accordance with the will of God, then they demonstrate the truth of the indicative. Paul's vision for their future rests on hope but also depends upon their participation to actualize that hope.

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[1]Furnish, Theology and Ethics, 91.

[2]The eschatological dimension is emphasized in the paraenetic section in 13:11-14 and also functions as the motivation of the concluding verses of the section in 15:7-13.

Paul's purpose for writing Romans has been vigorously debated.[1] Paul had not visited Rome. He states his desire to come and visit as a means of introducing himself and his mission (Rom 1:10-15; 15:22-29). He desired Rome to be the launching pad for a new mission to Spain.

Although the Roman church was a community with Jewish roots, it also included Gentile converts.[2] When the decree of Claudius in 49 C. E. expelled the Jews from the city, the Gentile members of the community found themselves in the majority. When Jewish Christians trickled back into Rome after permission was granted in 54 C. E., they found a Gentile congregation that tended to discount the importance of their Jewish heritage. Tensions grew, leading to separate house churches split along racial lines. The theological issue: What is the place of Israel in a mixed community of Jewish and Gentile Christians?

David Aune demonstrates how Romans is a logos protreptikos or "speech of exhortation,"—a letter intended to convince others of a particular lifestyle.[3] This

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[1]See Karl P. Dornfield, The Romans Debate (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1991). He concludes on p. lxix, "consensus has been reached that Romans is addressed to the Christian community of Rome which finds itself in a particular historical situation." My own understanding of the occassion that prompted Paul to write generally corresponds with Daniel Patte, Paul's Faith and the Power of the Gospel: A Structural Introduction to the Pauline Letters (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983): 44-50; Hans-Werner Bartsch, "The Historical Situation of Romans," Encounter 33 (Autumn 1972): 329-39; John Wood, "The Purpose of Romans" The Evangelical Quarterly 40 (October-December 1968): 211-18; and Jeffrey A. Crafton, "Paul's Rhetorical Vision and the Purpose of Romans: Toward a New Understanding" Novum Testamentum 32 (October 1990): 317-39. Some commentators who give exposition of the Christian virtues without particular regard to a situation in Rome are: Martin Luther, Lectures on Romans, Library of Christian Classics, 15 (London: SCM Press, 1961): 320; A. Nygren, Commentary on Romans (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983): 415; Sanders, Paul and the Law, 31; C. K. Barrett, The Epistle to the Romans, Harper's New Testament Commentaries (New York: Harper & Row, 1957); and F. F. Bruce, Romans, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1963).

[2]See Wolfgang Wiefel, "The Jewish Community in Ancient Rome and the Origins of Roman Christianity," in The Romans Debate, 100-119.

[3]Aune, "Romans," 91. His thesis is supported by Stowers, Letters, 114. Aune qualifies this classification in Literary Environment, 219, stating, "Romans is primarily epideictic in intention. . . . While Paul's presentation of his gospel in Romans 1-11 is epideictic in its present context, in the prior setting of his ministry of preaching and teaching it was protreptic."

identification of the letter's genre is useful for understanding how the paraenesis functions for Paul, namely, he is explaining the particulars of the abstract implications of the gospel in terms of the duties and obligations of Christians living in community.[1]

Paul's quotation of Habakkuk 2:4, "The righteous will live by faith," can easily be translated "The righteous by faith will live." To know which way Paul intended the phrase to be taken is determined by the context of Paul's argument. Paul will express both ways of translating the verse as truths in the letter. The dual theme of the letter is expressed by the one phrase. The righteous have new life in Christ because of their faith; and the righteous will proceed to live in accordance to their faith.

Paul's "debt," "eagerness," and being "not ashamed" to preach the gospel revealed God's righteousness and wrath (1:17-18). Preaching revealed God's own moral integrity. Paul preached the righteousness of God is ours by faith (1:17), and are justified freely from his wrath by this same faith that responds to the gospel (3:22-24; 5:1). The conclusion in chapter 3 is a climax to the heart and soul of Paul's gospel.

Romans 6 connects to Romans 12 in theme more so than any other passage in the letter. Our baptism into the death of Jesus and our resurrection to walk in a new life (6:4-10); is the basis for all the actions in the following pericope (6:11ff).[2] Therefore (oun 6:12), based on what has already taken place in baptism, the righteousness of God must be realized in the life of the believer. Due to our participation with Christ, our lives are to be offered (sacrificial language), not to sin, but to God as "instruments of righteousness"

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[1]Aune, "Romans," 119.

[2]Cruz, Christological Motivations, 165. For an extended discussion of baptism, see pp. 155-69. He contends, on p. 438, that the most fundamental motive for Paul is our dying and rising with Christ (Rom 6:4-10). It is the motive for the whole of Christian paraenesis.

(6:13). Our "offering" in 12:1 is clearly connected to and expounds upon what it means to respond to God's mercy.

Romans 8:2-10 describes the indwelling Spirit. The Spirit lives in us as we live between the times. Although we already possess the new life of Christ, it has not yet been fully realized. As we live in the world, the indwelling Spirit enables us to live out the implications of the gospel in the way we live and think.

The tension between Jew and Gentile that has created division and a superiority complex centers around the doctrine of Israel's place in God's plan. Justification by faith is the basis on which Paul argues for the equality of Jews and Gentiles. Does this mean that God's promises to the Jews are void? Not at all. Paul defends God in Romans 9-11 demonstrating that both Jew and Gentile belong together and are integral to God's plan of salvation. Paul therefore unifies the concepts of equality of all in the gospel and the priority of the Jews. Paul concludes with the doctrine of God's mercy for all (Rom 11:28-32), which is beyond analysis (Rom 11:33-36).

