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PREFACE

Early on in my doctoral research my supervisor told me, "Don't rush the writing. You will grow in the thesis and the thesis will grow in you." As I completed the writing I realized how wise those words are. So, with all the growth that has come in my own process of character transformation, I want to express my deep gratitude to my doctoral supervisor, Dirk van der Merwe. You are a friend as well as a supervisor.

There have been so many in the journey of completing this thesis. Of those, Dallas Willard stands at the forefront. He guided me towards Colossians 3.1-17 as my focal text and for that I cannot express enough gratitude. That passage has forever changed the way I see spiritual formation. He sat with me and, with a Bible open to Colossians 3, we talked about God's desire for us to be conformed to the image of Christ.

My deep appreciation is extended to Tom Wright. He will never know how formative his counsel was to me that afternoon there in Elie. He supported my premise, graciously informed my ignorance, and directed me towards resources that proved to be fundamental for my research. To him I owe much gratitude.

Above all others, there is no one who has had as much impact upon me through the years of writing and reading than my wife, Pamela. She has supported me, encouraged me, and sacrificed time together to allow me to do the research and writing. She believes in me like no one else and to her, no words could ever express the depth of my gratitude and love for her.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Within the Reformed Christian understanding of the soteriological process of justification, sanctification, and glorification; justification and glorification seem to exude a certain degree of concreteness that escapes the intervening process of sanctification. With regard to justification, the double imputation of the forgiveness of sin and the imparting of Christ's alien righteousness (2 Cor. 5.21) upon a person is an event that either has or has not happened. "Justification is a forensic or declarative matter," there is no biblical indication of an intermediate stage of spiritual reality.[1] The vinicultural picture presented by Jesus is that of being "grafted" into the true vine from which the branch receives life and bears fruit (Jn. 15.1-5). Jesus' analogy is clear: a branch has no life of its own. The branch is either connected to the vine or it is not connected to the vine. In the language of the apostle Paul, individuals are either made "alive together with Christ" ("συνεζωοποίησεν τῷ Χριστῷ") or they are still "by nature children of wrath, like everyone else" ("τέκνα φύσει ὀργῆς ὡς καὶ οἱ λοιποί").[2] Paul's understanding is that the soteriological experience of justification changes the spiritual life and reality of a person; moving from spiritual death to spiritual life. The pneumatological locus of the person is now "ἐν Χριστῷ," and that person is, therefore, a new creation (2 Cor. 5.17).

The other end of the soteriological spectrum is the element of glorification. While there is a transformative element to glorification (2 Cor. 3.18) within the spiritual dimension, there is a definitive moment when "ἐν ῥιπῇ ὀφθαλμοῦ" the physical life of the follower of Christ will be forever changed. The physical sphere of life with all of its finite ramifications will be instantly transformed into a state of imperishable immortality (1 Cor.

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[1] Millard J. Erickson, *Introducing Christian Doctrine* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1992), 314.

[2] Ephesians 2.5, 2.3, respectively. Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture quotations in English are from *The Holy Bible: New Revised Standard Version* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1989). Scripture quotations in Greek are taken from Eberhard Nestle, et al., eds., *The Greek New Testament*, 27th ed. (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1993). Scripture quotations in Hebrew are from *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia: With Werkgroep Informatica, Vrije Universiteit Morphology; Bible. O.T. Hebrew* (Werkgroep Informatica, Vrije Universiteit: Netherlands, 1983).

15:52, 53).

God, in an act of immeasurable grace, takes a person from spiritual death to spiritual life and, by that same grace, forever overturns the inevitable degeneration of the corporeal embodiment associated with physical living. In between the definable concrete reality of justification and the certainty of instantaneous culmination in glorification lies the daily living of life for the follower of Christ. Thus, the question becomes, what happens between these two soteriological realities? The theological term utilized to describe this intervening experience is *sanctification,* and it involves both a declaration of holiness[3] as well as the lifelong process of spiritual growth.[4]

While the Bible speaks about the prescriptive realities of justification and glorification, the actual *process* of sanctification is much more descriptive though it is no less a reality. Paul describes this process as "being conformed to the image of Christ" (Rom. 8.29; 2 Cor. 3.18) and is, in fact, commanded as an aspect of transformation juxtaposed with the negative command to reject being "conformed to the image of the world" (Rom. 12:2). Sanctification is a process predicated upon the reality of justification. It is "a process by which one's moral condition is brought into conformity with one's legal status before God. It is a continuation of what was begun in regeneration."[5] According to the Westminster Shorter Catechism, "Sanctification is the work of God's free grace, whereby we are renewed in the whole man after the image of God, and are enabled more and more to die unto sin, and live unto righteousness."[6] Sanctification brings a person's physical reality, evidenced by their moral condition, their behavior, and character, to a place of congruence with their spiritual reality of union with Christ. If the sanctification process of spiritual growth is a scriptural and theological reality, how then does such a process happen? Using Colossians 1 as his textual foundation, Beeke states that,

> . . . spiritual growth is like a diamond; it has many facets. It begins in the head and the heart (v.9), works itself out in our daily lives (vv. 10, 11), and is consummated in

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[3] See Erickson's discussion of the two-fold nature of sanctification (313ff). This idea of a dual aspect to sanctification is very much in line with the "already/not yet" understanding of the believer's positional relationship of union with Christ. A believer is "in Christ," and that position of holiness is a present spiritual reality (Col. 3.1-4) but the outworking of that reality is the developmental process of sanctification through which the believer "becomes what the believer already is."

[4] Joel Beeke, *Developing Healthy Spiritual Growth*: *Knowledge, Practice and Experience* (Darlington, England: EP Books, 2013), Kindle Electronic Edition: Chapter 1, Location 115.

[5] Erickson, *Introducing Christian Doctrine*, 313.

[6] G. I. Williamson, *The Westminster Shorter Catechism*, 2nd ed. (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2003), 159.

the praise and thanksgiving that we offer by word and deed to our Father in heaven (v.12).[7]

One can visibly see the outworking of a person's moral condition, character, and behavior on display in the physical context of life. For the follower of Christ, that observable characterological evidence should be an external physical manifestation of an internal spiritual reality. However, so often the testimony of the follower of Christ echoes the words of Paul in Romans 7.15 as he confesses, "ὃ γὰρ κατεργάζομαι οὐ γινώσκω οὐ γὰρ ὃ θέλω τοῦτο πράσσω, ἀλλ' ὃ μισῶ τοῦτο ποιῶ." However, an evidentiary dissonance between external manifestations and internal intentions does not necessarily negate a greater spiritual reality. It is precisely that unseen inner working of the spiritually transformative process of sanctification that necessitates an investigation into the *summa mysterium* of growth into Christlikeness.

For the follower of Christ, there is a "gap" that exists between the spiritual veracity of union *with Christ* that begins at the point of justification (2 Cor. 5.21) and the subsequent evidentiary characterological reality *of Christlikeness* that is seen in the outward manifestations of the living out of that union. Richard Lovelace labels this lacuna as the "sanctification gap."[8] John Coe describes this gap in the lives of believers as that area "between what they know to be the *goal* of sanctification and growth and where they know they *actually are* in their life."[9] The recognition of the sanctification gap and the corresponding dissonant characterological manifestations can be a frustrating experience for the follower of Christ that desires spiritual growth and maturity. "One of the most pressing questions for many believers as well as for the church in general is how to close this gap, that is, *how to understand the real-life processes of transformation* in order to grow with a growth that is from God (Col. 2.19)."[10]

When the believer experiences regeneration in the justification event, that event sets in motion a journey of sanctification on a path towards future glorification. If this movement is a reality, is it possible to identify a *process* of characterological transformation within that intervening experience of sanctification? If such a process is

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[7] Beeke, *Developing Healthy Spiritual Growth*: *Knowledge, Practice and* Experience, 115.

[8] Richard Lovelace, "The Sanctification Gap," *Theology Today* 29 (1973): 363-369.

[9] John Coe, "Spiritual Theology: A Theological-Experiential Methodology for Bridging the Sanctification Gap," *Journal of Spiritual Formation & Soul Care* 2 no. 1 (2009): 4, accessed December 4, 2012, *ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials*, EBSCO*host*.

[10] Ibid., 5.

indeed identifiable, then what is the believer's role in that process and how can the believer facilitate it? These are essential questions to answer. Within the Reformed tradition, justification is an event initiated and carried out by God alone. The person responds to God's invitation by faith through grace (Eph. 2.8-9). In a similar fashion glorification is also an event that originates with God and occurs without any facilitation by the follower of Christ (2 Cor. 3.18). If sanctification is carried out in the same manner as justification and glorification then does the individual have no role but to await God's initiation and fulfillment of the characterological development into Christlikeness? However, if the individual *does* have a faciliatory role in the transformation process, then it behooves the individual to ascertain the parameters of that role and pursue them with all spiritual energy and attention. The believer must discern how to go about becoming characterologically Christlike: one's embodiment of the spiritual position in Christ is congruent with the physical manifestations of their character in daily life.

The question of how to close the gap between present character and spiritual position in Christ is significant for every follower of Christ. It is ultimately a question of character transformation. By what means is a believer's character transformed from their present state into the character of Christ? Is there an identifiable biblical process, and what is the role of the follower of Christ in such a process? If such a process exists, identification of this process presents inestimable possibilities for mitigating the frustration experienced by followers of Christ. Identification of this process also allows for a potential concomitant congruency between the spiritual and physical realities of their lives. A preliminary exploration into the issue of character, as well as an investigation of relevant interdisciplinary views surrounding a person's character, provides the backdrop for the research into the possibility of a biblical process of character transformation.

1.1 Background for an Understanding of Character

Character is said to determine a person's destiny. In much the same way, the pre-Socratic philosopher Heraclitus believed that a person's character is the "guardian spirit" that shapes the outcome of one's life.[11] Character is often described as the core of a person's identity. A person's character is evidentially observed by behaviors that flow from

[11] Heraclitus is noted for his use of multiple layers of meanings. Since fragments are all that remain of his writings, this particular quote has no small amount of debate regarding its actual meaning. The aspect of the quote that seems free from dispute is the word ἦθος as it refers to a person's character. For a more thorough discussion see Shirley Darcus, "Daimon as a Force Shaping Ethos in Heraclitus," *Phoenix* 28 no. 4 (1974): 390-407.

deeply held values and beliefs even though verbal assent does not always support those behaviors. Linguistically, the word "character" is derived from a transliteration of the Greek word, χαρακτήρ and was originally used with reference to, "… a mark impressed upon a coin."[12] Χαρακτήρ is the *nomen agentis* from the verb χαράσσει and refers to "one who would sharpen," and then later, "to inscribe on wood, stone, or brass." [13] Etymologically, as the word evolved linguistically, it came to be associated with a distinguishing mark that set one thing apart from another.[14] The application of χαρακτήρ grew from an identification of descriptive "characteristics" of things to an expression of prominent characteristics found in people. These characteristics became referred to singularly as ἦθος,[15] indicative of a person's customary or usual behavior and synonymous with the person's distinctive nature or "character." [16] In many instances, the words χαρακτήρ and ἦθος are utilized interchangeably where both would describe the usual behavior and defining characteristics of people or things.

As the term underwent further linguistic development in ancient literature the use of the word "character" (ἦθος) deviated from the transliterated word χαρακτήρ and emerged with a sense of specificity in the area of philosophy.[17] While both words χαρακτήρ and ἦθος retained the idea of customary behavior, the word ἦθος became more commonly used in association with traits or virtues in as much as they were considered desirable qualities. The antitheses of those virtues were referred to as vices.[18] Aristotle used the term χαρακτήρ to depict a fixed impression or stamp as in minting of coins but used ἦθος

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[12] Marcia Homiak, "Moral Philosophy," in *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy,* ed. Edward N. Zalta (Spring 2011), np, accessed December 3, 2014, http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2011/entries/moral-character/.

[13] Ulrich Wilckens, 'Χαρακτήρ,' *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament,* eds., Gerhard Kittel Geoffrey Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964), 418.

[14] Homiak, "Moral Philosophy, np."

[15] Robert Beekes, *Etymological Dictionary of Greek,* Vol. 1 (Leiden: Koninklijke Brill, 2009), 511.

[16] Ibid., 378. See also Johannes P. Louw and Eugene Albert Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains* (New York: United Bible Societies, 1996), 506, for ἦθος, ref. 41.25.

[17] Shirley M. Darcus, "Daimon as a Force Shaping Ethos in Heraclitus," 391-394.

[18] William Arndt, Frederick Danker, Walter Bauer, eds., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 2000), 501. Aristotle's characteristic descriptive for such people was κακός, with various cognates. The term refers to someone who does not meet accepted standards of behavior: people who are socially or morally reprehensible or evil.

extensively to describe the character of an *individual*.[19] Theophrastus, a student of both Plato and Aristotle, uses physiognomical sketches in his work, *Moral Characters,* to illustrate certain vices like cowardice, greed, and lying.[20] For each vice, the person whom he describes as possessing the vice is so closely identified with that negative character trait and the customary behavior to the point that the person becomes synonymous with the vice. The vice is descriptive of their character and becomes equated with the identity of the person. Later, the Stoic philosopher Epictetus, in the work *Enchiridion*,[21] used the word χαρακτῆρα to describe distinctively positive qualities a person should express both in demeanor and in behavior.[22]

It is in the teachings of Aristotle that we acquire much of the present understanding of character. In Aristotle's work, *Nicomachean Ethics*, the virtues are designated "ἠθικαὶ ἀρεταί" or "virtues of character." The word ἦθος, its cognates, and its plural form ἠθικαὶ refer to that idea of character. These virtues of character are further distinguished from what he terms "intellectual virtues" (ἀρεταὶ διανοητικαί). The former are virtues of character expressed as courage, temperance, justice, and prudence.[23] Aristotle postulates that these qualities of character develop in early childhood and shaped through habituated practice.[24] The latter, termed the intellectual virtues, are "virtues of knowledge"

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[19] Thornton Lockwood, "Habituation, Habit, and Character in Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics," in *A History of Habit: From Aristotle to Bourdieu*, eds., Tom Sparrow and Adam Hutchinson (Plymouth, UK: Lexington Press, 2013), 315. See also Aristotle's *Politics* I.9.1257a40-41, *Economics* II.1347a10, 1349b31.

[20] Theophrastus, *The Characters of Theophrastus,* trans. Charles E. Bennett and William A. Hammond (New York: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1902), xxii. The actual title of the work is "θικοὶ χαρακτῆρες," or Moral Characters. In total, Theophrastus describes thirty negative characters in his work.

[21] It is generally believed, though not without debate (see Robert Dobbin, 1998, for the argument in favor of direct authorship) that Epictetus did not write any books. The work attributed to him, *Enchiridion*, is believed to be most likely composed by his student, Flavius Arrian.

[22] See Epictetus, *Enchiridion*, 33 where he states, "Τάξον τινὰ ἤδη χαρακτῆρα σαυτῷ καὶ τύπον . . ." and goes on to describe this character, or demeanor, as not speaking hastily or with palaver and providing counsel for general behavior, both public and private.

[23] These four virtues came to be known as the "cardinal" or "hinge" virtues. According to Plato, (and later elaborated upon by Aristotle) these four virtues are the foundation upon which all other virtues develop in a person's life. More specifically, these four virtues can be expressed by any person; unlike the "theological virtues" of faith, hope, and love which are grace gifts from God alone. The classification of the "theological virtues" is the work of Augustine, who sought to re-examine the philosophical neo-platonic teachings on virtue from within a biblical framework.

[24] Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics,* ed. C.D.C. Reeve (Indianapolis: Hackett, 2014), 2.1, 1103a17-20. It is not accurate to the overall context of Aristotle's teaching to imply that it is through mindless, rote repetition and habit alone that one develops a virtuous character. The discrepancy arises because our understanding of the word habit and Aristotle's use of the word are distinctly different. There are many other factors involved in the development and transformation of character. A thorough reading of Socrates would uncover a similar argument to Aristotle's (There are some questions of inconsistency in the work of Socrates that may be explained by incomplete revisions of his work prior to his death. Those are relatively

or wisdom. A rudimentary explanation of the difference between the two types of virtues is that *intellectual virtues* are expressed as the (learned) knowledge and wisdom to choose the actions. These actions are then evidenced by the habituated[25] *virtues of character*. The actions of virtues of character are demonstrated at the appropriate time and in the appropriate situation.[26] In order to be a person whose character reflects a fully virtuous life, both types of virtues; knowledge and character, are essential.[27]

When we examine Scripture, the word χαρακτήρ occurs three times in the Septuagint (LXX).[28] There is a singular, though significant, occurrence of the word χαρακτήρ in the New Testament, found in Hebrews 1.3.[29] In this instance, the writer of Hebrews describes the Son as the "exact imprint" or the "exact representation" of God's

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inconsequential and when viewed through the revision theory, become less significant, especially as they relate to the overall direction of this research). Habit alone does not bring about a desired character of virtue. See the *Republic*, X.618cd. Additionally, a similar link to habit and character exists in Plato's *Laws* 7.792e where "κυριώτατον γὰρ οὖν ἐμφύεται πᾶσι τότε τὸ πᾶν ἦθος διὰ ἔθος." Bury translates this as, "For because of the force of habit, it is in infancy that the whole character is most effectually determined" (Plato, *Plato in Twelve Volumes, Vols 10 & 11*, trans. R.G. Bury (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Univ., 1967 & 1968). While the exact nature of the character is not easily elucidated and the linguistic understanding of the word habit has undergone evolution, the essential link between character and habit (or *habituation* as demonstrated in Lockwood) is most certainly expressed. Desires and passions, in themselves often fleeting, can give rise to habituation or *ἕξις* which over time give rise to moral virtues (or corresponding vices). These moral virtues, interwoven with the intellectual virtues that come from knowledge, are all a part of the ongoing progression of a person towards a virtuous life.

