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Nijay K. Gupta

WORSHIP THAT MAKES SENSE TO PAUL

A NEW APPROACH TO THE THEOLOGY AND
ETHICS OF PAUL'S CULTIC METAPHORS

Nijay K. Gupta
Worship that Makes Sense to Paul

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Abbreviations

AB	Anchor Bible
ABD	<i>Anchor Bible Dictionary</i>
ANRW	<i>Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt</i>
ANTC	Abingdon New Testament Commentary
BAGD	<i>Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature</i>
BECNT	Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament
BNTC	Black's New Testament Commentary
BTB	<i>Biblical Theology Bulletin</i>
BZAW	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft
CBQ	<i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i>
DLNTD	<i>Dictionary of the Later New Testament & Its Developments</i>
DPL	<i>Dictionary of Paul and His Letters</i>
EDNT	<i>Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament</i>
FRLANT	Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments
HBT	<i>Horizons in Biblical Theology</i>
ICC	International Critical Commentary
JBL	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
JETS	<i>Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society</i>
JSNT	<i>Journal for the Study of the New Testament</i>
JSNTSup	Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement
JSOTSup	Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement
JTS	<i>Journal of Theological Studies</i>
LNTS	Library of New Testament Studies
NIB	New Interpreter's Bible
NIBC	New International Bible Commentary

NICNT	New International Commentary on the New Testament
NIGTC	New International Greek Testament Commentary
<i>NovT</i>	<i>Novum Testamentum</i>
NovTSup	Novum Testamentum Supplement
NRSV	New Revised Standard Version (Bible)
NTD	Neue Testament Deutsch
NTL	New Testament Library
<i>NTS</i>	<i>New Testament Studies</i>
PNTC	Pillar New Testament Commentary
<i>RBL</i>	<i>Review of Biblical Literature</i>
<i>RSPT</i>	<i>Revue des sciences philosophiques et théologiques</i>
SBLDS	Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series
SNTSMS	Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series
SP	Sacra Pagina
<i>TDNT</i>	<i>Theological Dictionary of the New Testament</i>
THNT	Two Horizons New Testament
TNTC	Tyndale New Testament Commentary
WBC	Word Biblical Commentary
WUNT	Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament
<i>ZNW</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche</i>
<i>ZThK</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche</i>

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Introduction

This book examines the apostle Paul's non-atonement cultic metaphors with a view towards determining their theological import. Though there are numerous studies on cultic language in the New Testament, very little attention has been paid to Paul's distinctive usage. Also, when scholars have had an interest in cultic language and Paul's theology, most of the discussion surrounds his attitude towards the Jewish cult and the practice of religion. However, advances in literary theory and cognitive linguistics (among other things) have led to insights into the roles that metaphors play in the creation of meaning in communication and the formation of personal and social identity. Thus, it will be argued that Paul's cultic metaphors reveal much more about his thought than simply what he believed about the temple, priesthood, and sacrifices. In this study, we will determine what areas of his thought he was intending to illuminate through his use of cultic metaphors and why this particular group of symbols was so useful for his theological purposes.

We will argue that previous studies have failed to understand how 'theology' is explicated on the basis of metaphors. In many cases, what ends up happening is that very general conclusions are reached, often with inchoate theological points. One may observe, on a broader level, the approach to New Testament ecclesiological metaphors taken by Paul Minear in 1960. Aiming at a synthetic theological collage based on 'images of the church in the New Testament', Minear wove various New Testament texts together to produce a sort of theological patchwork fabric which resulted from his interest in 'chart[ing] the range of connotations conveyed by the image in this particular state of its [historical] development'.¹ Though Minear is attentive to the variety of expressions of these images, his study seems to place too little emphasis on the *literary* (especially rhetorical) and *social* dimensions of the study of biblical metaphors. Indeed, what is also missing, when such a synthetic approach is undertaken, is the examination of metaphor-making as a conceptually-transformative act – an act that has the capacity to mold and reform one's imaginative world.² In a sense, then, if one is wishing to

1 Minear 1960: 13.

2 Such a perspective is articulated well by Richard Hays who describes the process of metaphor-making as an act that has the power to disrupt and defamiliarize previous conceptions of the world; see Hays 1996b: 298-312; esp. 311n. 8.

determine Paul's theological interests vis-à-vis his metaphors, one must not only ask what they *mean*, but what they *do* in his discourses and how they create meaning.