Romans 12:1-2 reiterate, in the imperative mood, what it means to receive by faith the revealing of God's righteousness (1:16-17). Oun functions as a connection immediately to God's mercy (Rom 11:30-32),[1] but also to the entire argument Paul has been making in Romans. With the words, "Therefore, I urge you, . . ." Paul's exhortations connect with the previous teachings.[2] The "mercies of God" are not limited

[1]John Piper, 'Love Your Enemies' (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979): 103, gives the parallel relationship of the appeal in 15:30 ("love of the Spirit" and "the Lord Jesus Christ") to 5:5, 8. Paul again connects appeal to earlier theological discussion.

[2]C. E. B. Cranfield, Romans, vol. 2, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1975): 596.

only to chapters 9-11.[3] Oun indicates that Paul presupposes the theological assertions made previously in the entire letter. However, these exhortations also supply a further explication of what the gospel is and how it works as God's power for salvation.[2] Mercy is the keynote of chapters 9-11 as Paul reaches his climax of his entire teaching on the gospel of God's righteousness (1:17).[3]

The parakalõ functions to introduce the real concern of the letter.[4] It is one of Paul's stronger words to exhort the believers to respond. The action called for by the parakalõ will have a clear connection with the theology of the letter.

Cruz identifies the following Christological motivations in the paraenetic sections of the letter for the Christian imperatives: (1) The faithful being with Christ (6:4-10); (2) The words of Christ (13:8b, 9, 10b−the love command); (3) The nearness of the hour of salvation (13:11-12); (4) Our belonging to the Lord (14:7-8); (5) Christ's death and

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[1]Furnish, Theology and Ethics, 101. Furnish notes on p. 102, the themes and vocabulary of Romans 12 correspond throughout the letter and especially chapter 1. Parsons, "Being Precedes Act," 116, states, "Paul has shown previously God's character in his saving work−closely aligned to the idea of 'mercy': kindness (2:4); patience (9:22; 11:22) Love (5:5; 8:35, 39) and grace (1:7; 3:24; 4:16; 5:2, 20, 21; 6:1, 14, 15, 17; 11:5, 5), for example, and although the words oiktirein, eleos and eleein are absent from chapters 1-10 the mercy of God is never far from Paul's mind."

[2]Furnish, Theology and Ethics, 106.

[3]Parsons, "Being Precedes Act," 116.

[4]Romans contains two parakalõ formulas (Rom 15:30-32). Both are connected to the thanksgiving in Romans 1:8-15. George Smiga, "Romans 12:1-2 and 15:30-32 and the Occasion of the Letter to the Romans" Catholic Biblical Quarterly 53 (April 1991): 257-73, summarizes C. J. Bjerkelund article, "Parakalõ: Form, Funktion, und Sinn der parakalo-Satze in der paulinischen Briefen" Bibliotheca Theologica Norvegica 1 (1967). The form is as follows: (1) parakalõ in the 1st pers. sing.; (2) a small conjunction, oun or de; (3) the object in the 2nd pers. pl., hymas, usually with adelphoi; (4) a prepositional phrase beginning with dia and the genitive; (5) the actual request in one of three forms: the infinitive construction, an imperative, or a hina clause. Both text in Romans exhibits the full parakalõ form. Although Bjerkelund dismisses Romans 12:1-2 due to a lack of connection with the thanksgiving, Smiga makes the connection unmistakable. The thanksgiving contains two hina clauses indicating two purpposes for Paul's coming, namely, mutual encouragement (1:11-12), and to bear fruit among them (1:13). This conclusion is supported by Robert Funk, "The Apostolic Presence: Paul" Parables and Presence (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1982): 94.

resurrection (14:7-9, 15); (6) Christ not pleasing himself (15:3); (7) Christ welcoming all (15:7b); and (8) An appeal by the Lord Jesus (15:30).[1]

12:1 orients the entire text for the individual and the community. With one phrase, Paul has set the entire paraenesis within a theological framework: the theme of "reasonable service."[2] Our sacrifice is called logikên latreian (logical service) and is related to Paul's service (1:9).[3] Our self-sacrifice is an appropriate response to God's mercy.

The sacrificial language of 12:1 is also connected to 1:7a. Our election by God, our calling to be saints (a holy people), and our new relationship with God based upon righteousness by faith has implications of how we define this service. Saints are to be priests who offer sacrifices. In light of the gospel, saints will offer themselves as the sacrifice.[4] "This is what happens when we offer ourselves as living sacrifices (12:1). It brings about a cross-like situation. But we can do so with trust and hope that God will intervene in a resurrection-like manifestation so as to make us truly Christ-like for this person."[5]

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[1]Cruz, Christological Motives, 429.

[2]Ernst Käemann, New Testament Questions of Today (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1969): 189.

[3]The choice of "rational" or "logical" as the translation for logikos is based upon its connection with nous in 12:2. Sacrifice was the center of temple worship. Every day of Paul's life, sacrifices were made in the temple for atonement. The sacrifice is a consecrated gift to God and a constant reminder of the gulf between God and humanity. The sacrifice of the Christian is understood in light of Christ's own sacrifice that provided justification (Rom 3:23-25). For detailed background on the concept of sacrifice see, Gerhard von Rad, "The Sacrifices," Old Testament Theology (2 vol.; New York: Harper & Row, 1962): 1:250-61. See also, Calvin J. Roetzel, "Sacrifice in Romans 12-15" Word and World 6 (Fall 1986): 410-19.

[4]Patte, Paul's Faith, 247. Kasemann, Questions, 189, also connects "spiritual worship" as a description of what it means to stand under the righteousness of God.

[5]Daniel Patte, Preaching Paul (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984): 79-80.

This consecration of our lives will be seen as we separate ourselves from the world for service. Transformation involves the whole person. The totality of God's gift envisions the totality of God's demand. Obedience involves the whole person and cannot be sub-divided into individual acts. Particular instructions demonstrate the concreteness of Paul's ethic in a variety of situations.