[25] For an excellent discussion of the significant difference between habit and habituation as well as their influence upon character see Lockwood, "Habituation, Habit, and Character in Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics," 315.

[26] This does not imply an Aristotelian "situation ethic" but rather "situationism" as posited by John M. Doris in *Lack of Character: Personality and Moral Behavior* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2002), 1. While Aristotle would suggest that those virtues honed in habituation will demonstrate themselves as the situation arises, Doris argues that character does not exist and that we should focus on "situation management." In "situation management" it is not habituation of character that is important but rather exercising control of the situations in which people find themselves. A proper response will arise in the appropriate situations. This situational approach can be further traced back to a report by Hartshorne and May, "The Character Education Enquiry," published in 1930 in the 3 volume *Studies in the Nature of Character.* For a full discussion, see Erik J. Wielenberg, "Saving Character," *Ethical Theory and Moral Practice* 9 (2006): 461-491.

[27] For an excellent argument related to an Aristotelian understanding of the inter-relationship between knowledge, character, and the ability (and responsibility) to change one's character, see William Bondeson, "Aristotle on Responsibility for One's Character and the Possibility of Character Change," *Phronesis* 19 no. 1 (1974): 59-65. It is Bondeson's position that Aristotle did indeed believe people could change their character. Further, since knowledge that character change is possible, it then follows that people are ultimately responsible for the kind of character they possess.

[28] Wilckens, 'Χαρακτήρ,' 419-20. The three occurrences are in Leviticus 13.28; 2 Maccabees 4.10, and 4 Maccabees 15.4. Aside from the Leviticus reference where the word refers to a "scarring" as a result of burning, the Maccabee references are used to designate the "likeness between parents and children" (4 Macc. 15.4) and the distinguishing features of Hellenistic culture as χαρακτῆρα.

[29] Sakae Kubo, *A Reader's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and a Beginner's Guide for Translation of New Testament Greek* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1975), 220.

very essence (ὑποστάσεως), or character.[30] This ὑποστάσεως, of no small import in the historical development of Christological theology, is not a physical representation but rather an essence of nature. It refers to the essential character of God exactly expressed in the life and character of the Son. In his nature, the essence and character of the Son is of the same substance and nature as the character of God. It is this idea that is at the core of understanding the words of Jesus in John 14.9, "ὁ ἑωρακὼς ἐμὲ ἑώρακεν τὸν πατέρα."

The noun ἦθος and related cognates ἔθος and συνήθειαν are found three times in the New Testament. In John 19.40 ἔθος is utilized in a description of the Jewish burial custom or *habit* of wrapping a body with spices in linen cloth. In 1 Corinthians 11.16, the noun συνήθειαν is used in conjunction with apostolic teachings on customs and *habits* regarding the public behavior of women. The use of the noun ἦθος occurs in the form ἤθη in 1 Corinthians 15.33, where the writer states "μὴ πλανᾶσθε φθείρουσιν ἤθη χρηστὰ ὁμιλίαι κακαί" and translates in this instance as "character" or "morals."

Of particular historical note is the use of the word "character" by the Hellenistic Jewish philosopher Philo in an expression of the Stoic doctrine of perception. In speaking of the soul, he states that "the soul is like a wax tablet which lets perceptions make their impress on it" (ὥσπερ δακτύλιός τις ἢ σφραγὶς ἐναπεμάξατο τὸν οἰκεῖον χαρακτῆρα) and the perceptions remain until forgetfulness wipes them away.[31] In the Stoic doctrine of perception, the proto-impression is known as the εἰκών, from which we derive the transliterated word "icon." The term εἰκών translates as the "exact image or exact representation."[32] According to Philo, this εἰκών is not merely a physical image but extends to the νοῦς, translated as "mind, or understanding," which is itself formed in the likeness of the divine Spirit.[33] According to the Stoic doctrine, the proto-knowledge of God is implanted into the human soul. In the imaging of humankind, the λόγος, which is the very image (εἰκών) of God and knowledge of God, is indelibly inserted into the χαρακτήρ of humankind so that it is accessible. It is this interrelation between εἰκών - λογος - χαρακτήρ that allows Philo to merge εἰκών statements with χαρακτήρ statements. The εἰκών is like

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[30] Louw and Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament,* 591-92.

[31] Wilckens, 'Χαρακτήρ,' *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament,* 420.

[32] The word appears as εἰκόνα, found in Genesis 1.26, 27 of the LXX and as צֶלֶם in Hebrew, with its accepted meaning of "image" or exact representation. See Francis Brown, Samuel Rolles Driver, and Charles Augustus Briggs, eds., *Enhanced Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977), 853.

[33] William Arndt, Frederick Danker, Walter Bauer, eds., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 2000), 680.

"the die impressing its stamp on wax."[34] The character of humankind is indelibly impressed and imprinted with the image of God.[35]

The idea of character is a prevalent theme throughout Scripture despite the relatively few occurrences of the words χαρακτήρ or ἦθος in the New Testament and the limited use in the Old Testament. When God created humankind, he created them in God's own εἰκών (Gen. 1.26-27) or, according to God's character. God "stamped" God's εἰκών[36] and χαρακτήρ in the creation of humankind.[37] It is that image and character that was irreparably damaged with the first sin (Gen. 3).[38] The restoration of the original χαρακτήρ and εἰκών in which God created humankind and the process through which χαρακτήρ is transformed in a restored relationship with God is the overarching theme of Scripture.

The meanings of words evolve as language and culture evolve. Throughout the historical use and development of the noun, we presently understand as "character" there are at least two common elements to the term regardless of the form of expression. Whether the term is used to denote the burning of a mark, an etched or imprinted image, or the elemental qualities that summarize a person's identifiable attributes, the underlying concepts in all of those descriptions are the ideas of representation and authenticity. That which bears the image is intended to be an exact representation of the original and authentic article. Moreover, as the term is applied to people, the character or trait becomes synonymous with the individual such that when the character is observed, the nature and

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[34] Wilckens, 'Χαρακτήρ,' *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament,* 421.

[35] Kirsopp Lake, *The Apostolic Fathers,* vol. 1 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Univ. Press, 1965), 65. In 1 Clement 33.4, God, "ἄνθρωπον ἔπλασεν τῆς ἑαυτοῦ εἰκόνος χαρακτῆρα;" which Lake translates as, "he did form in the likeness of his own image." Within the context of 1 Clement, this passage is a reference to the Genesis account of the creation of humankind.

[36] This is also the deeper theological intent of Jesus in the interaction with the ἐγκαθέτους in Luke. 20.20-26. Jesus asked the question, "δείξατέ μοι δηνάριον τίνος ἔχει εἰκόνα καὶ ἐπιγραφήν?" The answer was that it was that εἰκόνα of Καίσαρος imprinted on the coin. That coin, with the image of its creator, was to be given back to the one who ultimately created and owned the coin. From the Genesis creation account, we understand that humankind is indelibly imprinted with the εἰκόνα θεοῦ, reflecting the character and nature of God. It is Jesus' intent in his teaching that we are to "ἀπόδοτε τὰ . . . τοῦ θεοῦ τῷ θεῷ," effectively yielding to God the totality of our character, nature and being.

[37] It is interesting to compare the Genesis 1.26-27 and Hebrews 1.3 use of εἰκών. While humankind is created *in* the εἰκών of God, the Son *is* the εἰκών of God. This comparison is of particular import as one begins to examine the transformation of character and the εἰκών to which character is conformed.

[38] It is noted that there is a great deal of attention given to the scholarly debate surrounding the interpretation of Genesis 1-11. Scholars are divided as to whether the creation account is myth or is written with historical veracity. The view taken in this research is that the creation account in Genesis 2 and the record of the first sin in Genesis 3 are literal realities with subsequent generational impact and are therefore reliable for understanding the nature of humankind.

identity of the person becomes inextricably linked to that particular trait or character.

When the notion of character and exact representation is applied to the biblical context of humanity, there are profound theological ramifications to being created in the image of God (Gen. 1.26-27). These ramifications extend to the identity and role of Christ who is the exact representation of God (Heb. 1.3), and to the follower of Christ who is in the process of being formed and conformed into the image of Christ (Gal. 4.19; Rom. 8.29). What is that elemental "character" with which humankind is stamped in the life-giving process of creation? How does an individual ascertain that character and thereby discern genuine identity? The authentic element of human character and the potential for character development are historically debated topics that are once again coming to the forefront within interdisciplinary circles. The rationale for the interest in character and the prevailing interdisciplinary views necessitate exploration in order to add texture to a biblical understanding of character as well as the plausibility of a process whereby transformation of character can occur.

1.2 Background for the Research in Transformation of Character

The background for the research in the transformation of character is based upon a perceived increase of interest and awareness on five levels. The increased interest in the topic of character from the standpoint of worldview addresses issues related to values and moral decision-making. The sociological and educational viewpoint examines moral education and how we potentially influence the shaping and transformation of moral character. The philosophical frame of reference examines origins of character, the responsibility for character, and the potentiality of character change. The psychological viewpoint takes into consideration character and the plausibility of its existence, its formation, and its mutability. Finally, this research is situated in the rapidly developing discipline of Christian spirituality. The sacred text of Scripture creates spiritualities in the lives of those who interact with the text. The increased interest in Christian spirituality calls for an examination of character transformation from the perspective of the spiritualities that develop around the lived experience of character transformation as well as the theology motivating such transformation. The selected pericope of Colossians. 3.1-17 serves as the primary textual source from which to theologically examine a process of character transformation and the spiritualities generated in that transformational process.

1.2.1 Worldview Impact on Character

From the standpoint of worldview, much of the interest in character comes as a response to two perceived shifts in worldview. The first shift is from postmodernism to what has been called post-postmodernism. The second shift is a response to secularism displayed in a post-secular worldview.[39] The former paved the way for interest in that it lacked grounding in objective reality and presented a relative approach to moral absolutes. Absence of moral absolutes creates a vacuum in which a standard interpretation of "right" and "wrong" becomes purely subjective. The latter altered the understanding of the relationship between faith and reason.

Postmodernism is itself difficult to define[40] but there are certain characteristics of the postmodern worldview that factor into a current understanding of character and its corresponding expression. Postmodernism embraces a cultural definition of morality[41] rather than a defined system of values and ethical behavior arising from a standard moral absolute. With the lack of definite, defined values[42] and the loss of an objective moral foundation, there is within postmodernism an absence of an adequate standard of absolutes to direct human behavior and by which to measure human actions. Actions rooted in subjectivity and relativism yield a determination of "rightness" by the actor. This relativism, in turn, leads to a justification of behavior not always shared by everyone impacted by such actions. Behavior deemed acceptable by one individual within

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[39] Shifts in worldview are difficult to identify due to the almost innate aspect of worldview as it relates to beliefs and values. One can have a "blind spot" to issues of worldview until one has the perspective to look back on a particular view after there has been a prevailing shift from that view to another. Such is the case with postmodernism and post-secularism. There is current debate regarding the perceived passing of the postmodern worldview and the move towards what some term "post-postmodernism," or "pseudo-modernism" and "post-secularism." This research takes into account the current debate and after consulting the writings of leading scholars in the debate understands post-secularism to be that with the greatest rationale for an interest in character.

[40] Postmodernism encompasses a wide variety of concepts and disciplines and no single definition would suffice to provide a full explanation of its meaning. It embraces a high degree of uncertainty and posits the non-existence of absolute truth. In essence, postmodernism escapes definition because in the act of defining it one would be ascribing an absolute to a philosophical premise that denies such an existence.

[41] This intent of this research is not to disparage postmodernism. Rather, there are particular aspects of postmodernism that correlate to an increased interest in the topic of character and its related aspect of transformation. There are a number of dimensions related to postmodernism that are a most welcome recovery to much of the damage done by strict adherence to modernism, primarily as they relate to the rejection of non-empirically measurable experiences of spirituality which quite possibly paved the way for the shift to post-secularism.

[42] Whether these values are themselves entirely objective is irrelevant to this argument and to the research that follows. Since the values under discussion fall within the framework of the Christian perspective and this research seeks to identify a particular process for transformation of character and the spiritualities which that process creates, the values presented here will have a biblical standard as their foundation of objectivity.

postmodernism results in the creation of an individualized objectivity.

With a postmodern approach to the issue of character, the manner in which a person becomes "good" becomes unclear at best.[43] The acquisition of desirable virtues and the rejection of undesirable qualities of vice become subjective and undefinable except from a personal perspective.

At the heart of every culture are values and beliefs that hold the culture together and give people a sense of collective belonging and social order. Value issues "always concern choices about what is 'good' . . ." and "beliefs answer the question 'What is true?'"[44] These values and beliefs are an intrinsic part of a culture. When character is observed through the framework of postmodernism, the questions of "What is good?" as it relates to morality and "What is true?" as it relates to right and wrong yield subjective answers.

Post-secularism is debatably the prevailing worldview that is following secularism. While secularism rejects aspects of spirituality as non-empirical and therefore suspect, the position of post-secularism approaches faith and reason as no longer mutually exclusive.[45] The responses to post-postmodernism and post-secularism provide the potential for seeking a characterological moral compass within a framework that is open to the influence of the divine in the lives of individuals. The foundation is laid for a presentation of character development and transformation that is scripturally anchored, and Christologically centered.

Answers to the questions of values, beliefs, and morality are interwoven into the fabric of culture. They are expressed through a response to life and the lived experience of the Divine as one encounters the texture of life. The ways in which society and culture translate ideas of values and morality are of growing interest to those within the disciplines of sociology and education.

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[43] Even essential aspects, such as a sense of adapting to society and acquiring of desirable qualities in an individual, become cloudy and difficult to define and therefore facilitate.

[44] Lloyd Kwast, "Understanding Culture," Chap. 63 in *Perspectives on the World Christian Movement*, eds. Ralph Winter and Steven Hawthorne (Pasadena: William Carey Library, 2009), 398.

[45] For a fascinating perspective on post-secularism see Jürgen Habermas, "Secularism's Crisis of Faith," *New Perspective's Quarterly* 25 no. 4 (Fall, 2008): 2-5.

1.2.2 Sociological and Educational Interest in Character

Sociologically and educationally, character training predates Aristotelian or Socratic methodology and has a biblical locus in the family.[46] Teaching about God and the principles of morality laid out by God in the Decalogue were to be habitual practices of the Hebrew nation. Over the course of time, familial responsibilities for training in character came to be shared as established forms of education became more accessible. "Character education is as old as education itself. Down through history, education has had two great goals: to help people become smart and to help them become good."[47] Moral instruction of children can be identified back to Plato's *Republic* and has a recognized history.[48] "Early character education in the United States can be traced directly back to 18th century practice in Great Britain and medieval Christian morality (e.g., Aquinas), both of which are direct descendants of the Aristotelian idea of virtue formation through habituation."[49]

Character education is controversial and not without its detractors and skeptics. Brookes states, ". . . character building is a myth" and further, that "character . . . is almost entirely illusory."[50] Cornwall is another challenger of the validity of character education. He writes,

> Character is an archaic, quasi-metaphysical term, more related to horoscopes than any scientific concept. It is a term with no agreed upon definition, even among proponents of character education, which, moreover, that confusingly blends personality and behavioral components."[51]

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[46] See, e.g., Deuteronomy 6.4-9. Additionally, the Old Testament sage has much to say regarding instruction in wisdom, character, and ethical behavior in Wisdom literature (see Prov. 1.8-19; the call of wisdom in Prov. 1.20-33; 8-9; as well as Prov. 2-7, among others). Much of Proverbs is intended to be the parental transmission of ethical instruction.

[47] Thomas Lickona, "The Return of Character Education," *Educational Leadership* 51 no. 3 (November 1993): 6.

[48] See John Locke, *Some Thoughts Concerning Education* (1693), Jean-Jacques Rousseau's *Emile* (1762), James Russell Miller, *The Building of Character* (1894), John Dewey's *The Study of Ethics: A* Syllabus (1894), Booker T. Washington's *Character Building* (1902). The list is not exhaustive and extends beyond available space. These are considered classics in the field of character education.