Thus, we will argue for the use of a cognitive and socio-literary approach because metaphors must be understood as part of a piece of communication that is meant to strike the readers in a certain way.³ The cognitive aspect must be included in the analysis of metaphor-making because these literary tropes have such world-constructing and world-collapsing power. According to conceptual metaphor theory, metaphors operate at the thought level (and not just the level of verbal output) and often shape the way we think. Metaphors have the unique ability to shift and shape cognitive paradigms. Eva Kittay aptly explains that a metaphor has the power to rearrange the furniture of the mind.⁴ This kind of thinking about metaphor, in recent years, has led to fruitful research on how to make meaning of metaphors by being attentive to both the theological webs-of-meanings involved and *also* how these symbolic statements become a means for expressing the writer's mind at work in communicating to his or her readers.

In a recent book on 'The Power of Images in Paul', Raymond F. Collins takes a very different approach to metaphors than Minear's where he follows Paul through his letters to see how his word-pictures become communicative events. Collins explains that he wishes to 'study how Paul used metaphors in each of his letters in order to clarify the gospel for a particular audience and persuade the various churches to whom he wrote his letters of the truth of his message'.⁵ Our study dovetails nicely with Collins' approach due to his specific interest in the meaning, not just of 'metaphors', but of the act of 'metaphorizing' – the comparison of something (like the people of God) to something else (like the temple) in order to communicate some 'truth' that can hardly be communicated another way. One can see, then, that a *theological* discussion of metaphors in the New Testament is not a simple and straightforward task. What is needed, in many cases, is a way of approaching these tropes that pays attention to cognitive, literary, and social aspects of communication.⁶

Many, like Minear, have been too quick to make judgments about Paul's 'ecclesiology' based on such metaphors, without realizing the extent of his rhetorical horizon.⁷ I propose a more sophisticated approach to this theological coherence which involves attentiveness to the various exigencies of the letters

3 For a test-case of how 'socio-literary' analysis is performed with respect to cultic metaphors, see the treatment of 1 Peter in Gupta 2009a: 61-76.

4 As referred to in Gaventa 2007: 11; see Kittay 1987: 316-214.

5 Collins 2008: viii.

6 A more thorough pursuit of an appropriate methodology will take place in chapter two.

7 See the discussion in §1.2.

at hand (especially sociological factors) and how cultic metaphors were particularly suited for responding to such issues as a way of re-shaping perspective (cognitive and literary factors).⁸

The unique contributions of this study involve not only the methodology, but also the scope. In one way, it is interesting to note that few scholars have attempted to examine the use of non-atonement cultic metaphors solely in Paul's (undisputed)⁹ letters.¹⁰ On another level of scope, identifying exactly what qualifies as a cultic metaphor is also a challenge. In this study we will outline and apply a method for determining the context from which a given metaphor comes (which we will call the 'source domain'). In the past, either scholars have limited themselves to the most 'obvious' ones, or speculations run rampant concerning various phrases and statements that *could* qualify as cultic.¹¹ A more methodologically rigorous approach will mitigate such conjecture.

Outline of Study

This study is broken down into three parts. The first part, Issues and Approaches, covers the essential preliminary matters that must be discussed in order to chart a path through Paul's cultic metaphors with a final goal of determining a theological synthesis. Thus, a brief review of literature, a