Social groups, cultural norms, institutions, and former traditions all have the power to mold individual behavior.[1] Many new converts (both Jewish and Gentile) desire to hold onto previously held patterns of behavior and thought. Through faith in the gospel, conversion occurred. Yet the process of socialization into a new community proved difficult. The imperative not to conform recognizes the human responsibility to resist old and/or outside pressures that countered the gospel. As members of a new community, Christians will have a new identity expressed in their daily living. The exhortations of 12:9-21 will reflect both the negative "do not conform" and the positive "be transformed."

Since our minds have been renewed for the discernment of God's good will, our moral identity will also be shaped. There is no dualism here between the mind and body. "Renewal of mind" is bound with "presenting the body." The good will of God that is accomplished by God's renewing of our minds gives us the discernment to do good.[2] Each situation, therefore, will be assessed in light of our past participation with Christ

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[1]James D. G. Dunn, Romans 9-16, Word Biblical Commentary 38b (Dallas, TX: Word Book Publisher, 1988): 712.

[2]Structurally, God's good will is connected to three strategic verses in Paul's admonitions, namely, 12:9b, 17, and 21. Later analysis will highlight the key position these three antithetical parallel phrases play in unifying the whole text as a rhetorical refrain.

and his cross and the coming eschaton. This new discernment is possible due to our participation in the Christ event.

Our relationship with God cannot be viewed in isolation from the community (12:3-8). The Christian community will function as a corporate unity. Instruction in appropriate behavior was assuredly part of the process of resocialization that accompanied baptism.[1] Cruz indicates that the community as the body of Christ is one of Paul's primary motivations for his exhortations.[2] Not only is the attitude transformed in how we view ourselves, but also how we view others in that same body. The controlling concrete admonition directed to the community's body life is, "Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought. . . ." It is directly related to the Jewish-Gentile tension. Both groups were taking pride by claiming favored status (2:17-20; 3:27; 11:18-20).

The seven different gifts in the community all function for the purpose of edification.[3] Therefore, within this redefined community, God's righteousness and mercy will continue to find concrete expression. That will be seen as the body imagery of this section gives way to the family imagery seen in phileo word group of the next section.

The paraenesis found in 12:9-21 is integrally connected in the larger literary flow of Paul's argument. The admonitions of 12:9-13 expound upon the internal relations within the body. 12:17-21 begins Paul's discussion about external relations with the world found in 13:1-7. The middle verses of 12:14-16 reflect both backward and gaze forward. Many of these thoughts are integrated in Paul's thinking and cannot be easily

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[1]Meeks, First Urban Christians, 139.

[2]Cruz, Christological Motives, 138, 147-48.

[3]Ibid., 151.

separated in terms of insider/outsider. Christians at Rome especially found that the insider was often acting as the enemy.

This paraenetic section corresponds closely to the form of paraenesis found in the Hellenistic world. Many of the patterns described in chapter II are found in 12:9-21. Paul, a person who has demonstrated his familiarity with the whole Hellenistic thought world, often modified forms and concepts from his cultural environment. Although a "Hebrew of Hebrews" and a "Pharisee" who was probably raised in an orthodox home, Paul was still a Diaspora Jew from Tarsus and fully conversant with Greek culture.

Walter Wilson connects Romans 12 structurally with the Hellenistic form. 12:1-2 is the programmatic section. 12:3-8 is the descriptive section. 12:9-21 is the prescriptive section.[1] The paraenetic form of the prescriptive section of 12:9-21 is structured as follows: (1) thematic statement (12:9a); (2) protreptic maxim (12:9b); (3) lists of consequences (12:10-13); (4) central statement (12:14); (5) explanatory admonitions (12:15-20); (6) summarizing maxim (12:21).[2]

Formally, paraenesis relied upon earlier traditions.[3] Paul, too, relied upon a well-defined tradition that provided precedents for his ethical instructions. He "filtered these

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[1]Wilson, Love Without Pretense, 128-142.

[2]Ibid., 143.

[3]It is not the purpose of this exegetical section to find the earlier antecedents in Hellenistic sources, Rabbinic Judaism, or a Jesus tradition to the paraenesis found in this pericope. The question of concern here is, how did Paul use that tradition as he adapted it for his own intent. See p. 12n2. Daube, Rabbinic Judaism, 102, states, "In the NT paraenesis 'the most probable explanation of these strange participles . . . is that they are literally taken over from the Hebrew. . . . They appear not in basic injunctions like the prohibition against murder, but in directions as to the proper behavior of members of the new Christian society. . . . Everything points to the existence of early Christian codes of duties in Hebrew, from which the participles of the correct practice crept into the Greek epistles." Allison, "Pauline Epistles," 20, summarizes the following parallels with Q. Rom 12:14 // Luke 6:28 and Mt 5:44; Rom 12:17 // Luke 6:27-36 and Mt 5:38-48; and Rom 12:21 // Luke 6:27-36 and Mt 5:8-48. Piper, 'Love Your Enemies', 112, summarizes the following OT parallels: Rom 12:17b // Prov 3:4; Rom 12:18 // Ps 33:15 LXX or 34:15; Rom 12:19a // Lev 19:18; Rom 12:19b // Deut 32:35; and Rom 12:20 // Prov. 25:21f. He notes that Paul does not mechanically quote these texts but uses an adaptation of them to suit his aims.

traditions through his interpretation of the event of God's act in Christ, and the claim God makes on the believer."[1] He selectively used these sources with christological discernment to suit his interests, perspectives, and objectives.[2]

Winsome Munro[3] is one who finds verbal disarray in Romans 12-13. She rearranges the text omitting phrases that she deduces do not fit into an original Pauline stratum. Her conclusions are based upon a preconceived notion of Pauline style that has no text tradition to support it. There is no basis to assume a redactor's hand in this section either on stylistic or theological grounds. Paul, however, was using the common style of paraenetic literature. The new text Munro proposes as original is more poetic, yet her argument is unconvincing.