[49] Trevor Harding, "The Psychology of 'Ought'," *38th ASEE/IEEE Frontiers in Education Conference,* Session S4H (Sarasota Springs, NY, 2008), 13.

[50] Andrew Brookes, "Character building: Why it doesn't happen, why it can't be made to happen, and why the myth of character building is hurting the field of outdoor education," *13th National Outdoor Education Conference Proceedings* (Underdale, South Australia: Outdoor Educators Association of South Australia, 2003), 19.

[51] Kevin Cornwall, "The Problem with Character Education," 2005, in paragraph 1, section 3, accessed December 14, 2014, http://patriotismforall.tekcities.com/character_ed.html,).

While character education is controversial, there seems to be a revival of interest in the United States after a period of quiescence, promulgated by its abandonment in the 1950's. Concern over the teaching of values and an increased focus on academics led to the decline of intentional character education and a shift to "values clarification."[52] Teacher training focused on teaching techniques and strategies and "downplayed the teacher's role as a transmitter of social and personal values."[53] In the 1970's and 1980's, concern that the "inaction of schools and the inability of many parents to model and teach values . . . created a 'values vacuum' in youth."[54] This perceived vacuum was believed to have a negative impact on both schools and society. The answer posited for the problem was a resurgence of character education.

Sociology and education's interest in character and the quest for the teaching of character in schools is, at least in part, prompted by behaviors that leave sociologists and educators struggling to find answers for escalating challenges to standards of right and wrong. In 2010 the University of Central Florida discovered wide-spread cheating on an exam in which 200 students were suspected of receiving advance copies of the exam.[55] The overwhelming response was one of shock and dismay as to how the concept of honesty as a trait of character and morality had evaded such a significant percentage of the student body.

Lickona gives three sociological reasons behind the renewed interest in character education in the 1990s: the decline of the family, troubling trends in youth character, and a recovery of shared, objectively critical ethical values.[56] The loss of moral standards brought on by the worldview shift of postmodernism and the abandonment of character education in schools created an environment in which the fabric of society became strained. "Moral education is at once a necessary condition for social control and

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[52] David Wells, *Losing Virtue: Why the Church Must Recover Its Moral Vision* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 13.

[53] William Huitt, "Moral and Character Development," In *Educational Psychology Interactive* (Valdosta State Univ., 2004), 2, accessed June 29, 2014, http://www.edpsycinteractive.org/morchr/morchr.html.

[54] David Collins and Ray Henjum, "The 3 C's in character education," *Guidance and Counseling,* 14 no. 3 (Spring 1999): 24, accessed May 23, 2012, *Academic Search Premier*, EBSCO*host*.

[55] Yunji De Nies and Karen Russo, *ABC News,* November 10, 2010, accessed December 15, 2014. http://abcnews.go.com/Business/widespread-cheating-scandal-prompts-florida-professor-issues-ultimatum/story?id=11737137.

[56] Lickona, "The Return of Character Education," 9.

an indispensable means of self-realization." [57] Character and morality are integral components of self-understanding. If moral education is a necessity, then the determination of what morals should be part of that education become paramount. The questions related to what is morally good and how a person achieves a character of "moral goodness" are questions returning to the forefront of the field of moral philosophy.

1.2.3 Philosophical Interest in Character

When one considers the discipline of philosophy and the issues related to character and virtue, for many the nexus of that study is found in a return to the teachings of Aristotle. "In the last decade or so, many philosophers concerned about moral development have shown a renewed interest in Aristotle's writings on ethics."[58] This renewal of attention to character and in particular moral character from the standpoint of philosophy can be traced, at least in part, to "a seminal article arguing that modern moral philosophy is in a state of confusion and disarray."[59] In her article Anscombe theorizes that modern moral philosophy bears little resemblance to Aristotle and many of the current moral philosophical theories depart significantly from his original ideological concepts.[60]

Anscombe makes a *prima facie* case for the contemporary expression of Christianity as the reason for the philosophical drift. Christianity, with its roots in Judaism and its focus on the Law (תּוֹרָה), adheres to morality based on directives from God concerning issues of right and wrong.[61] Anscombe argues that when the notion of a law-giving God was abandoned, the rhetoric and language surrounding those moral actions remained, while the substantive foundation for them was discarded.[62] She examines the

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[57] Thomas Wren, "Philosophical Moorings," in *Handbook of Moral and Character Education*, eds. Larry Nucci, Darcia Navarez, and Tobias Krettenauer (New York: Routledge, 2008), 11.

[58] Joseph Malikail, "Moral Character: Hexis, Habitus and 'Habit'," *Minerva - an Internet Journal of Philosophy* 7 (2003): 3, accessed July 15, 2015, http://www.minerva.mic.ul.ie/vol7/moral.pdf.

[59] Raymond Devettere, *Introduction to Virtue Ethics: Insights of the Ancient Greek* (Washington D.C.: Georgetown Univ. Press, 2002), 156.

[60] Elizabeth Anscombe, "Modern Moral Philosophy," *Philosophy*, 33, no. 124, (Jan. 1958), 1.

[61] Ibid., 5.

[62] Ibid. It should be noted that it is not God that Anscombe rejects. She was herself a firm believer in God, converting to Roman Catholicism as an adolescent. What Anscombe is rejecting is the notion of a law-giving God and the remnants of language that shaped ethics and moral philosophy. Anscombe's argument rings true in as much as she points out the disproportionate attention that Christianity has given to avoiding vice over practicing virtue. Historically, Christianity (and other religions based on an absolute standard of right and wrong given by the Divine) has focused more on the doing and not doing of "sin" and sinful behavior. That is expressed in historical Judaism and throughout the first two millennia of Christianity. The established Church categorized and divided sins based on the degree of sinfulness and the penance

philosophical theories of Kantianism, Utilitarianism, Social Contract Theory and Consequentialism (her terminology for Consequentialist Moral Theory)[63] and finds that they are "shallow philosophy" as moral theory.[64] The primary reason for the perceived lack of substance is rooted in the abandonment of a "divine legislator" as the source of moral behavior.[65] The philosophical ideas and theories developed during the onset of the post-Enlightenment transitional period of the 19th Century and subsequent to that time period pursue lines of thinking that no longer reflect a connection with their Aristotelian origins.[66] While there was not an instantaneous response to Anscombe's argument, it was her work, in conjunction with a convergence of sociological, educational, and worldview factors, that sparked a growing renewal of interest in moral theory. With that interest came a renewed interest in Aristotle's original teachings on virtue and character.

Character may be explained as the summation of deeply held values and beliefs expressed in behavior. However, actions, in and of themselves, do not shape and determine character. For Aristotle, the person of good character is a virtuous[67] (ἀρετή) person,

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required for reconciliation. The hyper-focus was directed to the sinful behavior rather than to a focus on the goal of being the kind of person one needs to be in order to willingly reject sinful behavior: both in principle and in practice. The Law, embodied in the 10 Commandments, was viewed as a list of "shall nots" to be avoided and such a perspective missed the intent of the Law while focusing on "the letter" of the Law. The apostle Paul pointed to the Law as that which enables one to understand the reality of sin within the heart of that person (Rom. 3.20) and thereby a need for righteousness through faith (Rom. 3.22) rather than duty and adherence to Law. Perhaps it is at this point that one finds the real strength of Anscombe's argument. It is likely that much of Christianity (and subsequently, the vast majority of the followers of Jesus) has failed to fully grasp and incorporate the Scriptural intent of the Law as a "tutor unto Christ" (Gal. 3.24) rather than a "tutor unto moral behavior." Unfortunately, Anscombe neglects the New Covenant teachings of Jesus, and perhaps justifiably so, since her focus is on the remnants and impact of language rather than focusing on the ideal set forth in Scripture. The prophetic words in Ezekiel 36 and Jeremiah 31 point to a time when the Law will be something written not on stone tablets but on the human heart; giving attention to the possible positive outworking of a person more fully focused on the "good." This internalization finds its fullest expression in Jesus' teaching in the Sermon on the Mount. The external requirements of the Law are superseded by an internalization of the attitudinal principles that lay behind the specifics of the Law.

[63] Candace Vogler, "Modern Moral Philosophy Again: Isolating the Promulgation Problem," *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, 2006, 4.

[64] Ibid., 10.

[65] Ibid., 11.

[66] Much of the Anscombe's objection to moral philosophical theories of the time was related to an understanding of natural law and relevant theories dating back to ancient Greeks and which continued through the medieval period. See John Coe and Todd Hall, *Psychology in the Spirit: Contours of a Transformational Psychology* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2010), 122-25. The classic natural law theory (e.g., as held by Aquinas) suggests that there is within humankind precepts which guide behavior. The "rightness" or "wrongness" of an action is determined based on its alignment with natural law. These laws are within humankind as a result of God's natural ordering of creation.

[67] The word most often used by Aristotle to describe virtue was *ἀρετή*, having the idea of strength or excellence (See "Character Development and the Virtuous Life: A Position Paper," presented by the Education Commission, Ontario Conference of Catholic Bishops (April, 2008:1-9), accessed February 17, 2013, http://www.acbo.on.ca/englishdocs/OCCB%20position%20paper%20on%20CDI%20FINAL-%20August%202008%20.pdf). The word *ἀρετή* included but was not limited to morality. For a more

especially within the context of social expression, and ἀρετή "is explicitly linked with human knowledge."[68] The highest expression of human potential is in knowledge. This principle is in keeping with early Socratic and Stoic teaching as well. In his dialogue with Meno, Socrates states, "Virtue (ἀρετή) is knowledge."[69] A person can be habituated to do specific acts of virtue, but the reasoning ability to choose those virtuous acts requires more than habituation.[70] For Aristotle, "full virtue is only possible with practical wisdom."[71] Further, this practical wisdom, or φρόνησις, is for Aristotle the essential component that allows an individual to express the virtues in a way that demonstrates a cognitive element to the virtuous life. According to Aristotle's theory, a virtuous person does not merely "do" virtuous acts but exercises those virtuous acts in a manner that reflects the cognitive aspect of making the right choices, for the right reasons, in the right time, and in the right manner.[72] The converse is also true. A person cannot be wholly virtuous just by knowing the "right things" to do or the virtues that should be expressed in any given situation. Knowledge alone is insufficient. A wholly virtuous person is one who has both the knowledge and the actions that reflect the virtuous life.[73] The motivation and *τέλος*[74] for the virtuous life espoused by Aristotle is to become a better person – to become a fully realized and "flourishing" person of ethical ἕξεις[75] that responds in a way that expresses

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complete list of biblical and extra-biblical references for the use of αρετη in ancient literature see Otto Bauernfeind, "*ἀρετή*," *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament,* 457-461.

[68] Richard Hooker, "World Cultures Home Page," *Greek Philosophy,* 1996, accessed December 4, 2014, richard-hooker.com.

[69] Plato, *Meno,* trans. W.R.M. Lamb, vol. 3 of 12 (Cambridge: Harvard Univ., 1967), *86b, c.*

[70] The particular area of philosophy focused on virtue, morality, and behavior is virtue ethics. It finds its focus in the agent (Aristotelian εὐδαιμονία for the well-being of the individual) rather than the actions (Kantian actions for the sake of duty and obedience to a set of rules). Some would divide these two types as eudaemonist and deontological respectively.

[71] Wren, "Philosophical Moorings," 17.

[72] Ibid.

[73] Julia Driver, *Uneasy Virtue* (Cambridge Univ. Press), 2, accessed August 22, 2015, http://assets.cambridge.org/97805217/81725/excerpt/9780521781725_ excerpt.pdf. Aristotle's understanding of the relationship between knowledge and virtue is in contrast to that of Socrates, who held that knowledge and virtue were synonymous.

[74] A τέλος is "the goal towards which a movement is being directed, *end, goal, outcome*," see William Arndt, Frederick Danker, Walter Bauer, eds., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature,* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 2000), 998.

[75] ἕξεις is the plural of the Greek noun ἕξις, (the transliteration of which is hexeis and hexis, respectively). See William Arndt, Frederick Danker, Walter Bauer, eds., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 350. Joseph Malikail explains that ἕξις is equated to a "state of character" (see David Ross's translation of Aristotle's *Nicomachean* Ethics (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1980) which, depending on the person's *disposition* can be either "excellence or aberration" with regard to

virtue in the various circumstances of life. He describes that goal as "happiness" or "the good life" and that life is achieved by the incorporates the habits into life is illustrated in figure 1.[76]

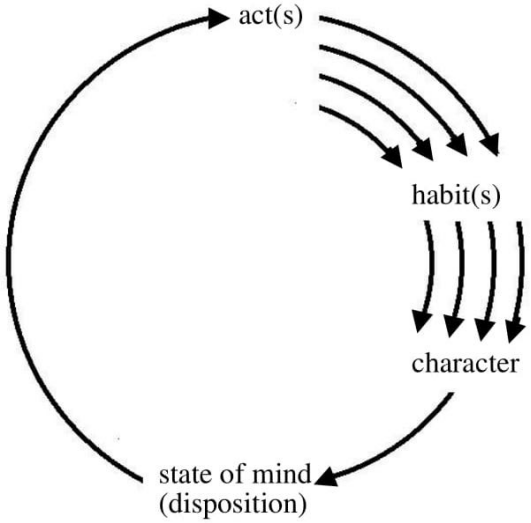

Figure 1. Aristotle's process of habituation that leads to a person of character

There is much debate as to which comes first: the disposition from which one brings the dynamics of cognitive awareness and applied φρόνησις towards the actions, or process, one must jump into the "cycle" at some point. In an Aristotelian model, the person begins with the *capacity* for good character. Through cognition, applied φρόνησις, and repeated actions in line with the desired character, habits (ἕξεις) develop that lead to the character. The resultant character then, in turn, leads to a particular disposition, supplementary cognition, and applied φρόνησις that take a person into further actions in line with that desired character.[77] With the acquisition and expression of character the person achieves that goal of εὐδαιμονία and lives a flourishing life.

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virtue (Malikail, "Moral Character: Hexis, Habitus and Habit," 11). Also, see Malikail's explanation of the relationship between the words *hexis*, the Latin translation *habitus*, and the more common English word, *habit*. Hexis, for Aristotle, could be used to explain both knowledge and "moral character." (Malikail, 5). In the New Testament usage of the word, there is the sense of "practice, doing again and again, doing repeatedly," evidenced in Heb. 5.14 referring to "τῶν διὰ τὴν ἕξιν τὰ αἰσθητήρια γεγυμνασμένα ἐχόντων πρὸς διάκρισιν καλοῦ τε καὶ κακοῦ," describing those "who through practice have their faculties trained to distinguish between good and evil." See Louw and Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, 511, entry no. 42.10.

[76] See Section 2, "The Good Character," accessed August 23, 2014, http://philosophy.lander.edu/ethics/aristotle1.html for the diagrammatic source material. The diagram would be better illustrated in three dimensions as a spiral with an upward trajectory that reflects characterological development and transformation.

[77] Ibid.

However, for the follower of Christ, the motivation and τέλος relate to but transcend that of Aristotle and are fundamentally and distinctly different.[78] The motivation and τέλος for the follower of Christ is to become, in praxis, what one already is in position. This is, to use MacIntyre's description, "man-as-he-could-be-if-he-realized-his-*telos.*"[79] This motivation and τέλος is a characterological reality that one comes to possess on a pneumatological level because of spiritual union with Christ and is to be expressed in the praxis of practical daily living. The character of Christ, positionally and spiritually achieved through the imputation of righteousness (2 Cor. 5.21), becomes the "disposition" or primary focus of the believer's cognitive awareness, will, and desires. Subsequent to the focus, cognitive awareness, in concert with both will and desires, generates actions commensurate with the characterological reality. These actions are practically expressed in the ἕξεις of the daily experience of living. These ἕξεις then becomes a pattern of behavior rooted in the disposition and desire to express those behaviors in light of applied φρόνησις and under the influence of virtues reflected in the character of Christ. It is a realized expression of character arising from the perspective of a teleological virtue ethic grounded in a Christological τέλος as expressed in figure 2.

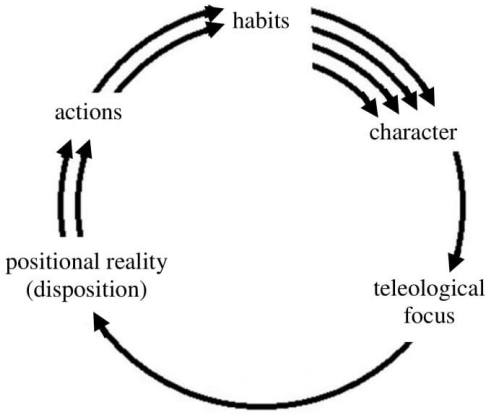

Figure 2. Character development from a Christological and teleological perspective

As philosophy re-examines Aristotle and the related issues of character and virtue, the question remains as to the standard for defining virtue. Who sets the standards for the virtuous life and defines the goal for that virtuous life? Do we merely agree to adopt

[78] Teleological virtue ethics is a particular area of virtue ethics "in which certain kinds of actions, habits, capacities and inclinations are discouraged because they direct us away from our true nature" and from our desired goal. See Joseph Kotva, *The Christian Case for Virtue Ethics* (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown Univ. Press, 1996), 17. For the follower of Christ, this τέλος is vastly different from that of Aristotle's τέλος of εὐδαιμονία (*Nicomachean Ethics* 1095a17).