-
- 8 My own understanding of and appreciation for this approach has been influenced by Francis Watson whose research in this area is seminal. When discussing his own intellectual journey from studying theology as merely a philosophical exercise involving thoughts and convictions to learning about the social dimensions of the New Testament texts, he writes this: 'Previously, I had known texts and ideas; now those texts and ideas all had to be rethought in the light of their social dynamics. One had to ask not just the theoretical question. What does the text say? but also the pragmatic question, What does the text do? What, in other words, is its origin and destiny within the world of social, intercommunal reality? How does it shape that world, and how is it shaped by it?' (2007: 10).
 - 9 The choice to leave aside the disputed Pauline letters is not for reasons of dubious authorship, but rather for the sake of manageability. It would be interesting to compare the conclusions from this thesis with a study of, for instance, Colossians and Ephesians, to see if the synthetic theological results are similar.
 - 10 K. Weiss (1954) has treated the topic in a brief article, but chose to focus on Paul's role as 'priest'; more recently, Martin Vahrenhorst has written a monograph entitled *Kultische Sprache in den Paulusbriefen* (2008). Unfortunately, Vahrenhorst's book was released and came to my attention too late to be given detailed consideration in this study, but a brief delineation of his approach and conclusions will appear in chapter one.
 - 11 For a choice example of this latter problem see K. Weiss' argument that Paul's language of being separated (*ἀφορίζω*) as a called apostle (Rom. 1.1) is meant to parallel the holy separation (LXX *διαστέλλω*) of the tribe of Levi as cultic servants as in Numbers 16.9; see Weiss 1954: 357-8.

discussion of methodological concerns, and a description of key terms will appear in this initial part.

The second part, Exegesis, will involve detailed examination of Paul's undisputed letters with the intent of classifying various metaphorical relationships in passages that appear to be using cultic language metaphorically. Also, the social correlates and rhetorical weight of these metaphors will be determined wherever possible. This happens to be a large section because, in previous studies, Paul's 'point' is often presupposed without sufficient scrutiny, and hasty judgments are often made concerning his theological motivations. Before an attempt at determining coherence is undertaken, work must first be done within the confines of each individual text, understanding a given metaphor as it functions within discrete discourses.

The final part, Synthesis, follows from the Exegesis (Part II) and attempts to link Paul's cultic metaphors together *theologically*. Where some scholars have only drawn basic ethical and ecclesiological conclusions from Paul's cultic metaphors, it is a fundamental argument of this study that the theological implications reach many spheres including Paul's conception of ethics, epistemology, anthropology, eschatology, the Holy Spirit, the problem of suffering and death, and obedience to God. In chapter ten we will draw together our findings to address the question of coherence and how these cultic metaphors help to shape social identity. The concluding chapter offers summaries and final reflections on the argumentation and subject matter of the study.

Conclusion

Simply stated, this study examines Paul's non-atonement cultic metaphors and endeavors to explain their theological coherence. It seeks to interpret such metaphors using an eclectic method of observing original social correlates as well as considering the importance of metaphors as conceptual constructs and rhetorical devices. Important research questions, thus, include: *How are cultic metaphors identified? How are they used in rhetorical discourses? What theological themes are commonly associated? In relationship to what sort of issues do they appear? How do cultic metaphors aid in shaping Paul's symbolic universe?*

We will argue that metaphors are well-suited as powerful devices for transferring theological concepts from Paul to his churches that were often struggling with understanding the relevance of the dawning of the new age in Christ in the midst of the present evil age. It is our contention that scholars have not yet plumbed the theological depths of Paul's cultic metaphors in full recognition of this volatile-and-yet-fecund time in which the apostle lived.

By reviewing major studies on the topic of Paul's cultic imagery, we will consider how a theology of his metaphors has been variously conceived. Though some important advancement has taken place, especially in terms of literary criticism, we will establish the need for a more robust approach that takes stock of cognitive and social dimensions of Paul's discourse and thought as well.

Part I: Issues and Approaches

Chapter One

The Theology of Paul's Cultic Metaphors: A History of Research

1.1 Introduction

In this précis of the most significant contributions on the topic of Paul's cultic metaphors, our scope will be limited (wherever possible) by giving attention to the most influential treatments, but special interest will be directed towards those studies focused on non-atonement metaphors and those that concentrate solely on Paul's letters. Finally, we will try to narrow the field of discussion further by attending specifically to what *theological* conclusions are made.