It is preferred that the exegete deal with the text at hand since there is no variant to offer other reasonable alternatives. There have been several more convincing analyses of the pericope that find both unified structure and theology. 12:10-13 is loosely constructed structurally yet held together by repetition, parallelism, and theme. J. D. G. Dunn concludes that there are rhetorical parallels of ten clauses in 12:10-13 that form a 2, 3, 3, 2 pattern.[4] Cranfield also recognizes structural unity by noting there are five pairs of ten admonitions.[5] Structural unity is also seen verbally: poneros and kakos (9, 17, 21) parallel agathos and kalos (9, 17, 21). The theme of love is woven through the section by

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[1]Furnish, Theology and Ethics, 43.

[2]Ibid., 81.

[3]Winsome Munro, Authority in Paul and Peter: The Identification of a Pastoral Stratum in the Pauline Corpus and 1 Peter, Society For New Testament Studies Monograph Series 45 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press): 56-67.

[4]Dunn, Romans, 738.

[5]Cranfield, Romans, 2:631-40. See David A. Black, "The Pauline Love Command: Structure, Style, and Ethics in Romans 12.9-21" Filologia Neotestamentarial (1989): 5-9.

the use of agapê, philadelphia, philostorgos, and philoxenia (9, 10, 13). The entire section is seen to be a literary unit when it is recognized that 12:21 functions as an inclusio with 12:9b. All work to elaborate the distinctive characteristics of love (12:9a). Seen in this way, the admonitions have a climactic step-ladder effect that leads to the central statement at 12:14 where the first finite verb is found.[1] This central verse provides both a climax and resolution to the tension found in relationships at Rome.

The admonitions that follow contribute to the themes of retaliation (12:17-19a, 15, 20), fear of the Lord (12:19b), and humility (12:16).[2] They are structured together by two ring compositions, one inside the other, seen in the chart below:

v. 14	A	Return evil with good
v. 15	B	Respond to the needs of others
v. 16	C	Know your place and be humble
vv. 17-19a	D	Live at peace with all people
v. 19b-c	C'	Leave vengeance to God
v. 20	B'	Respond to the needs of enemies
v. 21	A'	Overcome evil with good
v. 17a	E	"Never repaying evil for evil,
v. 17b	F	taking thought for what is good
	G	before all men;
v. 18a	H	If possible, so far as it depends on you
v. 18b	G'	with all men
	F'	living at peace;
v. 19a	E'	not taking your own revenge,"[3]

12:14 forms an antithetical construction with 12:21. The central point in the chiasim is 12:18a, "If possible, so far as it depend on you." This will become the focal point of the

[1]Wilson, Love Without Pretense, 144.

[2]Ibid., 173. Wilson follows the tradition in naming non-violence as the major theme. However, retaliation is closer to the concept being taught by Paul and the Jesus tradition.

[3]Ibid., 176.

example sermon that follows. This aspect of peacemaking is essential in the Roman situation and will be analogous to the present congregation the following sermon is designed to address.[1]

These exhortations function as concrete commandments that define what the will of God is. The claim of God confronts the Christians' life and relationships as they make choices in the world.[2] Love stands programmatically at the beginning of this series of admonitions.[3] The admonitions therefore are negative polemics against behavior that interferes with love and positive expressions of love.

Furnish indicates the wide variety of imperatives that are in this section of paraenesis. He finds an imperatival infinitive in 12:15; imperatival adjectives in 12:10-11; and imperatival participles throughout the section.[4] He does not limit the variety of Paul's usage of the imperative here but also includes ironic imperatives, narratives that function imperatively, hortatory narratives, benedictions with imperatival force.[5]

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[1]Individual exegesis of each phrase is beyond the scope of this paper. It is the presupposition of the exegete, based upon earlier discussion, each admonition has direct relationship with the immediate social context at Rome. Any of the cited references provide adequate explanations of the meaning of the content. C. E. B. Cranfield, Romans: A Shorter Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1985) does not connect the individual exhortations to any particular situation at Rome, yet his remarks on each verse I found the most practical in relating Paul's advice to today's audience. The exegesis of this paper is designed to discuss function and structure only.

[2]Furnish, Theology and Ethics, 74-75.

[3]This conclusion is based upon an understanding of Paul's ethic presented elsewhere in his writings. The immediate context also confirms this conclusion (Rom 13:8-10; 14:15).

[4]Furnish, Theology and Ethics, 92.

[5]Ibid., 92, 97. On pp. 68-69 Furnish notes how the imperative is interwoven into the total context of his letters. Paul does not confine the imperative to paraenetic sections, but expressed it in a variety of ways throughout each letter.

The exhortation to the Christians on their relationship with outsiders has its connection to Jesus' teaching on enemy love found in Matthew 5 and Luke 6.[1] This text becomes Paul's longest explanation in all his writings about relationships with outsiders. Romans 5 clearly teaches that we too were God's enemies when he demonstrated his love toward us in Jesus. Paul now exhorts us to let our enemies experience what we experienced when we were God's enemies.[2]

This is the first time human love is expressed in Romans; however, love is seen as an expression of divine love in 5:5, 8; 8:35, 39; 15:30. Yet, this love should not be compartmentalized into groups like: christians, outsiders, enemies, and God. The exhortation to love needs to be viewed holistically in all situations, even the most demanding ones; otherwise it is not love at all.[3]

> Although the individual admonitions in 12.9-21 are varied and more-or-less detachable, and the logical connection from one exhortation to the next can be somewhat loose or abrupt, all these ideas and injunctions are meant to be understood together and in light of one another, contributing to a single theme, namely, Paul's appeal to the Romans to love without pretense.[4]

A number of themes could be developed from Romans 12 for preaching. Once the indicative is well established with a community, more emphasis can be placed upon individual admonitions. Sometimes, it may serve the preacher well to only develop one of the admonitions, such as, hospitality (13b). Yet, even then, the theology of Romans

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[1]Lohfink, Jesus, 113-14. Even though Paul's teaching corresponds with Jesus' teachings, Lohfink qualifies Paul's understanding of love as being only for the community and not outsiders. This ignores 12:9 as the maxim that controls the entire section. The obvious teaching of Jesus to which Paul appeals is in complete agreement. This conclusion is supported by the inclusio of the theme love in 13:8-10. To distill out 12:17-13:7 as not part of the love command does injustice to the obvious flow of the text.