[79] Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue* (Notre Dame, IN: Univ. of Notre Dame Press, 1984), 54.

a historically philosophical variety of virtue and ethics based on those virtues defined by Aristotle? Can a person, once habituated, change one's character? Aristotle would argue that one can act contrary to habituation. If this is indeed possible, then from where does the capacity to act contrary to habituation come?

Is character change strictly a phenomenon of cognitive knowledge as expressed by Socratic and Stoic philosophy? Moreover, if the adage "knowledge is virtue,"[80] is an accurate expression as it relates to character transformation, is an effort of the intellect all that is needed for a person to change one's character? The field of psychology takes these questions and further expounds on them through an exploration of human development.

1.2.4 Psychological Interest in Character

Virtue ethics and the specific subsidiary of teleological virtue ethics can provide the schema for character, morality and moral behavior. However, the origins and developmental pathways in which character is formed and expressed are of importance to those in the field of psychology and moral psychology in particular. This psychological interest in character development arises because, according to Narvaez, "there are few more pressing problems before psychological science than to account for moral functioning."[81] At the heart of the investigation is that which identifies the self as a moral agent, how that agency is molded and, as some would believe, *remolded* based on variables encountered in life. "God created humans with volition, a capacity for agency and selfhood."[82] One of the characteristics of this agency is the ability to be self-reflective and to evaluate one's self and behavior from an objective position. It is this capacity that allows for contemplation and is one of the aspects that distinguishes humankind from animals. This essential moral agent is often described and understood as the soul.[83] According to

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[80] Plato, *Meno*, *86b, c.*

[81] Darcia Narvaez, and Daniel K. Lapsley, *Moral Identity, Moral Functioning, and the Development of Moral Character,* vol. 50, chap. 8 in *The Psychology of Learning and Motivation*, eds. Daniel Bartels, et al. (Burlington: Elsevier, 2009), 238.

[82] Mark McMinn, *Psychology, Theology, and Spirituality in Christian Counseling* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House, 2011), 41.

[83] The word *soul* is a transliteration of the Greek word ψυχή from which we get our word *psyche* and the discipline of psychology. It is synonymous with the Hebrew נֶפֶשׁ or *nephesh* and is best translated as "living soul." In the Genesis account of the creation of humankind (Gen. 2:7) it is recorded that "וַיִּיצֶר יהוה אֱלֹהִים אֶת־הָאָדָם עָפָר מִן־הָאֲדָמָה וַיִּפַּח בְּאַפָּיו נִשְׁמַת חַיִּים וַיְהִי הָאָדָם לְנֶפֶשׁ חַיָּה" (see Neil Anderson, Terry E. Zuehlke, and Julianne S. Zuehlke, *Christ Centered Therapy: The Practical Integration of Theology and Psychology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000), 36.) The breath of life given by God enabled the form of the created person to have life and be a living being or living soul. Space will not allow a full investigation of Plato's harmony of soul and body nor a Cartesian dualism of mind-body. This research approaches theology and social sciences

the psychologist James Hillman, within the soul is the "seed" for every person's character and destiny.[84]

While Aristotle would argue that it is within the realm of possibility for an individual to alter their character (through both knowledge and habituation), the argument is not entirely as defined in psychology.[85] In the 20th C, one of the most significant contributions to the interest in the development of character is the cognitive development theory of moral development by Lawrence Kohlberg in his *The Philosophy of Moral Development*. It is generally regarded that Kohlberg's work is an expansion of the work of Piaget's moral theory.[86] Both Kohlberg and Piaget focus on stages of human moral development. Kohlberg takes certain levels of development and then subdivides them into

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from a paradigmatic perspective. See James Estep and Jonathan Kim, eds., *Christian Formation: Integrating Theology and Human Development* (Nashville: B&H Publishing Group, 2010), 50 Any matters of apparent disagreement yield to Scriptural authority. From a biblical perspective, it will suffice at this point to identify the soul as that which bears the image of the Creator God (imago Dei). This research rejects both a monistic view as well as a dualism that generates a dichotomy of good and evil (soul = good, body = evil). "Humans cannot be reduced to either physical or nonphysical; we are inseparably both" (James Estep and Jonathan Kim, eds. *Christian Formation,* 30). The biblical account of creation is that God created the body and brought it to life as a living soul. A person is at the same time an "en-souled body" and an "embodied soul," the totality of which deemed טוֹב מְאֹד "very good" (καλὰ λίαν) by its Creator.

[84] James Hillman, *The Soul's Code: In Search of Character and Calling* (New York: Warner Books, 1996), 6. This "seed" is often referred to by Hillman as the "acorn theory." In essence, every person has within them the seed of their determined character and destiny. That seed will grow and be seen for what it really is. The growth of that seed, formed in a specific image (as an acorn is formed in the image of and will grow into an oak) will demonstrate the fulfillment and fruition of its intended purpose thereby formulating a person's mission and calling in life. The root of the idea comes from Plato's παράδειγμα, (see Plato, *Timaeus*, ed. John Burnet (Greek text) (e typographeo Clarendoniano, 1902), 28a, b.) in 28a as παραδείγματι, and the "Cause without beginning," forming and shaping the creation thereby determining destiny of the created.

[85] The debate on issues related to the existence of character, the ability of one to have one's character altered (if such a thing as character *does* exist), and the nature of how that change in character is brought about are all topics of lengthy debate. There are a growing number of social psychologists, O. Flanagan, *Varieties of Moral Personality* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Univ. Press, 1991), Richard. E. Nisbett and L. Ross, *Human Interface: Strategies and Shortcomings of Social Judgment* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1980), Peter Railton, "Made in the Shade of Moral Compatibilism and the Aims of Moral Theory," *Canadian Journal of Philosophy* Supplementary Volume 21 (1995): 79-106 and John M. Doris, *Lack of Character: Personality and Moral Behavior*, (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press), 2002, among others who would question the existence of character and traits of character (though Flanagan would argue for the existence of traits, he would not describe them on a level of "unrestricted globality or totally context-independent"). See Gilbert Harman, "Moral Philosophy Meets Social Psychology: Virtue Ethics and the Fundamental Attribution Error," *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society, New Series* 99 (1999): 326. Others would not contest the existence of character but would posit that character is only expressed in particular situations (situationism) and would deny that character can be altered through habit or habituation. While their contribution is recognized and appreciated, this research will approach the topics of character and the malleability of character from a primary position presented in Scripture as well as substantiated by research by others in the field of psychology.

[86] Iodanis Kavathatzopoulos, "Kohlberg and Piaget: Differences and Similarities," *Journal of Moral Education* 20 no. 1 (Feb. 1991): 47, accessed December 23, 2014, *Academic Search Premier*, EBSCO*host*.

particular stages, much as Piaget does with his five-stage[87] theory of development. Kohlberg develops a six stage model for linear development in "abstract and universal moral principles which regulate the moral thinking and action of the individual."[88] According to Kohlberg, "moral character . . . is a set of 'good habits' produced by training, example, punishment, and reward," but that moral character does not develop in a moral vacuum.[89] "Kohlberg viewed the habitualized virtue approach of character education as intellectually devoid and of no use when one faces real-life dilemmas which have no antecedent in the actor's prior training."[90] Knowledge of morally acceptable action alone is not sufficient to lead to reliable behavioral change.[91] Kohlberg concludes that while morality is universally embedded in all cultures, people experience moral (and character) development over time - through experiences and interaction.[92]

Cognitive development alone does not produce substantive, long-lasting behavioral change. Operant conditioning through reward or stimulus may produce behavioral change, but it can be independent of the morality surrounding the behavior. The missing element in the synthesis of knowledge and behavior is the aspect of the will. A person can know the right thing to do and desire to do the right thing and yet fail to carry through on what is known and desired. Historically this is referred to as incontinence or

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[87] Jean Piaget, *The Psychology of Intelligence,* trans. Malcolm Percy and D. E. Berlyne (New York: Routledge, 1950), 131-71. Piaget's four stages are primarily cognitive periods: sensorimotor, preoperational, concrete and formal. The last of these stages is achieved in adolescence. His theory of moral development consists of two stages: a heteronomous morality (following rules given by others) and an autonomous morality (in which one evaluates a decision based on more complex sets of variables related to the action).

[88] Kavathatzopoulos, "Kohlberg and Piaget: Differences and Similarities," 47.

[89] Lawrence Kohlberg, "Development of Moral Character and Moral Ideology," in *Review of Child Development Research,* vol. 1, eds., Martin Hoffman and Lois Hoffman (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1964), 388.

[90] Trevor Harding, "The Psychology of 'Ought'," *38th ASEE/IEEE Frontiers in Education Conference.* Session S4H (Sarasota Springs, NY, 2008), 2.

[91] William Huitt, "Moral and Character Development," *Educational Psychology Interactive* (Valdosta State Univ.), 2004, 3, accessed June 29, 2014, http://www.edpsycinteractive.org/morchr/morchr.html.

[92] Kohlberg, "Development of Moral Character and Moral Ideology," 384-93. This developmental model should be understood juxtaposed to Fowler and his six-stage theory of faith development. See James Fowler, *Stages of Faith: The Psychology of Human Development and the Quest for Meaning* (San Francisco: Harper & Rowe, 1981). There are some that would argue for a developmental approach which is less cognitive and includes more emphasis on emotion and awareness. See William Huitt, and Jennifer Robbins, "An Introduction to Spiritual Development," *11th Annual Conference: Applied Psychology in Education, Mental Health, and Business* (Valdosta: Valdosta State Univ., 2003, 13.) See also Robert Coles, *The Spiritual Life of Children* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1990) and David Hay and Rebecca Nye, *The Spirit of the Child* (London: Jessica Kingsley, 2006).

the weakness of the will (ἀκρασία).[93] It is mainly this unreliability of connection between belief and behavior that has led many moral psychologists to discount the reality of character and character traits. The will can supersede belief and bring about corresponding behavior that is contrary to the desire of the person committing the act. The converse of that is also true. The will can act in concert with belief and bring about actions that are desired, but objective observation of those actions leads to a consideration that they are substantively irrational in the face of situational factors.

The question becomes then, in reality, is a person responsible for one's own character since there are so many variables at work in shaping it, many of which seem to be outside of one's ability to control? Levy postulates that it is only the virtuous person that is responsible for their character – the vicious person is not.[94] "Most accounts of moral responsibility claim that it is only appropriately attributed to an agent if she exercises control over the action, omission or consequence for which she is held responsible; it is therefore natural to think that we are responsible for our characters only if we exercise a sufficient degree of the right kind of control over their contents."[95]

Does responsibility for character cease when we fail to exercise the right kind of control? If a person has the moral knowledge, can the person's character be altered such that the change is exhibited by the corresponding consequential behavior? Is there an external factor which can express lordship over the will and cooperate with an aspiration to achieve the desired *τέλος* when the internal will to do so is insufficient? While much of psychology gives strict attention to secular aspects of the dimension of character development, the disciplines of Christian spirituality and theology would direct attention to the interaction between the human spirit and the spirit of God as the nexus of activity

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[93] Aristotle describes incontinence or weakness of the will (ἀκρασία) in *Nicomachean Ethics 7.1*. The word ἀκρασία is linguistically related to the word ἐκράτεια whose stem "denotes power or lordship, and which expresses the power or lordship one has either over oneself or over something" (see Walter Grundmann, "ἐγκράτει," *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, 339-42. See also *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, eds. Bauer, et al., 38). While ἀκρασία is noted here as a component of moral character, evidenced by ethical behavior.

[94] Thus far we have focused unilaterally on the virtuous person. The converse to the virtuous person would be the vicious person; the person whose life is controlled and dominated by a desire for vice and its expression in their behavior.

[95] Neil Levy, "Are We Responsible for Our Characters?" *ethic@* 1, no. 2 (December 2002), 115. It would appear that Levy makes a case for the vicious person as not responsible for their vicious actions. He equates moral responsibility with being held responsible for the actions. The vicious person is not responsible for their character and subsequently the actions that result from that character. He goes on to say that the same level of responsibility applies to character, though "only if we exercise a sufficient degree of the right kind of control over" the content of our character (Levy, 117).

for that development.

1.2.5 Theological and Spirituality Interests

Spirituality can be described as a lived experience of a faith relationship.[96] "In our daily life, as a rule, spirituality is latently present as a quiet force in the background, an inspiration and an orientation."[97] To an extent, the growing interest in spirituality is a result of a nascent awareness that modernism, with its corresponding rejection of God and the *mysterium spirituale*, does not fill the spiritual void that exists within each person. Additionally, interest in spirituality increased with a corresponding increased interest in the issue of character in the American workplace; which can at least partially explain the success of Stephen Covey's book, *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People.*[98]

When one explores Christian spirituality and the creation of spiritualities that come from the encounter with sacred texts, an embedded pathway emerges that confronts issues of moral and ethical behavior, character, and the transformation of that character. "A spiritual life motivates a moral life."[99] Christianity provides an environment of spirituality in which ethical behavior and character find their true expression. The Scriptural declaration of ethical truths that affect moral behavior come together with the theological reality of God who is both within and behind the spirituality.

Scripture confronts those who interact with the text with a moral life that is "always embedded in a theological context."[100] Theology and ethical behavior are

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[96] As interest in spirituality has grown, there has been a corresponding growth in varieties of spiritualities and with each a distinct interpretation of the term. One can encounter secular spirituality as well as New Age (Origenic) spirituality and even a spirituality of jazz, among a plethora of possible alternative spiritualities. For this research and as it relates to character and the transformation of character, the scope will be limited to Christian spirituality and the spiritualities created by and within the context and environment of Scripture.

[97] Kees Waaijman, *Spirituality: Forms, Foundations, Methods*, trans. John Vriend (Leuven: Peeters, 2002), 1.

[98] Lake Lambert, *Spirituality, Inc.: Religion in the American Workplace* (New York: New York Univ. Press, 1999), 19. The relative success of Covey's book within a secular and Christian context is attributed, at least in part, to post-secularism's willingness to allow faith and reason to coexist as previously discussed. This openness also takes spirituality into the realm of lived experience rather than a compartmentalized expression of religion.

[99] Louise Kretzschmar, Wessel Bentley, and Andre van Niekerk, *What is a Good Life?* (Kempton Park: AcadSA, 2009), 22.

[100] Daniel Harrington, and James Keenan, *Paul and Virtue Ethics: Building Bridges Between New Testament Studies and Moral Theology* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2010), 110.

interwoven; they are inextricably linked. "Ethics flows from theology, just as action flows from being (*agere sequitur esse*)."[101] The idea that "right orthopraxy flows from proper orthodoxy" is fundamental for understanding Pauline epistolary structure.[102] Burridge cites Dibelius' argument that "that the ethical material at the end of the letters was little more than contemporary Hellenistic paraenesis, inserted to provide moral guidance in the absence of an early Christian ethic, which was not needed in the expectation of the immediacy of the second coming."[103] Scholarship subsequent to Dibelius disputes his claim and instead, strengthens the argument that there appears to be a high degree of intentionality in the overall structure. The majority of churches to whom Paul addresses the epistles are relatively young, both in faith and chronology. It appears that Paul's intent is to strengthen and settle issues of doctrinal belief prior to establishing patterns of characterological behavior. A person expresses character through behaviors that flow from their core beliefs and values. As a person apprehends the ethical implications of being "in Christ," a robust Christological theology, as expressed in the Pauline epistles, is significantly influential upon a person's understanding of identity (or self-realization).[104] A proper, theological understanding of spiritual identity, in turn, facilitates the characterological transformation demonstrated by ethical behavior.

Belief precedes and leads to behavior. Character is formed and developed through belief that comes from knowledge (Rom. 10.14) in conjunction with habituated behavior. How does one apply these theoretical principles and become a person of character, within the framework of a lived experience of faith? What is the ultimate goal for that character that is continually being formed and reformed within each person?[105] Is

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[101] Ibid.

[102] See Rom. 1-11, 12-16; Gal. 1-4, 5-6; Eph. 1-3, 4-6; Col. 1-2, 3-4. In many of the examples given, there is a clear shift in language that represents the initiation of an ethical segment of the epistle. One should examine the epistles from an overall structure rather than isolating individual statements to point out issues of disagreement. While there is a clear division of intention in the sections, much theology can still be taught in paraenesis.

[103] Richard Burridge, *Imitating Jesus: An Inclusive Approach to New Testament Ethics* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), 98.

[104] Two of the most important Pauline phrases for an understanding of identity and psychological self-realization are found repeatedly in the epistles. Those two phrases are "ἐν Χριστὸς" in 3.23 and "Χριστὸς ἐν ὑμῖν," (seventy-six times and four times in strict structural agreement). The implications of being "in Christ" are essential for a believer's understanding of identity, but they also have implications for behavior. Thus, knowledge of identity and the explanation of proper ethical behavior associated with that identity are foundational for the formation and transformation of character.