1.2 Historical-canonical approaches

In the 20th century, two works stand out as key contributions to the subject of cultic language in the New Testament (with a concentrated chapter on Paul's letters). The first, appearing in 1932, is by Hans Wenschkewitz, entitled, *Die Spiritualisierung der Kultusbegriffe: Tempel, Priester und Opfer im Neuen Testament*.¹ Wenschkewitz, essentially utilizing a *religionsgeschichtlich* approach, attempted to chart a progression in the Bible towards a more spiritualized conception of cult. He saw Greek philosophy, especially Stoic thought, as a particularly strong influence on early Christianity. Accordingly, then, Paul's life and letters are read in this light.²

Wenschkewitz began his review of 'Paul' with a consideration of the evidence from Acts. He observed that this portrait of Paul was one whose attitude towards cult was complex for he supported cultic vows and prayed in the temple (Acts 21.6-7; 22.17). Wenschkewitz concluded, though, that too

1 Wenschkewitz 1932.

2 It is indicative of studies in this methodological vein that Paul's tendency to spiritualize cult is inherited from 'primitive Christianity', especially the theology of the so-called Hellenists; see, in support of Wenschkewitz, Fraeyman 1947: 408-11.

much cannot be made of these actions as we cannot ascertain whether Paul was accommodating to the Jews apart from his own (personal) theological convictions.³

Turning directly to the Pauline corpus, Wenschkewitz rightly observed that Paul's use of temple language is rarely 'literal' (insofar as he refers directly to the Jerusalem sanctuary). Rather, Paul's employment of such imagery is connected to the idea of 'numinous awe' for the sake of ethical admonition.⁴ The fact that Paul can call the individual believer a 'temple' led Wenschkewitz to conclude that the apostle was especially in line with Stoic philosophy and Hellenistic Jewish thinkers like Philo.⁵ Indeed, Wenschkewitz detected a tension in Paul, between his Jewish influences that appreciated the body and the pessimistic attitudes of the Hellenistic philosophers who limited the value of the material. For Paul, the body was given a new estimation especially because of the somatic resurrection of Christ.⁶

Another difference that Wenschkewitz detected between Stoic and early Christian thought, despite similarities in cultic interpretation, is the latter's interest in community formation. He concluded:

Weder in der Stoa, noch bei Philo treffen wir diesen Gedanken, denn hier war alles auf den Einzelnen, auf das Individuum eingestellt. Es ist sehr zu beachten, daß auch in diesem Stück das Christentum den Individualismus bricht, indem es eine durchaus individualistisch gemeinte Form der Umdeutung des Tempelbegriffes so wendet, wie es der im tiefsten nicht individualistischen neuen Religion entspricht.⁷

Another feature is notable in Wenschkewitz's interpretation of Paul. He did offer some reflection on the rhetorical use of Paul's metaphors as some, such as those in 1 Corinthians, were deployed, at least in part, to create a sense of community among the Corinthian believers such that they would be less likely to succumb to false teaching.⁸ However, overall, Wenschkewitz focused on the moral dimensions of the ideas and attitudes expressed in Paul's cultic metaphors which discouraged the kind of wanton hedonism that went unnoticed in pagan religions. Here we have, again, this mixing of Jewish and Hellenistic influences where Jewish morality is fused with Greek philosophy. What was striking for Wenschkewitz is the fact that the terminology that Paul used was clearly from the LXX. Again, 'Wir haben also bei Paulus auf der Basis der hellenistischen Spiritualisierung des Tempelbegriffes eine christliche und ein jüdische Komponente festgestellt'.⁹

3 Wenschkewitz 1932: 110-11.

4 Wenschkewitz 1932: 111.

5 Wenschkewitz admitted, though, that Stoics would not have conceived of the 'body' as a divine place of residence; 1932: 111.

6 Wenschkewitz 1932: 111.

7 Wenschkewitz 1932: 112. A serious criticism of Wenschkewitz's view here is offered in Gupta 2009f; see also §1.5 (Analysis).

8 Wenschkewitz 1932: 113.

9 Wenschkewitz 1932: 113.

A major catalyst for this shift towards a spiritualized interpretation of cult is the death of Christ, according to Wenschkewitz (e.g. 1 Corinthians 5.7). He acknowledged, though, that this line of reasoning is not obvious when only Paul's letters (and Acts) are considered, but in light of the whole New Testament. Rather, what was most obvious for Wenschkewitz was the moral aspect of the cultic language.