[2]Piper, 'Love Your Enemies', 104.

[3]Wilson, Love Without Pretense, 199.

[4]Ibid., 198.

must be woven into the sermon providing the christological motivation for the exhortation. The sermon ought to connect the need for Christians at Rome to practice "stranger love" with those they disdain and the modern need to see hospitality as a means of expressing God's hospitality to us. This sermon, therefore, moves beyond a "Suzie Homemaker" moralism.

The following sermon develops the indicative fully. If the sermon was in a longer series, *lectio continua,* a lesser development would be desirable. Even then, the indicative will be woven in each sermon in such a way that God's grace in Christ dominates. Romans 5 was chosen to parallel the text so that the indicative will be explicit in this sermon. The temptation with a single sermon is to be too inclusive of the rich material for preaching waiting in Romans.

I chose the theme of peacemaking as the central theme. The theme of peacemaking as a response to God's mercy and representative of the self-sacrificial love prescribed in the text will find concrete expression by elaborating some of the other more specific admonitions to relevant particular instances within the local setting. Even though this sermon will focus on application of one of the exhortations, the unity of the whole pericope will be respected.

CHAPTER V

MOVING FROM TEXT TO SERMON

The movement of this sermon is plotted as follows: *The hatred between enemies knows no limits. But the distinctions of who is our enemy is sometimes blurred, for our enemy is just like us. And we are God's enemies. But God's mercy established peace. That mercy is displayed through us when we initiate peace with others. Therefore, make your love real by living at peace with others.*

Peace Initiators

> *Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honor one another above yourselves. Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord. Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. Share with God's people who are in need. Practice hospitality. Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn. Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited. Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everybody. If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. Do not take revenge, my friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: 'It is mine to avenge; I will repay," says the Lord. On the contrary: 'If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head.' Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.* (Romans 12:9-21)

My close friend in college served as a missionary in Yugoslavia before the fall of the Iron Curtain. He left behind a small group of Christians in Saravejo that enjoyed close fellowship and relative freedom to practice their faith without outside interference. When the Iron Curtain fell, you knew in your heart that the opportunity for the spread of the gospel

was greater than ever. For the most part, that hope has been realized. Yet, the red hand of oppression that had also silenced bitter enemies was now no longer enforcing peace. Once the military peace was removed, ancient ethnic hatreds once again lashed out in violence. The savage siege of Saravejo shocked our modern sensitivities. Humanity knows no limits to its hatred after battle lines have been drawn between enemies. God becomes the first draftee; Truth the first casualty.

On another part of our great world, ancient rivals talk peace. The PLO and Israel are finally sitting down at the peace table. Many factions of the Palestinians, though, oppose this effort. By terrorism they hope to thwart these initiatives. Our sympathies for our allies in Israel were horrified just a few months back when it was an American born Israelite doctor who stormed into a Mosque massacring innocent worshippers. It will take a miracle to bring about peace between these ancient enemies in the Middle East.[1] God becomes the first draftee; Truth the first casualty.

Looking back, I wonder if the assignment was too heavy for a sophomore in High School. Reading, All Quiet On the Western Front, did not fit my idea of John Wayne war movies. The cruel realties of war from an insiders perspective were sobering. Battle lines become blurry between enemies and allies. Both claim God to be on their side. In an introductory remark about the book, the author states,

> This book is to be neither an accusation nor a confession, and least of all an adventure, for death is not an adventure to those who stand face to face with it. It will try simply to tell of a generation of men who, even though they may have escaped its shells, were destroyed by the war.[2]

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[1]This introduction is designed to help the audience image the reality of the term "enemy." It is this term used by Paul that I will demonstrate the need for God's mercy. This sermon will not begin with the immediate text but will establish the indicative of the context that gave rise to Paul's words in Romans 12.

[2]Erich Maria Remarque, All Quiet On the Western Front, trans. A. W. Wheen (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1929): n.p.

The book speaks about a series of friends who came and died. When recalling about their instructors in basic training, our hero states,

> The idea of authority, which they represented, was associated in our minds with a greater insight and a manlier wisdom. But the first death we saw shattered this belief. . . . The first bombardment showed us our mistake, and under it the world as they had taught it to us broke into pieces. While they continued to write and talk, we saw the wounded and dying. While they taught that duty to one's country is the greatest thing, we already knew that death-throes are stronger. . . . We loved our country as much as they; we went courageously into every action; . . .[1]

And later, recounting how even death of a friend has become a matter of pragmatic indifference, our hero states,

> Muller is dead. Someone shot him point blank. . . in the stomach. He lived for half an hour, quite conscious, and in terrible pain. Before he died he handed over his pocketbook to me, and bequeathed me his boots—the same that he once inherited from Kemmerick. I wear them for they fit me quite well. After me Tjaden will get them, I have promised them to him. We have been able to bury Muller, but he is not likely to remain long undisturbed. Our lines are falling back. There are too many fresh English and American regiments over there. There's too much corned beef and white wheaten bread. Too many new guns. Too many aeorplanes.[2] . . . We are forlorn like children, and experienced like old men, we are crude and sorrowful and superficial--I believe we are lost.[3]

All Quiet On the Western Front is unusual for Americans because it presents W.W.I from the German perspective. Not politically, but humanly. It speaks about homes, dreams, mothers, lovers, and their loss. Even our hero dies on a day when the only thing carried by the news wires was, "All Quiet On the Western Front." Just a statistic. And another mother longs to embrace a son who will never come home.