[105] See Kees Waaijman, "Conformity in Christ," *Acta Theologica Supplementum 8* (2006): 41-55.

there a process one can follow by which one can facilitate the transformation of one's character? Integral to all of these questions is the role of the individual in that process of character transformation. Is each individual solely responsible for their own transformation of character or are there other elements at work, both internally and externally, to bring about the desired goal? According to Wright, "Character is transformed by three things. First, you have to aim at the right goal. Second, you have to figure out the steps you need to take to get to that goal. Third, those steps have to become habitual, a matter of second nature."[106]

In the Judeo-Christian tradition, the biblical text explains those goals of character transformation and the steps necessary to achieve them. Scripture is replete with ethical commands, and the repercussions of a life lived in harmony with or in dissonance with those commands. When God establishes the Hebrew nation, he gives the Decalogue to them in order for them to know how to frame their ethical behavior towards God and others. In the New Testament, Jesus takes the ethical goals of the Decalogue and the תּוֹרָה to an internal attitudinal level with an external expression. Further, in the NT, the *corpus Paulinum* provides a scriptural milieu in which that radical internal transformation with external expression is expanded and explained.

Paul presents his ethics within the central framework of three essential theological elements: the cross, new creation, and community.[107] This model parallels the pericope of Colossians 3.1-17 and provides some of the most explicit expressions in the New Testament of the balance between *κήρυγμα*, (the proclamation of the gospel) and *διδαχή*, (the ethical teachings on behavior); between the *indicative*, (what God has done in Christ), and the *imperative*, (what is expected of those within the community of faith).[108] Further justification for the use of the selected pericope is evidenced by the possible inclusion of a teleological element. This element provides a focal point from which an overarching process of transformation of character can be understood and realized in the lives of those who are part of the community of faith.

This research into a process for transformation of character and the spiritualities created surrounding that process utilizes a particular pericope within the Pauline epistle to

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[106] Nicholas Wright, *After You Believe: Why Christian Character Matters* (New York: Harper Collins, 2010), 29.

[107]This tri-fold framework serves as the thesis for Richard Hays' work, *The Moral Vision of the New Testament* (New York: Harper Collins, 1996.

[108] Ibid., 18.

the Colossians. Within Colossians, there is a convergence of theological and ethical instruction as well as the possible presentation of a process of character transformation that necessitates exploration. Just as the geographical location of Colossae has yet to be explored from an archeological perspective, so the selected Colossian pericope has received little attention with regard to the transformation of character. A review of literature related to the Colossian pericope provides essential background for the current understanding of the Pauline text as well as reveals the areas of perceived importance for the epistle as a whole. These commentaries and monographs are reviewed in the following chapter.

CHAPTER 2

A REVIEW OF THE RELEVANT LITERATURE

2.1 An Examination of Relevant Commentaries and Related Monographs

Specific commentaries and monographs were selected for a review of relevant literature.[1] These commentaries were chosen for their thorough analysis of the biblical text and the opportunity to investigate the topic of character transformation from the foundational text of the selected pericope. These resources reflect a spectrum of methodological approaches including historical-critical, socio-rhetorical, theological reading, and chiastic structural analysis. Each resource is critically examined utilizing specific criteria for analysis.[2] For coherence and in order to allow for a thorough understanding of relevance to the movement of the thesis, these criteria will form the framework for an examination of the literature.

The commentaries and monographs under review can be located into one of four methodological categories. All but Rogers, Harrington, Wilson, Thompson, Witherington, MacDonald, and Heil[3] analyze the selected pericope using aspects of the historical-critical

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[1] In order to provide a sufficient backdrop for an understanding of character and character transformation, familiarity with literature from multiple academic disciplines is essential. In addition to commentaries and monographs that examine the pericope under investigation, the consultation of literature from the areas of philosophy, psychology, sociology, and spirituality provide invaluable insight in as much as particular areas of those fields relate to character and character transformation. The space allocation for the thesis necessitates the limitation of the review to include those commentaries and monographs that are directly related to the Colossian epistle.

[2] The evaluation of relevant commentaries focuses upon their contribution to the understanding of the focal pericope and the concept of transformation of character based on three critical criteria. These three criteria are as follows: 1. What is the structural integrity of the focal pericope within the framework of the Colossian epistle? Is it an integral unit or is it subdivided between preceding and subsequent sections of the epistle? 2. How are sections of the pericope analyzed with regards to the transformation of character and the process of transformation? 3. Is there a theological link between the commands in 3.12-16 and the broader Christian community's role in character transformation?

[3] See Patrick Rogers, *Colossians*, New Testament Message 15 (Wilmington, DE: Michael Glazier, 1980); Daniel Harrington, *Paul's Prison Letters: Spiritual Commentaries on Paul's Letters to Philemon, the Philippians, and the Colossians* (Hyde Park, NY: New City Press, 1997); Marianne Thompson, *Colossians and Ephesians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005); Ben Witherington III, *The Letters to Philemon, the Colossians, and the Ephesians: A Socio-Historical Commentary on the Captivity Epistles* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007); Margaret MacDonald, *Colossians and Ephesians* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2008); John Heil, *Colossians: Encouragement to Walk in All Wisdom as Holy Ones in Christ*

methodology. Extensive detail is given to etymological distinctions and semantics as they relate to the commentator's analysis of both the particular and the broader meaning of the text. Garland's excellent work on Colossians and Philemon in the NIV Application Commentary bridges the historical-critical methodology with extensive theological reflection and application. While the latter distinctives potentially locate it within the first section, it is located in the more extended historical-critical division, if for no other reason than to offer a bit of a welcome respite to the consistent depth of exegetical investigation reflected in the other works under review.

Rogers takes a theological approach to exposition and finds within the epistle a distinct message of theology and practical spiritual renewal. Thompson utilizes a theological reading methodology. Her primary focus is upon the location of Colossians within the theological framework of the entire Bible as well as how the epistle contributes to biblical theology. Witherington and MacDonald apply the Socio-Rhetorical methodology to their research and as such provides excellent insight into the socio-cultural context from which Paul writes the epistle. Heil approaches Colossians from a chiastic structural analysis that leads to a contextual understanding of the epistle. This analytical approach takes into account the cultural nuances of the chiastic structure and how that structure impacts the understanding of the interrelated messages of the epistle in their historical context.

Since the majority of the commentaries and monographs fall into the historical-critical methodology, those outside of that type of analysis will be reviewed first according to the specific criteria utilized for evaluation.

2.1.1 What is the structural integrity of the focal pericope within the framework of the Colossian epistle? Is it an integral unit or subdivided between preceding and subsequent sections?

Rogers divides the epistle into four major sections. The focal pericope fits within the framework of the third section, comprising Colossians 3.1-4.6.[4] The specific section of 3.1-17 introduces the discussion of moral living in light of the preceding doctrinal focus of the epistle. The "fundamental principle of conversion (3.1-4) leads on to practical guidance contrasting the new with the old (3.5-10); the vestments of harmony (3.12-14) illustrate the

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(Atlanta: SBL, 2010), David Garland, *Colossians and Philemon*, The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2009).

[4] Rogers, *Colossians*, 46.

ideal of mankind reunited (3.11) . . .” with the concluding verses of 3.15-17 illustrating the “fullness of peace which should characterize Christian community.”[5] One aspect of Roger’s work that distinguishes it among the others is his assessment of 3.15-17 as “the pinnacle of the second half” of the Colossian epistle.[6]

In *Paul’s Prison Letters*, Daniel Harrington takes a spiritual approach rather than the more common historical-critical and exegetical methodology in examining the Colossian epistle. He does divide the epistle into doctrinal and ethical sections along the division of 1.12-2.23 and 3.1-4.1 respectively. The section of 3.1-4 serves as a theological “bridge” to the vices to be avoided (3.5-11) and virtues to be practices (3.12-17).[7] Within that bridge is a tripartite connection between the believer and Christ.[8] For Harrington, that connection is centered in the picture of baptism and involves the death, resurrection, and revealed glory of the believer as identified with Christ through that act of baptism.

The section of 3.5-11 presents a focus upon the negative aspects of sinful behavior expressed in the vice lists. Harrington links these lists to the picture of baptism with “the command to put to death ‘the parts of you that are earthly’ in 3.5.”[9] Harrington views the expression in 3.11, “Christ is all and in all,” as a summation of “the theology of the entire letter.”[10]

Harrington contrasts the commands to “put on” the virtues in 3.12-14 with the commands to “put off” the vices of 3.5-8. These virtues are “first and foremost a response to being chosen, made holy, and loved by God (3.12a). The five virtues in the list in 3.12b are all predicated elsewhere of God or of Christ.”[11] The final section of 3.15-17 is the outworking of those virtues in the life and worship of the community of believers.[12]

Thompson views the introductory section of 3.1-4 as a bridge from the focus on

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[5] Ibid., 47.

[6] Ibid., 65.

[7] Harrington, *Paul’s Prison Letters*, 79.

[8] Ibid., 115-116. The three aspects of participation and identification with Christ are the realities of the death of Christ (and the Colossians died with him 2.20); Christ is risen (and the Colossians are risen with him 3.1), and Christ is coming in glory (and they will also be revealed in the same way with him 3.4).

[9] Ibid., 118.

[10] Ibid., 120.

[11] Ibid., 122.

[12] Ibid., 123.

the death of Christ in the previous epistolary unit to the life to be lived by the believer in the paraenetic section of 3.5ff.[13] She divides the section of 3.5-11 from 3.12-17 with the former being the exhortation to "seek the things above" as a result of identification with Christ.[14] Thompson finds that "putting off" and "putting on" suggests a "thoroughgoing, radical transformation, as radical as death itself."[15] She finds that Paul "speaks also of a process of renewal when he writes that the new person 'is being renewed in knowledge according to the image of its Creator," and references the corresponding Gen. 1.26-27 to illustrate.[16]

In the final section of 3.12-17, Thompson isolates the section from the subsequent verses and shifts to the focus on the corporate aspect of renewed, transformed people.[17] Unique to Thompson is her subtle link of the focal attention of believers in 3.1-2 with corporate worship in 3.15-17. "By directing the thoughts and minds of believers to God, these acts of worship serve corrective functions in the lives of believers, reorienting them to praise and thanksgiving to God."[18]

Rather than view Colossians 3.1-17 as a unit, Witherington divides the focal pericope into two sections. The first section of Colossians 3.1-4 is the summation of the Christological argument in 2.6-23. Witherington ties the focus of 3.1-4 to the supremacy of Christ. Because of the Colossian Christians' positional reality resulting from the resurrection and heavenly position of Christ, their desires and thoughts should be on those things of heaven. The second section of 3.5-4.1 encompasses what Witherington views as the third argument of the epistle. This grouping incorporates the household codes into the overall context of the lists of virtues and vices found in 3.5-17. "One may divide this section into a discussion of virtues and vices in general using the language of putting off and putting on (3.5-17) and words on the specific issue of behavior in the Christian household (3.18-4.1)."[19]

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[13] Thompson, *Colossians and Ephesians*, 69.

[14] Ibid., 74.

[15] Ibid., 77.

[16] Ibid., 78.

[17] Ibid., 80.

[18] Ibid., 86.

[19] Witherington III, *The Letters to Philemon, the Colossians, and the* Ephesians, 175.

MacDonald examines the focal verses of 3.1-4 as part of a summary of 2.8-23 and as a "bridge to the exhortations that follow" beginning in 3.5.[20] She does reference the subsection as a whole unit linking it to the picture of transformation in baptism in 2.12-13.[21] In agreement with many other commentators, MacDonald takes the section of 3.5-17 as a standalone unit that presents ethical guidelines for daily living the life of redemption.[22]

Heil provides a unique perspective on the message of Colossians. His approach differs from that of the other commentators in that he approaches the epistle as a chiastic unit comprised of ten microchiastic components.[23] The ten literary units that comprise the chiastic structure of the epistle "are based upon verbal parallels found objectively in the text rather than thematic or conceptual parallels, which can often be subjective."[24] The focal pericope of 3.1-17 is the sixth of ten microchiastic sections in the epistle and is subsequently divided into two primary microchiastic sections (3.1-7 and 3.8-16). Colossians 3.17 is considered part of the eighth microchiastic section of 3.17-4.1 based upon the linkage proposed in the use of "τῶ θεῷ" in 3.17 and the conclusion of the preceding section of 3.16. Additional support for the subdivision is based upon the similarity of construct between "ὅ τι ἐὰν ποιῆτε" in 3.17 and "ὅ ἐὰν ποιῆτε" in 3.23.[25]

Heil concisely details the semantic relationships between the elements of the pericope under investigation and their corresponding elements within the broader framework of the epistle. Thus, while he does not set 3.1-17 as an integral structural unit, there is significant benefit gained through the illumination of inter-textual relationships between the elements of the pericope and their epistolary counterparts outside of the selected text. Such understanding brings light to the contextual comprehension of the pericope within the epistle as well as leads to the articulation of the potential spiritualities created in the lives of those who encounter the text.[26]

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[20] MacDonald, *Colossians and Ephesians*, 129.

[21] Ibid., 132-33.

[22] Ibid., 144, though see her close identification of Col. 3.1-4 with 3.5-17). She notes the robust "balancing of indicative sentences in 3.1-17 referring back to the transformation that occurs in baptism, with imperative admonitions that point ahead to the new life that must be lived by those who have been raised with Christ." (MacDonald, *Colossians and Ephesians*, 144-45).

[23] Heil, *Colossians: Encouragement to Walk in All Wisdom as Holy Ones in Christ*, 15; 32.

[24] Ibid., 14.

[25] Ibid., 26-29.

[26] Ibid., 136-65.

Lightfoot views the introductory section 3.1-4 of the larger focal pericope of 3.1-17 as part of an overarching polemical section demarcated in 2.4-3.4.[27] He justifies his structure based upon the "Ei οὖν" of 3.1 as a resumption of the "Ei" in 2.20. With regards to the remainder of the focal pericope, Lightfoot associates the hortatory section of 3.5-17 with the overall hortatory section of 3.5-4.6. He distinguishes the hortatory sections with 3.5-17 encompassing the "comprehensive rules" regarding the "putting off" (through death) of vice and the "putting on" of the virtues (as a result of the resurrection).[28]

Ellicott provides no demarcation of the epistle via an outline to reference flow of thought and argument. Instead, his approach is to provide a verse by verse commentary with logical breaks at chapters. He does allude to the movement from a polemical approach to a "wholly moral and practical" emphasis for the remainder of the epistle. In that sense, there is an inferred bifurcation at the point of 3.1.[29] Further, Ellicott does note in 3.18 that the verses that follow (3.18-4.1) "contain special precepts" of a social nature and closely mirror those of similar precepts in Ephesians 5 and 6.[30] Again, such a break infers a sectional division not expressly noted by Ellicott but supported by the commentary. With a close reading of the commentary, one can discern an unstated intent to provide a structure within the epistle that reveals a unified pericope in 3.1-17.

Radford locates 3.1-4 as part of the conclusion to the overarching section of 2.8-3.4.[31] The introductory section of 3.1-4 is transitional material, moving from the "false mystery" to that which is true and found solely in Christ. The present "consciousness of Christ now and this contemplation of the future coming of Christ" are preparatory to the section following on the "practical ideal of Christian conduct."[32] In his monograph on Colossians, Johnson presents the epistle as divisible into four sections. The focal pericope of 3.1-17 straddles the second and third divisions, with 3.1-4 ascribed to the polemical section of 2.4-3.4, and 3.5-17 grouped with the practical section of 3.5-4.6.[33] He

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[27] Joseph Lightfoot, *St. Paul's Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon* (Lynn, MA: Hendrickson, 1981), 127.

[28] Ibid., 128.

[29] Charles Ellicott, *St. Paul's Epistles to the Philippians, Colossians, and to Philemon: With a Critical and Grammatical Commentary, and a Revised Translation* (Andober: Warren F. Draper, 1876), 182.

[30] Ibid., 196.

[31] Lewis Radford, *The Epistle to the Colossians and the Epistle to Philemon* (London: Methuen, 1931), 79.

[32] Ibid., 258.