At the end of his chapter on Paul, Wenschkewitz summarized his findings concisely: Paul's concept of cult was Hellenistic insofar as he saw Stoic spiritualization to be a fitting paradigm for understanding worship in light of the death of Christ. However, Paul maintained a Jewish appreciation for 'Leiblichkeit' and also a primary interest in the community. Though Paul was not the first to consider Christ's death an atoning sacrifice, the paradigm of how he viewed λογικὴν λατρείαν was unique. This involved the ideas that the church had no temple, but worshiped through the Holy Spirit; and there was no hierarchical priesthood, but every person could offer himself to God.

Recent scholarly appraisals of Wenschkewitz's research tend to be quite negative, but I fear that some have not read past the title of his work. Methodologically, there are a number of concerns with his interpretation including a casual amalgamation of findings from Acts and the Pauline letters as well as a hasty juxtaposition of 'Hebrew' and 'Greek' thought. And, of course, his paradigm of spiritualization seems to be read into many of the Pauline texts, rather than arising from them.¹⁰ Nevertheless, his deep interest in the social and ethical dimensions of the cultic texts seems to be more cogently developed. Theologically, Wenschkewitz was convinced that Paul does, in fact, 'spiritualize' and de-institutionalize cult based on an understanding of the atoning work of Christ. Unfortunately, it seemed to have been enough for Wenschkewitz to look for a lowest common denominator in terms of what effect this 'spiritualization' was meant to have on the churches to which Paul wrote. Though Paul had a distinctive voice on occasion, Wenschkewitz was content to find the great apostle happily singing the chorus in unison with the other New Testament voices when it came to spiritualizing cult.

The project that Robert J. Daly took up, forty years later, in his published doctoral thesis, *Christian Sacrifice: The Judaeo-Christian Background before Origen*,¹¹ in many ways picks up where Wenschkewitz left off. Daly reveals that the motivation behind the research for this work was not simply to attend to how the New Testament writers re-conceptualized cult. Rather, his primary

10 A. Hogeterp's research (2006) (see below) attempts to draw a more historically accurate picture of Paul within the matrix of Jewish thought in the first century.

11 Daly 1978a; an abridged and simplified version of this work appears under the title *The Origins of the Christian Doctrine of Sacrifice* (1978b).

interest was in Origen's use of cultic language, which led him to an intensive investigation of the major influences on this topic. Daly begins with the ostensibly foundational notion that religions often require sacrifice because it was an event that brought humanity and divinity together in a special way. Following from the fact that Christianity has no ritualized sacrificial practices, he explores the question: how, if at all, can Christians use the language of sacrifice in a meaningful way? Essentially, Daly goes on to interpret the New Testament in a way not dissimilar to Wenschkewitz as he concludes that, because Christ is the *fulfillment* of cult, sacrifice is not done away with but re-interpreted in light of Christ.¹² Again, like Wenschkewitz, Daly proceeds with a synthesis of the Synoptics, Acts, Paul, Hebrews, John, and Revelation. Our attention will focus on Daly's view of Paul.

Daly divides Paul's 'theology of sacrifice' into three: (1) the Christians as a new temple, (2) the sacrifice of Christ, and (3) the sacrifice of (i.e., performed by) the Christians.¹³ Briefly, in terms of the second category, Daly observes that Paul interpreted the death of Christ as both a Passover and sin offering that demonstrated a fulfillment of and supersession beyond the Old Testament rites.¹⁴ In the first category, Christians as the new temple, Daly sees much diversity in Paul's statements, from referent (individual versus group) to background (generic versus Scriptural). Daly makes the striking comment that Paul appears to link this concept to the reception of the Spirit, and that where Paul's pneumatology is found, so also his conception of person/community as temple.¹⁵ Finally, Daly examines the role that 'sacrifice' plays in Christian worship. What he finds implicitly paradigmatic is the death of Christ as a sacrifice. If Christians are expected to be self-giving, it is in imitation of Christ.

Daly seems to take a *heilsgeschichtlich* approach to Paul's cultic metaphors where Christians offer sacrifice, not out of cultic duty, but gratitude to God. And cultic language is transferred to the realm of ethics where a life of virtue and dedication to the Christian mission is idealized. Daly falls prey to many of the same methodological missteps as Wenschkewitz such as an appeal to the Hellenized language in Paul and the so-called Semitic interest in the body. Daly's analysis offers another example of a canonically-oriented study that attempts to synthesize the perspectives of the New Testament writers. Unfortunately, he gives little time and care to the unique circumstances and literary objectives of each author. In his defense, though, he struggled to

12 Daly does utilize the term 'spiritualization', but chooses to give it a very broad meaning where cult is ethicized and/or reinterpreted (1978a:4-5a).