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[1]Ibid., 11-12.

[2]Ibid., 276-277.

[3]Ibid., 123

It is still uncomfortable to think about the enemy as not being too much different from yourself. For your enemy is human too.[1] Have you seen the movie Schindler's List? In the midst of eleven million crucifixions, one Nazi industrialist sacrifices all to save a handful of Polish Jews from concentration camps. The Japanese could have used a Nazi like that in the American concentration camps. Which concentration camp did God favor? It is uncomfortable to think about the enemy as not being too much different from yourself.

War zones abound. They abound on Elm Street, behind locked doors, where another spouse is beaten into respect. War zones abound in the inner city, yet the front lines have moved into the suburban school. War zones wage hot over the minds of our children. And they are the ones who suffer the most from our "friendly fire." War zones abound in our neighborhoods while we mow the grass, do the laundry, and sleep well at night.

It abuses our sensitivities to hear about W.W.I from the enemy's perspective. When Oprah interviews the confessed spouse abuser, we refuse to sympathize or identify with this enemy of decency. Yet, deep down, every one of us knows the enemy's perspective, for we have met the enemy. We have met the enemy every morning in the mirror staring us in the face.[2] We have met the enemy in our prejudices. We have known the enemy's anger in our fits of rage. We have practiced the enemy's savageness with our own sharp tongues. We don't like to look at the dark side of humanity's cruelties to humanity for we do not want to gaze inward to the darkness of our soul. We have met the enemy in the mirror staring us in the face. Sin is ugly. And sin is the ugliest when it is our own.

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[1]Although this illustration may be too lengthy, it is designed to create identification with the term "enemy."

[2]Paul does not hesitate to make explicit one's true condition outside of Christ. If the identification of the audience has not been made so far, I too make it explicit before preceding to describing Paul's doctrine of mercy.

Paul knows the truth. He knows the truth about himself. He knows the truth about the Christians he writes to in Rome. He knows the truth about us. "We have all sinned and fallen short of the glory of God" (Rom 3:23). Paul is brutally honest. He declares, "we are God's enemies" (Rom 5:10). As enemies of God we are actively engaged in opposing God. Ungodly in our actions; ungodly in our essence; rotten to the core; and powerless to make a difference. We are enemies actively engaged in battle against God.

Every court in the land would grant God a divorce from humanity on the grounds of "irreconcilable differences" and "cruel and inhuman treatment." Beyond just a divorce decree, we have been tried for war crimes against the Most High and found guilty.

"But God!" In between our petty bickering and polite gossiping, God intervened. In between our acts of crudeness and our displays of rudeness, God acted on our behalf. In between the lusts and the passions, God "demonstrated his love for us while we were yet sinners Christ died for us" (Rom 5:8).[1]

God did not initiate peace talks. Peace treaties are tenuous at best seen recently in North and South Korea. By our violations of peace every day, we engaged the enemy again and again. No one, no not one, is at peace with God. But God's act was more than establishing a demilitarized zone on the 38th parallel. God went beyond a Golan Heights buffer on earth. God's violent act at the cross on the behalf of us, the peacebreakers, was in the midst of our sin.

War sometimes brings out the best in some. Rarely you will find one who will sacrifice safety in order to rescue a comrade. Even the enemy performs acts of heroism during the war. Sometimes a good Samaritan dives in front of oncoming traffic to save the life of an innocent child. Rarely. And rarely would it happen for the sake of the enemy.

[1]The image now shifts to God's mercy.

"But God demonstrated his love toward us that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Rom 5:8).

The cross was God's peace plan; God's peace initiative. Not peace through strength. Not peace through negotiation. God established peace through sacrifice.[1]

The familiar hymn reads:

> *O the love that drew salvation's plan! O the grace that bro't it down to [us]! O the mighty gulf that God did span at Calvary. Mercy there was great, and grace was free; pardon there was multiplied to me; there my burdened soul found liberty, at Calvary.*[2]

We did not deserve mercy. If we deserved mercy, it would not be mercy.[3]

Remember Jesus on the cross, in between the thieves. In the midst of his own death, he initiated peace saying, "Father, forgive them for they know not what they are doing." Remember Stephen, on the ground, in between the stones. In the midst of his own death, he initiated peace saying, "Lord, do not hold this against them." Mercy. A demonstration of God's mercy.[4]

So Paul writes these Romans who are in need of God's mercy. The church in Rome was a house divided. Jewish Christians and Gentile Christians were at war with one another. Both of these ancient enemies were convinced that God loved them best. Both believing the other was rejected by God. Both drafting God to their side. Both killing the truth of the gospel. Both needing a wake-up call by God's justifying mercy.

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[1]The sermon has shifted in imagery by beginning with war and enemy moving to mercy and now to peace. Peace is the outcome of God's mercy. It will be this peacemaking that I have chosen to exhort the congregation to imitate when the sermon later shifts to a paraenetic mode.

[2]D. B. Towner, "Years I Spent in Vanity." Copied by permission, CCLI # 536212.

[3]This song functions to bring to closure the indicative section of the sermon and is similiar to but not the same as the doxologies used by Paul (e.g., Rom 11:33-36).

[4]These two illustrations are designed to move from the action of God to God's action through us.

To the Gentile Paul writes: God's peace initiative was God's mercy. "As far as the gospel is concerned, they [the Jews] are [God's] enemies on your account; but as far as election is concerned, they are loved on account of the patriarchs, for God's gifts and his call are irrevocable" (Rom 11:28-29).

Referring directly to the Gentile Paul says, "Just as you who were at one time disobedient to God have now received mercy as a result of their disobedience, . . . (Rom 11:30).

Then referring back to the Jew Paul says again, "so they [the Jew] too have now become disobedient in order that they too may now receive mercy as a result of God's mercy to you. For God has bound all . . . over to disobedience so that he may have mercy on them all" (Rom 11:31-32). God's mercy established peace.[1]

"Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God−this is your spiritual act of worship" (Rom 12:1).