[33] S. Lewis Johnson, "Studies in the Epistle to the Colossians," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 118 no. 471

states, "Doctrine, while basic to duty, must also result in duty."[34] The ethical guidelines given in 3.5ff of the focal pericope reflect this duty. "The new man in Christ is expected to live a new life, and the apostle lays down a fairly comprehensive, yet brief, system of ethics in Colossians."[35] Johnson seems to view 3.5-17 as a cohesive unit that expounds upon the individual believer's expression of new life.[36] The section concludes with the fourth of four imperatives found in 3.12-17. Johnson translates the ποιῆτε of 3.17 as the present, imperative, "go on doing," with a grammatical link to the "second clause of the verse," πάντα ἐν ὀνόματι κυρίου Ἰησοῦ.[37] "The expression, 'in the name of the Lord Jesus,' means under the authority and approval of Him."[38]

C. F. D. Moule divides the integral unit of 3.1-17 into two sections with 3.1-4 serving as the conclusion to the section begun at 2.4.[39] The section of 3.5-17 "marks the transition from what is primarily theology to the application of this doctrinal matter to life and conduct.[40] He justifies his division based upon other Pauline examples of similar construction noting especially Romans 12.[41] The ethical section calls the believer to different conduct, but he notes that "Christian conduct is the result, not simply the effort to be good, but of incorporation into the Body of Christ."[42] The concluding aspect of the focal pericope in 3.17 receives little treatment by Moule, with a cross-reference to 1 Cor. 10.31 and brief textual variants related to τῷ θεῷ πατρὶ.[43]

In Lohse's commentary on Colossians, 3.1-4 is a referential section that points to the baptismal thematic elements of 2.12, 20. The continued theme throughout the

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(July 1961): 249, accessed February 12, 2012, *ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials*, EBSCO*host*.

[34] Ibid., 240.

[35] Ibid., 248.

[36] Ibid. While Johnson references the expression of the virtues within the context of the Christian community, the sectional division title indicates the primary focal location of the virtues within the individual, rather than an expression of the body corporate.

[37] Ibid., 32.

[38] Ibid.

[39] C. F. D. Moule, *The Epistles of Paul the Apostle to the Colossians and to Philemon: An Introduction and Commentary* (London: Cambridge Univ., 1968), 87.

[40] Ibid., 113.

[41] Ibid.

[42] Ibid., 114.

[43] Ibid., 126.

hortatory section of 3.1-4.18 is the thread of "the universal dominion of Christ" just as it is in the first two chapters of the epistle.[44] The hortatory commands in Colossians 3 comprise a component of the third and fourth chapters "in which the lordship of Christ includes all areas of our life."[45] Lohse finds a continuity within the epistle as it relates to the supremacy of Christ. The concluding verse of the focal pericope, 3.17, demonstrates that thread with the word "all," which encompasses the scope of both speech and action in the believer's life. "As Christ is Lord over all (1.15-20), so his people should do all in the name of the Lord Jesus (3.17)."[46] While Lohse notes a subdivision of the pericope into 3.1-4 and 3.5-15, it should be noted that he views the imperatives of 3.5, 8, and 9 (Νεκρώσατε (v.5), ἀπόθεσθε (v.8), and ψεύδεσθε and ἀπεκδυσάμενοι in v.9) as a further development of the commands to seek the above things" and "set your minds on the above things" ("τὰ ἄνω ζητεῖτε" and "τὰ ἄνω φρονεῖτε," respectively) in 3.1-4.[47] Hence, there is an unstated unity to the focal pericope rather than a distinct division of subsections.

Schweizer would concur with Lohse in that 3.1-4 serves to tie the first part of the epistle (1.12-2.23) to the second (3.5-4.6). The first section of the epistle is didactic whereas the second is primarily exhortatory.[48] According to Schweitzer there is a tri-fold division to the focal pericope of 3.1-17 with the aforementioned introduction to the hortatory in 3.1-4; the section comprising 3.5-11, which reinforces the new life in Christ; and the final section of 3.12-17 in which the writer of the epistle presents the way of life for believers within the community of Christ-followers.[49] While Schweitzer does bring out the priority of heavenward focus as opposed to a life consumed by the flesh, he does not present it as a foundation upon which to build the transformation of character.[50]

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[44] Eduard Lohse, *Colossians and Philemon: A Commentary on the Epistle to the Colossians and to Philemon*, trans. William R. Poehlmann, in Hermeneia—a Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1971), 3. In Lohse's outline of the epistle, there are only two main sections after the introductory section of 1.1-11: theological (1.12-2.23) and hortatory (3.1-4.18).

[45] Ibid.

[46] Ibid., 4. See his note 1, p.4. "The word 'all' and related words appear with extraordinary frequency in Colossians: 1.4, 6, 9-11, 15-20, 28; 2. sf, 9f, 13, 19, 22, 3.8, 11, 14, 16f, 20, 22; 4.7, 9, 12. These passages are like a red thread drawn through every section of the letter."

[47] Ibid., 136.

[48] Eduard Schweizer, *The Letter to the Colossians*, trans. Andrew Chester (London: SPCK, 1976), 171.

[49] Ibid., 181-212.

[50] Ibid., 175.

O'Brien subdivides 3.1-17 into three sections, as do several others under review. He views 3.1-4 as a "transition piece"[51] and a bridge between the polemic of Colossians 2.8-23 and as an introduction to the implications of that polemic "for the walk of the believers."[52] The introductory section "draws together themes previously mentioned (2.11-13, 20). At the same time, the theological foundations (the 'indicative') for the admonitions (the 'imperatives') that follow (3.5-4.6) are set forth."[53] Colossians 3.5-11 begins the paraenetic section found in 3.5-4.6. The remainder of the focal pericope includes two subsections (3.12-14 and 3.15-17) that consist of the positive exhortation (3.12-14) that "stands in contrasting parallelism with the preceding section," and 3.15-17 which "stands as a unity."[54]

Bruce analyses the Colossian text and includes the text of 3.1-4 within the framework of the polemic against the false teaching (2.8-3.4). The remainder of the focal pericope is within the broader context of directives regarding the Christian life (3.5-4.6).[55] While Bruce provides the analytical division noted, he also references the inclusion of the exaltation of Christ in 3.1-4 as a preliminary to the paraenetic section of the epistle.[56] Colossians 3.5-17 is subdivided into two sections; one being the negative "put off" and the second being the positive "put on."[57] The final verse of 3.17 directs that "our relation to God embraces and controls the whole of life."[58] While lacking prescriptive detail for action, the descriptive nature of the command allows for a more comprehensive approach to the moral conundrums that face followers of Christ.

Wright locates the focal pericope as three subsections (of four) within the broader framework of 3.1-4.6.[59] The introductory section (3.1-4) connects to the preceding

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[51] Peter O'Brien, *Colossians, Philemon*, in Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 44 (Waco: Word Books, 1982), 157.

[52] Ibid., 158.

[53] Ibid., 171.

[54] Ibid., 195-6.

[55] F.F. Bruce, *The Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians*, New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984), 35.

[56] Ibid., 133-34. Bruce notes that it is the usual procedure of Paul to preceded his paraenetic material with a reference to the content of "the apostolic preaching" (i.e., the supremacy of the resurrected Christ and the implications for his followers) and cites Rom. 6.1-11 and 1 Cor. 5.7-8 as examples.

[57] Ibid., 36.

[58] Ibid., 160.

[59] Nicholas Wright, *Colossians and Philemon*, Tyndale New Testament Commentary (Grand

section (2.20-23) with the continuation of the picture of death and resurrection with Christ. The resultant implication of the positional reality of the believer's resurrected life necessitates a new focus of mind and will.[60]

Wright finds within the second subsection (3.5-11) the centrality of the ongoing renewal in 3.10 in which "human beings can be what God intended them to be."[61] The third of the three subsections points to the pinnacle of 3.17 in which "Paul now closes the circle he began at 2.6."[62] Colossians 3.17 forms a twofold directive for Christian living: "grateful worship, which is to affect 'whatever we do': since 'all things have been created through Christ and also, in principle, redeemed through him."[63]

Harris divides Colossians 3.1-17 into three sections. Colossians 3.1-4 comprises the conclusion to the more extensive section of 2.4-3.4. Colossians 3.5-11 addresses the putting off of the vices, while 3.12-17 looks at putting on the virtues in the overall section of 3.5-4.6 and the call to living holy lives.[64] The protasis in 3.1 (Εἰ οὖν συνηγέρθητε) parallels the protasis found in 2.20a (Εἰ ἀπεθάνετε); the latter "introduces the consequences of death with Christ," while the former, "the consequences of resurrection with Christ."[65] Colossians 3.5-11 and 3.12-17 provide negative and positive directives regarding the lists of vices and virtues, respectively. Harris finds that each of these two sections "is linked with what precedes by οὖν and begins with an aorist imperative,"[66] after that moving to the five vices and five virtues found in each section. Harris finds the phrase "ἐν ὀνόματι κυρίου Ἰησοῦ" to be a summation of "the more specific preceding injunctions" of 3.12-16 in that "the Christian's entire life should be conducted in Christ's name."[67]

Ralph Martin sub-divides the pericope of 3.1-17 into three sections: 3.1-4, 3.5-

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Rapids: Eerdmans, 1986), 128-29.

[60] Ibid., 130-31.

[61] Ibid., 138.

[62] Ibid., 145.

[63] Ibid.

[64] Murray Harris, *Colossians and Philemon*, Exegetical Guide to the Greek New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991), ix-x.

[65] Ibid., 119.

[66] Ibid., 138.

[67] Ibid., 171.

11, and 3.12-17.[68] The first section of 3.1-4 serves as a "bridge section" which both "celebrates Christ's exaltation as the basis for the church's new life," and lays the groundwork for "a statement of true self-denial" in 3.5-11.[69] The sub-section of 3.12-17 provides "a much fuller statement of how Christian men and women relate to one another in their church fellowship and in contemporary society."[70]

Pokorný situates the focal pericope of 3.1-17 within the framework of the fourth part of the overall structural analysis of Colossians. This fourth section is comprised of material in 3.1-4.6 and is the paraenetic *exhortation*. He views 3.1-17 as a sub-structural unit that consists of the "paraenesis deriving directly from the theological argument (*exhortation generalis*)."[71] The transitional verses of 2.20-23 move from the polemical to the paraenetic sections while maintaining the visual imagery of baptism (death and burial; life and resurrection). Pokorný understands the grammatical link, formed by the οὖν of Colossians 3.1, ". . . connects the paraenesis (of 3.1-4.6) with the preceding pivotal pericope" of 2.6-2.23."[72]

In his monograph on the paraenetic material in Colossians, Roy Yates makes a distinction between the material of Colossians 3.1-4.6 and that which precedes it. Yates draws the line between "doctrine and exhortation."[73] The material in 3.1-17 contains one of the three types of "traditional catechetical and ethical material" identified in the broader division of the epistle.[74] The two vice lists comprise those in 3.5 which are part of the pagan past of the Colossian believers and those in 3.8 which detail "attitudes and practices which are detrimental to personal relationships, and which could easily develop in the life of the Christian community."[75] The pictures presented in the two lists conform to the imagery of

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[68] Ralph Martin, *Ephesians, Colossians, and Philemon,* Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching (Atlanta: John Knox, 1991), 215-16.

[69] Ibid., 257-59.

[70] Ibid., 193.

[71] Petr Pokorný, *Colossians: A Commentary*, trans. Siegfried Schatzmann (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1991), 26.

[72] Ibid., 159.

[73] Roy Yates, "The Christian Way of Life: The Paraenetic Material in Colossians 3.1-4.6," *Evangelical Quarterly* 63 no. 3 (1991): 241, accessed December 7, 2012, http://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_evangelical_quarterly-06.php.

[74] Ibid., 242. The three types of material Yates identifies in Colossians are the "lists of vices and virtues, the household code, and proverbial ethical sayings known as 'topoi'.

[75] Ibid., 243.

baptism. The list of vices is one to which the believers have died. The list of virtues is that to which the believers have "put on" in their union with Christ and are to live in that as part of their resurrection with him.[76]

Ernest Martin's work in *Colossians, Philemon* is an admixture of both historical-critical elements of syntactical examination as well as the inclusion of theological reflection. He divides the focal pericope into three sections. Colossians 3.1-4 is a transitional paragraph between the polemical section of 2.6-23 and the material in 3.5-17.[77] The opening phrase in 3.1 (*if you have been raised with Christ*) harkens to 2.20 (*if you have died*) and moves into three distinct but connected sections with particular emphases.[78] Martin does not make a clean separation along theological and ethical divisions. Rather, the whole of the epistle has "theological affirmations mingled with ethical instructions in chapters 3-4."

In his monograph on Colossians,[79] H. Wayne House approaches the epistle from the perspective of living the Christian life rather than addressing the individual debatable issues regarding the alleged philosophies that put the Colossians at risk of doctrinal confusion. For House, the details of those peripheral issues are in the background to the implications that those issues have on how the believer is to live in light of them. The author offers a detailed grammatical explanation of elements within the epistle as they relate to his thematic focus.

House takes an overarching two-fold division to the pericope in 3.1-17 and situates it within the demarcation framework of 3.1-11 and 3.12-4.6. Within those two divisions, there are three subdivisions (3.1-4; 3.5-11; and 3.12-17). The subdivision of 3.1-4 is a resultant theological bridge of the previous polemic against the alleged philosophy and heresy. The believer has a positional reality of resurrection with Christ. That position is to affect the object of what the believer seeks and the locus of where the believer is to

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[76] Ibid., 247.

[77] Ernest Martin, *Colossians, Philemon*, in Believers Church Bible Commentary (Scottdale, PA: Herald, 1993), 134.

[78] Ibid., 28. The three sections noted by Martin are the introductory transitional section of 3.1-4 that comprises the foundational aspect of "Living Oriented to the Risen Christ." The section in 3.5-14 contrasts the "Putting Off and the Putting On," of the vices and virtues, with the remaining section of the focal pericope (3.15-17) expressing the three-fold elements of "the peace of Christ," "the word of Christ," and "the name of the Lord Jesus," with their resultant implications for "Incorporating the New Life."

[79] H. Wayne House, The Christian Life in Colossians, *Bibliotheca Sacra* 151 (Oct-Dec, 1994): 440-54, accessed December 4, 2013, *ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials*, EBSCO*host*.

set the mind.[80]

House takes the section of 3.5-11 as a move "from the theological to the practical, into the realm where the believer is responsible for his actions."[81] He offers explanations on the various vice lists but gives little attention to the implications of the process of renewal or the picture of the image into which the new self is being created in 3.10.[82]

The third section of the tri-fold division (3.12-17) frames the broader context of how every relationship and activity in the believer's life patterned after Christ.[83] The summary approach to the list of virtues, the paucity of focus given to the implications for the Colossian community as it lives out those virtues, and the minimal comments on the final verses of the section reflect a lack thorough attention to the rich epistolary material.

Dunn's examination of Colossians has an overarching cruciform theme. His thematic section of 2.4-4.6 bears a twofold emphasis on the cross of Christ: the cross "renders unnecessary any further human traditions and rules" and the cross establishes a "pattern of living" for believers.[84] He subdivides the focal pericope into two sections as well: 3.1-4 is the "perspective from which the daily life of the Colossian Christians should be lived out,"[85] and 3.5-17 provides "general guidelines and practical exhortations."[86] Within Colossians 3.1-4 is a "picture of the exalted Christ as the one who fulfills the original creation of Adam."[87] There is a transformative theme in the three tenses present in the section of 3.1-4 (raised with Christ in the past, hidden with Christ in the present, and revealed with Christ in the future).[88] Colossians 3.5-17 moves from the perspective of daily life to the practical outworking of the reality of life in Christ. The climactic "do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus" in 3.17 points back to the thematic statement of 2.6 where

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[80] Ibid., 449.

[81] Ibid., 450.

[82] Ibid., 451.

[83] Ibid., 452.

[84] James Dunn, *The Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, in New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 41-2.

[85] Ibid., 202.

[86] Ibid., 210.

[87] Ibid., 209.

[88] Ibid.

believers are encouraged to "walk in the Lord."[89]

In the NIV Application Commentary on Colossians, David Garland divides the focal pericope into two main sections (3.1-4 and 3.5-17) and views the two sections as part of the ethical component of the epistle (3.1-4.6). He does "bridge" the vice and virtues with 3.10-11 and the "new humanity" which is realized in Christ. This "new creation" provides the possibility of putting the virtues into practice due to the reality of the ongoing renewal process in "knowledge in the image of the Creator."[90]

The section of 3.1-4, while part of the ethical component in Garland's construction, serves as a transitionary theological link with the argument against the controversy and "lays the foundation for the following ethical admonitions."[91] "Paul's letters make it clear that he firmly believed that right and wrong and moral character matter a great deal for the Christian."[92] Garland notes the parallelism between the ethical lists in Colossians 3.5ff and extra-biblical sources.

> Key differences, however, should be noted. (1) Paul has no interest in simply recording ethical ideals worth pondering. He fully expects Christians to abandon the vices and to live out the virtues. (2) He grounds his exhortation in Christology. Christians are being transformed into Christ's image (3.10). Because this is so, they are to be true to themselves.[93]

Garland further affirms that the renewal does not "come as the result of a successful, daily battle with temptation."[94] An inextricable link exists between the ongoing process of renewal and the imperatival nature of the ethical commands. There is an undeniable reality of divine agency in the believer's death, resurrection, and eschatological position in Christ, but there is the corresponding unmistakable human responsibility to "work out the salvation that God has worked" in the lives of believers.[95]

In the concluding verse of the last subsection of the focal pericope (3.17),

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[89] Ibid., 212.