13 Daly admits that this categorization comes from his study of Origen which he then reads back into Paul (1978a: 3).

14 Daly 1978a: 236-40.

15 Daly 1978a: 233.

synthesize a massive amount of literature, spanning many hundreds of years and including dozens of authors.

Just a few years before Daly submitted his doctoral thesis, and nearly a decade before he published his work, R.J. McKelvey published his own monograph (*The New Temple: The Church in the New Testament*) on the subject of 'the church as God's new temple'.¹⁶ Again, we have a pan-New Testament study that concentrates on a cultic image; in the case of Daly it was 'sacrifice', here it is 'temple'. But, whereas Wenschkewitz and Daly traversed on philosophical territory by engaging in a discussion of the 'spiritualization' of cult, McKelvey took a different approach and sought out to determine how and why Jewish conceptions and traditions of the heavenly temple were appropriated by New Testament writers. Drawing on background material in the Old Testament, early Jewish literature, and ideas of the heavenly temple in Greek thought as well, McKelvey concluded that the early Christians inherited many ideas of temple and cult that were adjusted and re-framed in light of Christ (and particularly Jesus' own attitude towards the temple). In contrast to the tendency of Wenschkewitz to focus almost exclusively on Philo and the Stoics, McKelvey brings to bear research from the Dead Sea Scrolls in particular. In the end, though, McKelvey does affirm the basic direction in which Wenschkewitz and Daly take the cultic language of the New Testament: it is transferred to the domain of daily worship specifically for the purpose of encouraging ethical living. McKelvey's unique contribution, though, is his demonstration of how early Christians were driven by a thoroughgoing eschatology which is evidenced in their belief that they lived in the time of fulfillment marked by the 'new temple': 'The New Testament declares that God has fulfilled his word of promise made by the prophets and erected a new and more glorious temple'.¹⁷

While McKelvey's study offers another salvation-historical approach to temple imagery in the New Testament, it differs from Wenschkewitz insofar as the former perspective is driven by evidence from Jewish tradition and a literary-historical methodology whereas the latter drew heavily from the philosophy of religion. As a more exegetically- and textually-rigorous investigation, McKelvey's research has been well-received and marks an important shift in approaches to cultic language in the New Testament. If early Christian reflection on cult was to be understood appropriately, scholars came to see that it must be studied within its own historical, literary, and social context. This leads us to a specialized kind of research on cultic metaphors in Paul and the New Testament: the comparative-historical.

16 McKelvey 1969: vii.

17 McKelvey 1969: 179-80.

1.3 Comparative-historical approaches

While Wenschkewitz found appealing parallels between Philo's use of cultic language and that of early Christianity, McKelvey was able to profit from the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls which were unknown to Wenschkewitz. When these Qumranic documents were available for wider scholarly research, it was found that striking similarities existed between how these sectarians used scriptural language and symbols and that of the New Testament writers (especially in the Pauline and Johannine literature). Naturally, some interest was directed towards the use of sacrificial, sacerdotal, and, especially, temple language. In the 1960's and 1970's, two studies appeared on this topic: Bertil Gärtner's *The Temple and the Community in Qumran and the New Testament* (1965) and Georg Klinzing's *Die Umdeutung des Kultus in der Qumrangemeinde und im Neuen Testament* (1971). The latter's research was more concentrated on the ideology of the Qumran community with only a third of the book devoted to the New Testament, whereas Gärtner devoted two-thirds to the New Testament. A particularly important methodological insight arose from Klinzing's investigation. By studying the habits of the Qumran community and their ritual practices, he became convinced that the term 'spiritualization' is misleading in terms of their cultic attitudes since they devoted much attention to how, for instance, meals were to be eaten and community membership was regulated.¹⁸ Comparing what is found in the New Testament, Klinzing also, in line with McKelvey, draws attention to the importance of an apocalyptic perspective for understanding the *Umdeutung* of cultic (and especially temple) language.¹⁹