Called to be living sacrifices. Wanted by God both dead and alive. Dead to sin that once controlled us. Alive to righteousness as obedient slaves of God. The problem however with live sacrifices is they tend to crawl off the altar. But in view of God's mercy, we crawl upon the altar and stay.

"Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is−his good, pleasing and perfect will" (Rom 12:2). Therefore, since you are able to discern the will of God, "hate what is evil; cling to what is good. . . Do not repay anyone evil for evil.

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[1]Before moving to the local setting, these last few paragraphs have strengthened the connection between the "then" and "now."

Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everybody. . . Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good" (Rom 12:9b, 17, 21).[1]

The altar of sacrifice finds itself located often where we least expect it. In our text, the altar stands in the midst of our fellowship with the saved.

> For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you. . . . so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. We have different gifts, according to the grace given us. . . . If it is showing mercy, let him do it cheerfully (Rom 3:3-8).

Crawling upon the altar, being a living sacrifice, involves living in harmony with one another. We have wars and disputes with one another. We each enlist God as our helper. Truth is the first casualty. We do not speak to one another. We gossip. We know the church would be better off without them. We want God to do some pruning in the vineyard.[2] But because God's mercy established peace with all, his mercy flowing through them freely given to us will also establish peace. "If it is showing mercy, do it cheerfully." If it is receiving mercy, do it gladly.[3]

God's mercy overflows in abundance into your life. As it overflows into your life, it will pour forth into abundance into the life of others. As God's mercy overflows into their lives, it will also extend through them to us. God's mercy will make a difference in our relationships. As you live in peace with God, you are to live at peace with one another.

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[1]The sermon begins to move into exhortations that find their basis in the indicatives in the text. This particular paragraph will allow the unity of entire chapter to be served on a single plate.

[2]Tensions within the local body are made explicit. The pew must realize that the sermon is not about a historical problem way back when, but part of its own reality.

[3]Although the admonitions predominately will encourage the listener to identify with the peacemaker, there is an attempt to maintain the identification established earlier that we are the one needing to receive mercy for we are the enemy. This will also be how the sermon will end.

Just as God's mercy overflows into your life, you need to open up your heart so that mercy can flow to others. The cross is not a private possession. No one has a corner on the market on mercy. Imagine a water main supplying a fire hydrant with water. No matter how wide you open up that valve, you cannot open it big enough to exhaust the water supply. So, no one should hoard the water of mercy; open wide that valve of mercy in your heart so that your brother or sister can know and experience it in full measure.

Many of us, I think, would be willing to display mercy in one giant heroic act. We would go up to Jerusalem and die with him. Yet, often we are called to let our mercy flow to others one drop at a time. Imagine taking a dropper and adding from the ocean one drop a water a day into a glass. One drop, then two. In two weeks you would have fourteen drops. Discounting evaporation, eventually, you would fill the glass. It is a patient work. Those final drops are held so tightly by the glass because of surface tension, but finally, on a day you least expected, one drop of mercy will overflow that glass. And by the love of God flowing through you, someone will be touched by grace.[1]

In view of God's mercy then let your love be real. If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.

- When your brother or sister breaks a promise to you about helping in the nursery, and you opt to patiently take their place−Continue to be devoted to what is good for you are making a peace initiative. God's love is real in you.
- When your brother or sister angrily rips into your good name, and you opt to help plan an appreciation dinner on their behalf−Continue to honor one another above yourself for you are making a peace initiative. God's love is real in you.
- When your brother or sister who has publicly opposed your work with the teenage class is taken to the hospital, and you opt to rake their leaves, feed their cat, and sit with their spouse through the surgery−Continue to share with God's people who are in need of mercy and give them your cloak as well for you are making a peace initiative. God's love is real in you.

[1]Throughout these last several paragraphs I have woven the move to paraenesis into the already established indicative.

- When no one knows or cares about your volunteer work at a crisis line, and you opt to increase your hours of quiet service−Continue to be zealous in your spiritual service to the Lord for you are making a peace initiative. God's love is real in you.
- When other fellowships cease supporting a struggling mission work, and we opt to continue−Let us continue to humbly serve without thinking too highly of our choices for we are making a peace initiative. God's love is real in us.
- When someone reports that the father we are helping through rehab is only taking advantage of us, and we opt to continue helping financially−Continue to bless without cursing for we are making a peace initiative. God's love is real in us.
- When the neighborhood opposes our stand on a social issue due to our Christian values, and we opt to fight on with tenderness and compassion−Continue to be patient in affliction and faithful in prayer for we are making a peace initiative. God's love is real in us.
- When our funds are low and the air conditioner needs repair and we opt to continue working with transient people who will never repay us−Continue to be joyful in hope for we are making a peace initiative. God's love is real in us.
- When our building is vandalized with crude graffiti, and we opt not to prosecute those apprehended−Continue not to take revenge for the Scripture says "If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink. . . . Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good. For then you are making a peace initiative. God's love is real in you. Remembering God's mercy to us, if it is possible, as far as it depends on us, let us live at peace with everyone.[1]

The might of a full self-sacrifice that demands our souls, our lives, our all, opens the portal of possibility of their future resurrection. Forgiveness is the key to overcoming evil. Forgiveness is two way−both in the giving and accepting. In view of God's mercy then let our love be real. If it is possible, as far as it depends on us, live at peace with everyone.

[1]This is a set-piece designed to communicate the paraenesis of Romans 12:9-21. It is constructed with specific local contexts in mind centered around the one theme of peace. Peace was chosen due to local circumstances and the exegetical discovery that 12:18 functions as a central phrase in the ring construction. It also relates well to analogous situation at Rome. Throughout, allusions to other familiar material as well as specific references to this text are made. It begins and ends the same way forming an inclusio. Although the piece begins with admonistions to an individual, it shifts to admonitions to the community. Not every phrase in the text is referred to due to length.