[90] David Garland, *Colossians and Philemon*, The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2009), 201.

[91] Ibid.

[92] Ibid., 219.

[93] Ibid., 204.

[94] Ibid., 206.

[95] Ibid.

Garland ties the command, "καὶ πᾶν ὅ τι ἐὰν ποιῆτε ἐν λόγῳ ἢ ἐν ἔργῳ, πάντα ἐν ὀνόματι κυρίου Ἰησοῦ," with the "Ὡς οὖν παρελάβετε τὸν Χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν τὸν κύριον, ἐν αὐτῷ περιπατεῖτε in 2.6." There is a New Testament application of "the Old Testament phrase 'in the name of the Lord,' which referred to God."[96] The Christ, into whose image the Colossians believers are being transformed (3.10), is the one in whom they are to do everything, "conscious of his calling, his commands, his promises, and his sustenance."[97]

Lincoln divides the focal pericope into two sections of *exhortatio.* Colossians 2.16-3.4 are specific exhortations related to the controversial "philosophy" and 3.5-4.6 are exhortations of a more general nature. "The exhortations of 2.16-3.4 are all directly related to elements in the teaching being opposed."[98] Colossians 3.4 reflects an "eschatological climax" that signifies a "transition in thought" that moves to the paraenesis of 3.5-4.6.[99]

Hay posits twofold division to the Colossian epistle as a whole.[100] There is a theological section with polemic and a subsequent hortatory section (3.1-4.6). Hay supports his position with evidentiary examples of other Pauline texts similarly structured.[101]

McL.Wilson demarcates the focal passage of 3.1-17 into two sections with 3.1-4 as a summation of the first two chapters of the epistle.[102] This demarcation is evident with the "συνηγέρθητε" of 3.1, in which Paul refers back to the "συνηγέρθητε and συνεζωοποίησεν" of 2.12 and 2.13 respectively.[103] Additionally, the "τὰ ἄνω" of 3.1 summarizes "what was said in the first two chapters about the lordship of Christ" and "gives a point of orientation for the 'new man'" in 3.10, 12.[104]

The remainder of the focal pericope (3.5-17) forms a single structural

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[96] Ibid., 213.

[97] Ibid.

[98] Andrew Lincoln, *The Letter to the Colossians*, The New Interpreter's Bible, vol. 11 (Nashville: Abingdon, 2000), 555.

[99] Ibid.

[100] David Hay, *Colossians* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2000), 114-15.

[101] See Rom. 1.18-11.32 and 12.1-15.13; Gal. 1.6-5.12 and 5.13-6.10; Eph. 1.3-3.21 and 4.1-6.20.

[102] R. McL. Wilson, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Colossians and Philemon*, International Critical Commentary (London: T&T Clark, 2005), 234.

[103] Ibid.

[104] Ibid.

subdivision. McL. Wilson views the ethical section of 3.5-17 as following the previous section of doctrine. The focus of the ethical section centers on principles for the Christocentric living of a new life.[105] The section concludes with 3.17 which, "condenses the whole range of Christian ethics into one single pointed and memorable aphorism: whatever you do, in word or in deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him."[106]

Talbert situates the focal pericope within the last of four thought units that comprise the logical argument of the epistle to the Colossians. This fourth thought unit consists of 3.1-4.6. Within that thought unit is the opening statement of 3.1-4 and a "Two Ways form" of 3.5-17, the entirety of which "moves to the use of precepts."[107] These precepts form the paraenetic section introduced with 3.1-4. Talbert presents the material in 3.5-17 as an example of the "Two Ways form," utilized to "shape a person's moral development."[108] This form "consists of three components" and are all found within the focal pericope of 3.1-17.[109]

Moo views all of Colossians 3 as a unit under the theme of a Christocentric life. He further divides the focal pericope of 3.1-17 into three distinct sections: 3.1-4 is transitional and intended to "bring to a climax and summarize much of the key theology of chapters 1-2 as a whole."[110] The movement from Colossians 2 and the negative warnings against the potential threats to the Colossian believers turns to a positive focus in Colossians 3.[111] The believers are encouraged to place their focus on Christ and the implications of the positional reality of the resurrected life upon their daily living.

The remainder of the pericope in 3.5-17 links with 3.1-4, based on the "οὖν" of 3.5 pointing back to the preceding verses, with the resultant expectation to follow in the

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[105] Ibid., 241.

[106] Ibid., 269.

[107] Charles Talbert, *Ephesians and Colossians*, Paideia Commentaries on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007), 225-26.

[108] Ibid., 227. Talbert cites both pagan, Jewish, and early Christian use of the form.

[109] Ibid., as Talbert cites Sugg (1972). These three components are (1) a dualistic introduction, (2) exhortations on the way to live, and (3) cosmic consequences of not following the guidelines on proper living.

[110] Douglas Moo, *The Letters to the Colossians and to Philemon,* The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 244.

[111] Ibid., 243.

verses to come (3.5-17).[112] The second and third sections of Moo's partition of the focal pericope, 3.5-11 and 3.12-17, respectively, consist of ramifications of the vice/virtue lists from the perspective of the "old man" and "new man" realities.[113] In Colossians 3.17, Moo finds a conclusion to the "central exhortatory section of the letter."[114] He ties the summary character of 3.17 with the similarity to 2.6-7 and the centrality of the Lord Jesus to both living and conduct. Moo positions the *Haustafel* of 3.18-4.1 as the final partition of the Christocentric living unit. These household codes are the outworking of the lordship of Christ expressed in human households with their respective roles and relationships.[115]

Barth and Blanke closely align with Witherington in pericope demarcation. The primary differentiation from Witherington is that Barth and Blanke see the section 3.1-4 as introductory to the paraenetic material that follows rather than a standalone section or a conclusion to the previous discourse. Substantive passages in the earlier part of the epistle are recapitulated in order to prepare for the paraenetic passage that follows. The contextual relationship of 2.20 with 2.11ff, juxtaposed with 3.1 and 3.3, justifies the structural demarcation. "'You have arisen with Christ' contextually belongs to 3.3, so that the two sections are not linked together. The statements in 3.1-4 go beyond the subject of false teaching."[116] They follow the argument of Nauck in translating "οὖν" as "when" in the conditional clause.[117] The conditional clause refers to a genuine but physically unrealized "event that is still future."[118] It is a spiritual reality indicative of a referential familiarity with the material preceding the subsequent hortatory discourse.[119]

Sumney approaches 3.1-4 as neither a summary of the textual material before

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[112] Ibid., 255.

[113] Ibid., 273.

[114] Ibid., 290.

[115] Ibid., 292.

[116] Markus Barth, Helmut Blanke, *Colossians: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, trans. Astrid Beck (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 2008), 392.

[117] See Wolfgang Nauck, "*Das οὖν paraeneticum*." ZNW 49 (1958): 134-35. Of particular interest relevant to the demarcation of the introductory section of 3.1-4 is his discussion of the use of *οὖν* as a sectional link between theological debate and paraenetic exhortation.

[118] See Andrew Lincoln, *Paradise Now and Not Yet: Studies in the Role of the Heavenly Dimension in Paul's Thought with Special Reference to his Eschatology* (London: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1981), 122-3.

[119] Barth and Blanke, trans. Beck, *Colossians*, 392.

nor a preparatory introduction for ethical instruction.[120] He takes the text of Colossians as a whole, without a clear theological/hortatory demarcation. He cites exhortations in Colossians 2:6, 8, 16, and 18 as evidence that there is no clear division of the epistle. Additionally, he looks to the imagery in Colossians 3 which points back to similar imagery in Colossians 2 (specifically that of baptism, conversion, and the picture of death and resurrection). Colossians 3.1-4.6 does not merely describe the *orthopraxis* expressed from the *orthodoxy* of Colossians 1.12-2.23. Instead, Colossians 3 is a continuation of the issue that started in 2.6. The section of 3.1-4 serves to further the argument against the false teachings begun in the preceding chapter. "The ethic proposed in 3.1-4.6 redefines what it means to 'seek the things above'."[121] To further support this view, Sumney links 3.1-4 with 2.20-23 based on his interpretation of the introductory textual, "Ei" as "since" rather than "if." Sumney bases his justification upon the understanding that "Colossians does not intend to express doubt about whether believers have been raised, but rather to assert their resurrection with Christ as a fact that serves as a foundation for what follows."[122]

Pao combines thorough exegesis with theological reflection in his commentary on Colossians. From a structural perspective, he locates the pericope of Colossians 3.1-17 within the broader sectional division of 3.1-4.1 and an overarching thematic direction towards Christocentric living. He divides the overall section into four subsections (3.1-4, 3.5-11, 3.12-17, and 3.18-4.1). While others see a transition from the theological to the ethical, Pao sees a continuation of the polemic found in Colossians 2.[123] The directive ethic of 3.5-14, in concert with the "stripping off" and "putting on" of the old and new natures, "leads to the reaffirmation of the lordship of Christ through thanksgiving" in 3.15-16.[124] In Pao's structural analysis, 3.17 serving as a conclusion to the paraenetic section begun in 3.1.[125]

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[120] Jerry Sumney, *Colossians: a commentary* (Louisville: John Knox Press, 2008), 173.

[121] Ibid., 174.

[122] Ibid., 175.

[123] David Pao, *Colossians and Philemon*, Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012), 204-5.

[124] Ibid., 205.

[125] Ibid., 250.

2.1.2 How are sections of the pericope analyzed with regards to the transformation of character and the process of transformation?

While all of the selected commentators view the section of the pericope found in 3.1-4 as a focus of attention on matters more heavenly than earthly, none of them associate the location of the focus with a recalibration of a goal related to the transformation of character. The commentators all agree that 3.5-17 is hortatory. Bruce and Rogers lay out the ethical goal of 3.17 and the implications of considering actions in light of compromising the reputation of the Lord Jesus.[126] The primary focus of the section in 3.5-12 is the list of virtues and vices. Witherington, Schweizer, and Dunn bring attention to the fivefold nature of the lists.[127] The linguistic significance of these lists will be discussed more fully in the discourse analysis.

The lists of vices and virtues are not unique to Colossians but was a part of both Greco-Roman and Jewish literature of the time. Hence, these lists may not reflect specific issues within the context of lives of Colossian believers.[128] McL. Wilson would agree that the lists were perhaps instructional at a baptismal event and may not reflect known issues among the believers in the church.[129] The lists are not meant for a legal code of conduct but instead represent a new pattern and standard of conduct. MacDonald, who relies heavily on and is in agreement with Lohse,[130] sees a significant picture of baptism in 3.5-17.[131] The word pictures found in the "putting off" and "putting on" directly relate to the taking off of old clothes and putting on of new garments after the act of baptism. Baptism was the start of the new life for the believer in Christ and signified a break with the old way of life and the initiation of the new life in Christ.

Thompson brings out the idea that though the lists are imperatives, the *motivation* for the change of behavior is rooted in the relationship with Christ and not in the imperatival nature of the commands. These lists, when taken as a whole, reflect a

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[126] Bruce, *The Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians*, 160.

[127] Ben Witherington III, *The Letters to Philemon, the Colossians, and the Ephesians: A Socio-Historical Commentary on the Captivity Epistles* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), 176-78; Schweizer, *The Letter to the Colossians*, 136-40; Dunn, *The Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, 212-19.

[128] MacDonald, *Colossians and Ephesians*, 148.

[129] McL. Wilson, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Colossians and Philemon*, 242.

[130] Lohse, *Colossians and Philemon*, 141.

[131] MacDonald, *Colossians and Ephesians*, 136.

"radical transformation, as radical as death itself."[132] There is a reference to a "process of renewal"[133] of that which is made in the image of the Creator.[134] The renewal is not something latent within the believer and waiting for a chance to germinate and grow. Instead, this renewal is a gift from Christ himself who ushers in a "transformed experience."[135] For Thompson, the epistle unpacks the "implications of Christ's death on Christian conduct."[136] The new life in Christ is one in which the believer is engaged in a "participatory" experience of entering into the death, burial, and resurrection of the Lord Jesus and "the old way of life out of step with the new reality lived in Christ."[137]

2.1.3 Is there a theological link between the commands in 3.12-16 and the broader Christian community's role in character transformation?

Wright distinguishes the shift in 3.12-16 to an emphasis on the character of the community of believers there at Colossae.[138] Lohse points out that the word "then, therefore" (οὖν) indicates the section forthcoming is set apart from the preceding exhortations[139] and states that it is the *community* that Paul addresses as "God's chosen ones" (ὡς ἐκλεκτοὶ τοῦ Θεοῦ).[140] Bruce and Thompson also distinguish the community aspect of the address. It is Schweitzer that points out the difference in the focus of the list of vices and the list of virtues found in this section of the pericope. He indicates that "in [3.13] this list is applied to particular relationships within the community, while in [3.14] it is summed up in the call to love."[141] The reference to the one body (ἐν ἑνὶ σώματι) is that community of believers: the body of Christ.[142] McL. Wilson indicates, "the virtues to be

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[132] Thompson, *Colossians and Ephesians*, 75

[133] Ibid., 78.

[134] Ibid., 77.

[135] Ibid., 78.

[136] Ibid., 13.

[137] Ibid.

[138] Wright, *Colossians and Philemon*, 141.

[139] Lohse, *Colossians and Philemon*, 146.

[140] Ibid.

[141] Schweizer, *The Letter to the Colossians*, 204.

[142] Ibid., 208.

put on here are precisely those calculated to promote fellowship within the community."[143] Dunn states, "to live out such a character calls for a strength . . . and without such an attitude toward others no group of individuals can become and grow as a community."[144]

2.1.4 Summary and conclusion of the review of relevant literature

All of the commentaries reviewed except one uniformly divide the passage of Colossians 3.1-17 into at least two sections. MacDonald refers to the passage as a whole, alluding to its significance in the framework of a transformational experience of baptism. The predominant viewpoint regarding pericope structure is that 3.1-4 serves as a bridge from the preceding didactic section to the hortatory sections in 3.5ff. None of the commentators under review examine the pericope as a distinct unit that stands intact between the didactic section concluding with 2.23 and the household codes found in 3.18ff. Analysis of 3.1-17 as a single component of the epistle may yield a different view of the verses. Such analysis may provide insight into the nature of significance for 3.1-4 and the connection to a possible teleological goal of 3.17.

While all of the commentators analyze the text utilizing historical-critical methodologies, socio-rhetorical methodologies, or theological reading, none of them view the pericope from a perspective of a potential pattern for character transformation. There are various breakdowns of the sections in the pericope with the examination of their association with different parts of the epistle as a whole. However, these divisions do not add to an understanding of a proposed process of character transformation.

Each of the commentators discusses the new life of the believer concerning the radical change upon conversion. Each makes a note of the focus that believers are to have with regards to their thinking and to those things after which they seek. None of the commentators connect that change of focus to a potential process for character transformation.

The virtue and vice lists do factor significantly into the discussions of each of the commentators. Many of the commentators suggest that Paul provides the lists of vices and virtues due to existing issues within the Colossian community. Alternatively, a number of the commentators view the lists as generically non-specific and do not connect their inclusion with any specific problems; they are standard lists used in other literary sources

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[143] McL. Wilson, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Colossians and Philemon*, 257.

[144] Dunn, *The Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon*, 230.

of the time. Dunn does reference aspects of character in relationship to these lists and to the application of virtues in the community as a whole. However, there is no application to a process of transformation and no indication of a specific goal of transformation other than referring to the sanctification of the believer.

All of the commentators note the community impact of the believer's changed life and the behavioral differences that the believers are to display in community relationships. None of the commentators reference the role of the community in bringing about the transformation of character. The sociological component of the Body of Christ and the role it plays in transforming character is a missing element in all of the commentaries.

2.2 Research Problems

2.2.1 The Textual Problem

The review of the relevant literature reveals significant gaps in the research on the pericope. As the review of relevant literature points out, there has been no research on the topic of character transformation as it flows out of Pauline theology expressed in Colossians. 3.1-17. Most commentators subdivide the focal passage in such a way that a pattern of transformation becomes fragmented and there is no distinct flow to the epistle writer's thought process. There is an absence of a cohesive process of character transformation. Further, there is no discernable exhortation to recalibrate one's life focus towards the desired outcome and demonstrated through a change in expressed behavior. This lack of cohesive analysis has led to an interpretation of the various aspects of the passage that is not inaccurate though it is incomplete.

2.2.2 The Theological Problem

Nothing to date has been published on the topic of character transformation from a purely theologic-ethic perspective. As Kotva points out, there is a lack of application of Scripture to a teleological virtue ethic; that is, the practical expression of virtues or character traits in life, based on a perceived goal and rooted in Scriptural admonitions and direction.[145] Research into the union of Scripture and an ethic rooted with a focus upon

[145] Joseph J. Kotva, *The Christian Case for Virtue Ethics* (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown Univ. Press, 1996), 59.

the actor moving towards a particular goal will yield a fuller theological understanding of the sanctification process in the life of the Christian.