Gärtner's contribution to the discussion is a sustained reflection on relevant New Testament texts in dialogue with Qumranic thought for the purpose of uncovering how and why certain arguments arose. Only two texts from the undisputed letters of Paul are treated (2 Cor. 6.14-7.1; 1 Cor. 3.16-17), but Gärtner detected several emphases based on 'resemblances' with the temple symbolism of the Dead Sea Scrolls: the identification of the faithful community as the temple of God, an emphasis on the 'dwelling' of God in the community, the holiness of this community, the importance of purity, and an oppositional stance towards outsiders.²⁰

Where many scholars have questioned Klinzing and Gärtner is in the eagerness to attribute to Paul, at times, a dependence on Qumranic 'tradition'.²¹ However, Gärtner admits that such a proposal is weakened by the

18 See the section 'Zum Begriff "Spiritualisierung"' (pp. 143-7).

19 Klinzing 1971: 221-24.

20 Gärtner 1965: 60; generally see pp. 49-71.

21 See Gärtner 1965: 49-50; Klinzing 1971: 166-96.

fact that the use of temple symbolism in the Dead Sea Scrolls was based upon 'a particular kind of self-consciousness in which the temple was considered to have been replaced by a living community'.²² To attribute to Paul the same kind of interests is question-begging. Perhaps, though, the lasting theological significance of this historical-comparative work is a recognition that the early Christians were not alone, as an eschatological community, in thinking that they were living in a time where God was doing a 'new thing' and was present among his faithful people in a special way in light of 'recent events'.²³

1.4 New approaches

Approaches to Paul's cultic language can be understood by comparison with the evolution of the study of the Gospels. There was a time when many scholars treated the Gospels as texts whose final forms covered up the authentic or pristine Jesus traditions. Thus, historical tools were necessary in order to get at what lay concealed beneath. However, an evolution took place where the evangelist himself was taken seriously as an author and story-teller and it was seen to be either irresponsible or simply unhelpful to cut away at his text which he so carefully redacted and composed, infusing it with his own theological emphases.²⁴ Similarly, with Paul, scholars came to realize that his letters are more than 'evidence' of his thought. They are carefully composed letters written for specific reasons to communicate very critical messages. They are 'words on target' as Christiaan Beker often put it. Thus, a handful of newer studies on Paul's cultic imagery have sought to take seriously this rhetorical character of his words and study history and theology *in context*.

This brings us to our first example, a literary study of cultic metaphors, by David L. Olford: 'An Exegetical Study of Major Texts in Romans which Employ Cultic Language in a Non-Literal Way' (1985). This unpublished doctoral thesis (Sheffield University) examines Paul's use of sacrificial and priestly language as 'a part of the expression of his thought'.²⁵ By limiting the scope of his concentration to Romans, Olford was able to sustain a more focused exploration of the 'use' of cultic language than had been undertaken previously. Such an approach did not prevent Olford from thinking historically, though, for he had in mind that Romans was a particularly

22 Gärtner 1965: 56.

23 For the Qumran community, the 'recent events' were the judgment of the Jerusalem temple and the formation of the pure and faithful community; for the early Christians, it was the death and resurrection of Christ and the coming of the Holy Spirit (see Gärtner 1965: 139).

24 For a brief overview of this development in Gospels research, see Dunn 2003: 92-97.

25 Olford 1985: 1.

interesting specimen for consideration – especially as a letter written by a Jew to a Christian church at the beginning of the partings of the ways. Thus, Olford writes, ‘Paul, a man grounded in Judaism, involved in the Christian mission to the Gentiles, and concerned with Jew-Gentile relations, [offers] a use of cultic language particularly worthy of note’.²⁶ What marks out Olford’s angle from his predecessors is his rhetorical mindset as he sought to observe the use and impact of cultic language in Romans ‘viewed within the letter as a whole’.²⁷