By being peace initiators, we are allowing God's activity to flow through us his people. When someone comes to us, accepts us, loves us, forgives us, we will know we have just witnessed God's real love.

> *Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another, for he who loves his fellowman has fulfilled the law. . . . 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' Love does no harm to its neighbor. Therefore love is the fulfillment of the law. Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God. . . . May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit* (Rom 12:8-10; 13:7, 13).[1]

> *Buried with Christ, my blessed Redeemer, dead to the old life of folly and sin; Satan may call, the world may entreat me, there is no voice that answers within. Dead unto sin, alive through the Spirit, risen with Him from the gloom of the grave, all things are new, and I am rejoicing in His great love, His power to save. Sin hath no more its cruel dominion, walking 'in newness of life,' I am free-Glorious life of Christ, my Redeemer, which He so richly shareth with me. Dead to the world, to voices that call me, living anew, obedient but free; dead to the joys that once did enthrall me-Yet 'tis not I, Christ liveth in me.*[2]

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[1]The sermon may best stop before the Scripture, however, I deemed it wise to refer back to Romans and bring conclusion to the larger context with the words of Paul. The quoted passages are the verses that bring closure to Paul's paraenetic section.

[2]L. O. Sanderson, "A New Creature." Copied by permission, CCLI # 536212. All of my sermons are followed with an appropriate hymn. Since the sermon belongs to a larger worship assembly, other hymns especially relevant would be "When My Love to Christ Grows Weak," "When I Survey the Wondrous Cross;" and "At the Cross." A reference from "When My Love to Christ Grows Weak" was used in the sermon, namely, "the might . . . of a full self-sacrifice." These songs begin with the indicative while the last verse will be an imperative.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

The Bible is rich in the variety of literary forms found within its pages. Often, in the past, the genre form was ignored in the crafting of the sermon. After the exegesis, the distilled content of the text would be molded into a deductive sermon form that often showed little resemblance to the original structure, logic, and sometimes intent of the passage. In this process, the language event was easily lost. Moralisms, self-help psychology, and legalistic prescriptions grew more prevalent. Recently, there has been a resurgence on the part of preachers to respect the diverse literature of the Bible. Homiliticians have written a landslide of new books that now consider both form and function of texts. Literary and rhetorical exegesis, following the lead of Form Criticism, has slowly caught up with the pulpit and is now felt weekly throughout the church. This is especially true of popular and abundant literary genres. For example, historical narratives, parables, and epistles have been explored in great depth. However, some genres have received little attention due to the lack of consensus of interpretation. Some of these categories include wisdom literature, apocalyptic, and prophetic. For these genres there are general studies available that contribute to sermon preparation. However, there is still a vast void in homiletical texts for many of the lesser studied sub-genres found in scripture. The preacher is left to hypothesize about how to preach these sub-genres with little guidance. This theses was designed to fill just one of those vacancies, namely, paraenesis found within the letters of the New Testament. Romans 12 was examined in detail as an initial attempt to provide one possible example of how to preach paraenesis in light of recent research.

The preliminary presuppositions of this thesis were: (1) paraenesis in the New Testament has a larger literary context; (2) paraenesis has connection with a social context relevant to the community being addressed; (3) paraenesis is controlled by theology; and (4) the function of the original text should influence the function of the sermon. These first two presuppositions were validated by researching the ancient sources. Recent research has reached a consensus. Older theories contending paraenesis merely contained isolated maxims without context proved inadequate. Careful examination of how Paul and other writers employed paraenesis confirmed the third presupposition.

Romans 12 proved to be an excellent choice. Older theories often cited this text as an example of their case leading interpreters to resist recognizing either historical, literary, and/or theological contexts for Romans 12. However, Romans 12 so closely resembled what was found in the ancient sources that interpreters were able to see beyond previous hypotheses and correlate Paul's usage to context and function. The exegetical section above demonstrated an essential context and an integral role in Paul's argument for the paraenesis in Romans 12. Since the successful quest to establish such relationships prove helpful here, other windows of interpretation are now open allowing this text to serve as a paradigm for other scriptures.

Areas necessary for further investigation are numerous. First, there are still a variety of sub-genres that need further investigation. It is not enough to understand narrative as used in the Gospels. Each sub-category of narrative needs special examination. It is a faulty correlation to blend pronouncement stories with miracle stories. The form and function of the dialectic between woe and beatitude differ greatly from that of antithesis even though they may appear in the same sermonic setting.

Furthermore, more careful examination needs to be made to the use of paraenesis by different New Testament writers. Peter may employ the form with only slight nuances

or radical divergence from James or Paul. Paul may also differ in his use as various factors cause him to adapt the material differently.

Several different quasi-experiments could be offered to see how different models of paraenetic preaching might be heard by the congregation. For example, does the congregation hear paraenesis better in a deductive sermon or an inductive one? What are the long term effects of preaching paraenetic sermons on the spiritual life of a congregation? Do different congregations demographically hear paraenetic sermons differently? Or, do some traditions already use more paraenesis in their sermons, and if so, how has it effected their congregational life as compared to a denomination that has historically shied away from such preaching?

From the research given above, it is hoped that preachers will give more careful attention to the form and function of paraenesis. More specifically, the aim of this research is to provide a prescription for preaching paraenesis that will increase the variety and possibilities for sermons preached to the body of Christ. It is also hoped that certain traditions that are heavy on command with little reference to grace will reconsider Paul's example of never exhorting, admonishing, warning, advising, or commanding without first proclaiming the wonderful love of God's gracious mercy poured out to humanity through Jesus Christ. Finally, in view of God's mercy, may the church of God be continually transformed into the image of the Son by the sanctification of the Spirit and proclamation of the word until the fruition of God's eternal purpose.

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