Though Olford is interested in the ‘theology’ of such language, he argues that a holistic framework does not exist that can account for the many occurrences of cultic metaphors. Therefore, ‘the burden of proof lay upon those who would seek to unify the various uses of cultic language, especially within a theological structure’.²⁸ Also, Olford is less inclined to read such metaphors from a *heilsgeschichtlich* standpoint as it might lead one to the conclusion that Paul was purposely opposing the Jewish cult and speaking polemically. Such a finding distracts one from the literary purposes of such imagery that need to be investigated keeping in mind the situation, structure, and manner of argumentation found in any given document (such as Romans). In Romans, Olford comes to the conclusion that Paul’s cultic language bears an ‘apologetic’ function regarding his ministry. With respect to the gospel, they clarify and enhance his message ‘grounding the eschatological gospel in religious tradition, as expressed in the OT, and revered at Rome’.²⁹

Though Olford did not outline any kind of sophisticated methodology, his focus on the rhetorical *purpose* of such language within the context of one letter adumbrated the kind of literary approach that many others would follow (whether conscious of his work or not). Though I find the term ‘apologetic’ limiting, it does carry the idea that cultic metaphors could be utilized to position ‘his eschatological gospel within a tradition of familiar religious ideas’.³⁰ When it comes to a larger synthesis, Olford makes no attempt to construct a ‘theology of cult’, as it were, but ties the cultic language to important theological concepts such as gospel, ethics, and apostleship. Thus, Olford has offered a rhetorical study that takes research forward by allowing Paul’s own process of thought in metaphor-making to take shape within the scope of one letter.

John Lanci’s study, *A New Temple for Corinth* (1997), is also a literary-focused monograph, but concentrates exclusively on 1 Corinthians. In

26 Olford 1985: 2.

27 Olford 1985: 2.

28 Olford 1985: 432.

29 Olford 1985: 433.

30 Olford 1985: 436.

particular, Lanci is interested in how temple metaphors are used in this epistle (especially 1 Corinthians 3.16-17). He takes the discussion in a different direction from previous studies on temple imagery (e.g. McKelvey, Wenschkewitz) by reflecting, not only or primarily on Paul as ‘theologian’, but as a Diaspora Jew writing to an ethnically diverse church in a Corinth filled with temples. Indeed, what Lanci finds distressing in previous scholarship is the immediate presumption that, if Paul refers metaphorically to a ‘temple’, he must mean *the* Jewish temple: ‘faced with the need to persuade this particular audience, a largely gentile one in Central Greece, what kind of reference would Paul allude to when he conjures up the image of a temple? The one in Jerusalem? Or one of the sanctuaries down the Lechaion Road in the center of their own town?’.³¹

Lanci subtitles his book ‘Rhetorical and Archaeological Approaches to Pauline Imagery’ which obviously reveals his methodology. The ‘rhetorical’ aspect is explicated by Lanci immediately in his very specific research question, ‘What role does the image of the community play in Paul’s argument in 1 Corinthians?’.³² The ‘archaeological’ approach involves looking at ancient Greco-Roman conceptions of what temples were like, and how they functioned in society. The exigency that necessitated Lanci’s archaeological approach is the concern that when scholars read 1 Corinthians as a text, they are often compelled to make links *intertextually* (i.e. with other ‘texts’), but such a tendency has the potential for neglecting ‘the physical reality of temples in Corinth’.³³

When Lanci deploys this methodology on 1 Corinthians, he makes two important conclusions about the use of temple metaphors. First, the consistent appearance of construction imagery in the letter is quite deliberate and furthers the overall agenda in 1 Corinthians of addressing the problem of competition and factionalism that plagued this young church. Paul’s temple metaphors, then, play an important role in encouraging unity. Thus, Lanci concludes, ‘rather than inviting the Corinthians to understand themselves as a new temple replacing the one in Jerusalem, Paul uses a metaphor, which both Gentile and Jew could understand, to present and then anchor the motif of community upbuilding which runs throughout the letter’.³⁴

A second argument that Lanci makes is that temples acted as ‘centering images’ in a city which stood for the ‘common good’ and aided in concretizing communal identity.³⁵ Here Lanci notes the social implications of the rhetoric

31 Lanci 1997: 3.

32 Lanci 1997: 5.

33 Lanci 1997: 6.

34 Lanci 1997: 5.

35 Lanci 1997: 90, 128, 134.