The vast majority of research into a Pauline theology of character transformation fragments the sanctification process based on the perspective of selected writings of Paul. There is no research into a unified, cohesive Pauline theology of transformation of character. Such research would necessitate a coherence of various related theological aspects present in the *corpus Paulinum* and provide an accurate spiritual hermeneutic of the transformation of character.

Christian Spirituality as a studied discipline is relatively new. Minimal research exists synthesizing Scripture and a theology of character transformation and no critical academic research exists on character transformation from an Early Christian Spirituality perspective. Critical and academic research into a cohesive Pauline theology of character transformation from an Early Christian Spirituality perspective would fill a gap in the available body of literature and enrich the disciple as an academic field of study.

2.3 Title, Objective and Purpose of Thesis

2.3.1 Title and rationale

The proposed title for the thesis is, "Putting Off and Putting On: An Examination of Character Transformation in Colossians 3.1-17 and the Spiritualities Created in the Process." The terms "putting off" and "putting on" are translations from the original text in the pericope and are essential to the expression of the concept of transformation in the passage. For this thesis, the working definition of spirituality will be the synthesis of faith and belief through a lived experience of the divine. The word character, while it means the essential core of who a person is, will be used within the thesis to allude to the traits often attributed to virtues. Transformation is the process of radical change within the person that begins at conversion but carries on throughout the believer's life. Each of these terms take significant focus in the development of the thesis. In order to provide a hermeneutically accurate understanding of the potential process of character transformation I critically analyze the text in its historical context.

2.3.2 Objective and Purpose

2.3.2.1 Objective

I intend to analyze the specific text both systematically and critically in order to ascertain the existence of a proposed process for transformation of character within the

selected pericope. This examination of Colossians. 3:1-17 will yield a hermeneutically sound interpretation that provides both insight into the author's intent and a synthesis of understanding on the topic of character transformation. The results of this investigation can then be applied in a context of Christian spirituality resulting in the cohesion of belief and the lived experience.

2.3.2.2 Multiple purposes of the thesis

A. *Methodologically*: The Historical-Critical methodology has been applied to Colossians and the selected pericope for many years. Traditionally the text has been analyzed in relation to surrounding texts but not from the perspective of character transformation. The application of selected principles of the Historical-Critical method will allow the critical examination of the author's intent for the audience.

B. *Sociologically*: The socio-historical context of the recipients of the Colossian epistle provides the best framework for accurate understanding of the principles of character transformation outlined in the pericope. An investigation into the sociological perspective of the original audience will yield a fuller understanding of the semantic nuances of the selected text and provide a frame of reference for an application of a pattern for the transformation of character.

C. *Theologically*: Within Christian spirituality, there is a desire to integrate associated beliefs and values with the lived experience of the divine. Understanding the desire of God concerning values and behavior is an essential component for a fuller comprehension of the process of sanctification. The research of this thesis explores the theological perspective of character transformation, the goal of the transformation, and the roles that both the believer and God play in the achievement of that goal. Waaijman's model of spiritual transformation provides the framework for much of that research.

2.4. Academic Contribution to Pauline Scholarship

While there is much discussion in the literature related to the supposed controversy at Colossae, the household codes, and the Christological discourse, there is none that brings together a Pauline theology of sanctification (with specific reference to the issue of character transformation) and the text of the pericope under examination. This thesis will contribute to the body of literature by providing foundational research into an application of a specific Scriptural text to the process of character transformation.

Additionally, this thesis will fill a gap in Pauline theology. Critical analysis and

integration of various ethical and theological concepts provide the means by which this gap is filled.

Historically, discourse analysis has been applied to sections of Colossians, but it has not been done from within a framework of sanctification and a Pauline theology of character transformation. Except within the work on the entire epistle by van der Watt and Callow, discourse analysis has not been done on the specific pericope of 3.1-17. This thesis will add to the linguistic analyses of Pauline writings as well as contribute to the better understanding of the Colossian discourse.

CHAPTER 3

THE METHODOLOGY FOR AN EXAMINATION OF THE TRANSFORMATION OF CHARACTER AND CREATED SPIRITUALITIES IN COLOSSIANS 3.1-17

For this thesis, specific components of Egger's Historical-Critical methodology are utilized to ascertain the meaning of the text as well as the historical-cultural context in which it was written.[1] The goal of this research is to apply selected aspects of the Historical-Critical methodology, integrated within an approach utilizing four analytical components for investigation of the text. These four components contribute to the overall hermeneutical understanding of the text and how to interpreted it in its original historically contextual environment. The text is further analyzed with respect to its inner textual composition and its inter-textual correlation to other texts based on a linguistic, semantic, and structural analysis. The theological nature of the text is analyzed from five textural "threads," each augmented with the additional investigation of appropriate inter-textural theological parallels. Because this research is located within the discipline of Christian spirituality, this methodology also encompasses an investigation into the spiritualities embedded within the rhetoric as well as four effects that occur within the lives of those interacting with the text.[2]

All of the selected methodological readings are interrelated and when viewed from a cohesive perspective come together to form an understanding of the text with a unique richness of theological textures. The inner and inter-textual analyses each possess an embedded theology that contributes to the spirituality texture that runs parallel through each of the other textures. While the interconnectedness of the theological and spirituality textures expresses overall cohesion, there is also an embodiment texture that runs linear to all of the other textures. This spirituality texture of embodiment is the culmination of

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[1] Wilhelm Egger, *How to Read the New Testament: An Introduction to Linguistic and Historical-Critical Methodology,* trans. Peter Heinegg (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1996).

[2] These four effects are discussed in detail later under the appropriate heading but are noted here for clarity of methodological direction. The four effects are 1) the dynamic interaction between the reader and the text, 2) the creation of images, 3) the dialectic of retention and protension, and 4) embodiment.

several factors and finds expression in two significant ways.

The first expression of embodiment is exhibited in the reality of textual impact on a personal, lived experience of faith. Interaction with the sacred text forms a realized spirituality as the text is embraced and incorporated into the life of the individual. This expression is described as the *internalization* of the text. The reality of the intersection of God with the human life creates one or more spiritualities in the life of the person internalizing the text. These spiritualities potentially transform the way the person sees God, others, and their own life and place in the world.

The second expression is the resultant embodiment of the spiritualities created by the internalization of the text. The embodiment is conveyed as God is revealed to others through the individual. This manifestation is described as the *externalization* of the text. The *internalization* of the text creates spiritualities in the life of the person. As the person embodies those spiritualities, the text is *externalized* as God is revealed to others through the life of the person.

The goal of this research is to use these four methodological components to provide a missing thickness to the interpretation of the selected text and its integral and critical relationship to the overall understanding of a process of character transformation.

3.1 Inductive and Library Research

The overarching research methodology is inductive in principle and utilizes library research as well as extensive analysis of journals and related academic resources. Online documents are included where deemed academically sound and are critically evaluated before incorporation into the body of research. Integral to the research into is an investigation into disciplines which contribute significantly to an understanding of character and character transformation. This research examines the contributions made in the areas of philosophy, psychology, sociology and education, theology, and spirituality. Inductive methodology safeguards objectivity and maintains exegetical accuracy. The application of inductive research to the specific components of the Historical-Critical methodology facilitates a reliable synthesis of findings and conclusions.

3.2 Historical Reading

The Historical Reading extensively and critically examines the selected text in order to ascertain the meaning of the text within the historical and cultural framework of

the original audience. This approach relates the text to the event that led to the writing. It also relates the text to the broader place in the "Old Testament and the New Testament, and between the Word of God and human existence."[3] Such an approach facilitates answering several critical questions that arise when reading the focal pericope: 1) What is the content of the teaching on character and transformation of character at that time in history? 2) What is the background for that teaching? 3) How are the issues of character and transformation of character communicated and is there a commonly accepted venue for that communication? This research examines aspects of the community that received the Colossian epistle: 1) Who were the Jews and Gentiles of the Colossae community and what were their lives like? 2) How did they act? 3) What was their conduct from the perspective of a social and cultural background? 4) What was happening in that time and within that community that led to the writing of this paraenetic text at this particular time? According to Wilson, "one of the chief concerns of paraenesis is to furnish an overall conceptual framework in which the author's behests to think and behave in certain ways make sense in light of the recipient's situation and experience."[4] The socio-cultural context of the pericope provides the background to the interpretation of the text and the environment in which it is received.

This research investigates the theme of transformation of character within the methodological framework of historical reading. In the timeframe surrounding the Colossian epistle, what are the prevailing thoughts and attitudes towards character and the potential for character transformation? If transformation was deemed possible, how did such a change occur and what are the factors that contribute to such a process? Is there any cohesion and congruence with the way character transformation is expressed within the pervading culture and the manner in which such a transformation is presented within the focal pericope? A process of interpretation and actualization is applied to the focal text using appropriately selected principles outlined by Egger. This application is undertaken in order to achieve a reading of the text that is accurate to the intent of the author and those who would interact with the text.

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[3] Egger, *How to Read the New Testament: An Introduction to Linguistic and Historical-Critical Methodology*, 189.

[4] Walter T. Wilson, "The Hope of Glory: Education and Exhortation in the Epistle to the Colossians," *Supplements to Novum Testamentum 88* (Leiden: Brill, 1997): 224.

3.3 Textual Reading

3.3.1 The Inner Textual Reading[5]

The inner textual reading focuses on issues emanating out of the selected pericope related to the language chosen to communicate the intended message. This research analyzes the inner textual composition of the passage and its inter-textual correlation to other texts based on a linguistic, semantic, and structural analysis. The rhetoric utilized in the passage is examined as well as various stylistic features that enable a reliable hermeneutic of the pericope.[6] A central part of the exegesis is the use of discourse analysis of the Greek text. The discourse analysis allows for a thorough examination of the structure of the discourse and brings understanding to semantic choices made by the writer. In this regard, this research reflects and expands upon work done by Christopher, Van der Watt, Porter and Reed, and Callow.[7]

As part of the exegesis, the pericope is examined for any textual variants that exist. These variants are evaluated based on the significance of interpretive meaning and historical reliability. Key to this analysis is the utilization of the Greek text in conjunction with relevant existing manuscripts.

3.3.2 The Intertextual Reading

The intertextual reading examines the language and message of the pericope within the broader context of related biblical and extra-biblical literature. According to Waaijman, a text does not stand alone in isolation but is "an intersection of fragments, allusions and resonances of other texts."[8] While the work on the discourse analysis gives

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[5] This research methodology utilizes certain relevant terms from Vernon K. Robbins and his socio-rhetorical methodology of interpretation. While much of the terminology is appropriately descriptive and applicable, the overall methodology was not deemed the most productive for the specific research goals. Whereas Robbins utilizes the strategy of columns to ascertain the rhetorical meaning of a text, this research utilizes discourse analysis to work intertextually with the text. Appreciation is expressed to Dr. Robbins for his contribution to the clarity of explanation in this thesis afforded by the use of his terminology.

[6] Egger, *How to Read the New Testament: An Introduction to Linguistic and Historical-Critical Methodology*, 72.

[7] Gregory T. Christopher, "A Discourse Analysis of Colossians 2:16-3:11," *Grace Theological Journal* 11 no. 2 (1990): 205-220; Jan G van der Watt, *Christus is Julie Hoop* (Pretoria: NGK, 1998); Stanley E. Porter, Jeffrey T. Reed, eds., "Discourse Analysis and the New Testament," *Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series* 170, 1999; John Callow, *A Semantic and Structural Analysis of Colossians*, 2nd ed. (Dallas: SIL International, 2002).

[8] Waaijman, *Spirituality*, 1.

primary focus to the semantic networks embedded within the focal pericope, the larger text of Colossians is taken into consideration in order to locate the pericope within the overall structure of the epistle. This analysis of the pericope within the framework of the entire epistle contributes to an understanding of the pericope and the overall intent of the author concerning the issue of character transformation. Where applicable, this research also critically examines other Pauline writings as well as other relevant biblical texts in both the New Testament and the Old Testament. This examination is undertaken in order to ascertain the impact of those texts upon the interpretation of the pericope. Attention is also given to apocryphal, pseudepigraphal, and other relevant extra-biblical texts that utilize similar wording or structure such as the use of vice and virtue lists, similar imagery of putting off and putting on, or attention given to transformation of character. This aspect of the methodology is done from a textual perspective in order to determine the interrelatedness of the other documentation and the impact on the meaning and interpretation of the focal text.

3.4 Theological Reading

The theological reading of the text involves an investigation into the sacred texture of a text. As one encounters sacred texts, there is an intersection between human life and the divine.[9] It is noted that a person's encounter with the divine is not limited to Scripture. However, in this research, the theological reading is limited to the selected Colossian pericope. Encountering the divine within the texts of Scripture would seem to be a reasonably obvious encounter. However, people encounter God on a myriad of levels and in a diverse number of ways. This research examines the selected text in Colossians from the perspective of five "threads" in order to express the particular thickness of the sacred texture of the text.[10]

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[9] Vernon K. Robbins, *Exploring the Texture of Texts* (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 1996), 120.

[10] Ibid., 120-31. This approach differs from that of Stephen Fowl, *Reading in Communion*, (Eugene, OR: 1998) in that it begins from the perspective of the text itself. Fowl would argue that the place of beginning for a theological reading would be that of the community. The text emanates from a community with the explicit target of another community. The methodology utilized in this research incorporates the dynamic of the community but initiates the investigation from a locus of the text in order to maintain a close connection with the nuances intended by the author. Many variables must be considered when one does a theological reading and interpretation from a Christian perspective. According to Shillington, *Reading the Sacred Text: An Introduction to Biblical Studies* (London: T&T Clark, 2002), 280, it "grows out of Christian experience and aims at enhancing Christian life and thought." Shillington's explanation is an excellent summation of the rationale behind the inclusion of this particular methodology.

3.4.1 Deity

Scripture is one of the sacred spaces in which God reveals God's self. One of the prevailing themes of Scripture is God's revelation of God's self to humanity and the development of God's desired relationship with humanity. When one comes to the selected text of Colossians, how does God choose to reveal God's self? What does the text reveal about the nature and character of God? What does the author want to reveal about God to the target audience? In the pericope, the author refers to God (τῷ θεῷ or alternate form) six times. Each of those occurrences reveals a specific aspect of God's nature. There is one reference where the person of God is implied, but rather than τῷ θεῷ; the author utilizes a *nomen agentis* to express a specific aspect of God's nature. Why does the author choose to highlight these particular character traits of God? Is there intentionality that directly impacts a possible process of character transformation for those who encounter the text?

A theological reading provides a richness and depth to the texture of the text. This research examines these interactions between human beings and the divine with particular attention given to a possible process of transformation of character.

3.4.2 Holy Person

Robbins states that often within a passage of Scripture there is the identification of a person who has a special relationship with God. The example *par excellence* in the sacred text of Scripture is the person of Christ.[11] One of the fundamental assumptions of this research is the equality of Christ in the divine Trinitarian person of God. The person of Jesus who is the Christ is concomitantly deity and, by nature of his deity, he is also a holy person.

Often the writers of Scripture include other characters, either good or evil, to highlight the degree of goodness of one or the disparity between the good and the evil. In the Colossian pericope, the person of Christ is mentioned nine times. Five of those instances reflect a locative sphere of relationship. Does the intentional locative description convey a theology of place? What does the author desire to communicate to the recipients about their lives in relationship to Christ? How should this locative sphere of existence impact one's character? Four of the occurrences relate to a specific aspect of the nature of Christ's character. What does the author desire to create within the lives of the recipients

[11] Robbins, *Exploring the Texture of Texts*, 121.

with regards to their characters and concerning the expressions of Christ's character?

Within the pericope, there is an apparent contrast between the person of Christ and the lives of the recipients. There is a further contrast between the pre-conversion and post-conversion lives of these recipients as the paraenetic passage develops. Further, there is referential evidence that the Colossian believers are themselves "holy persons" (Col. 3.12). Is there a model of holiness that reflects a characterological transformation in the lives of those who interact with the message of the text? This research examines the call to a particular lived expression of character reflected in the pericope and compares it with the textual relationship to the character possessed by the holy person of Christ.

3.4.3 Human Commitment

Salvation is God's work of redemption. Humankind responds to God with the commitment to following God's ways.[12] Commitment can be observed in the act of obedience to live according to the commands of God. For the follower of Christ, the appropriate motivating factor becomes love in response to God's activity rather than fear of judgment. In Colossians 3, the writer presents a salvific reality with eschatological implications. It is out of that environment of salvation that the recipients are commanded to focus the activity of their bodies and minds upon the things of God as an aspect of their faith commitment. What role does this human commitment play in the process of character transformation? Are there articulate directives of commitment that lead to observable characterological change? Is the process of character transformation initiated by the person as a result of the salvation experience? This research investigates the divine-human activity in character transformation. Further, this research explores the possibility of a process that allows for human responsibility and divine participation in the recreation of character according to a divine model.

3.4.4 Religious Community

Discipleship is both an individual and community activity. In the justification-sanctification-glorification model of redemption, there is an opportunity for the individuals who experience faith in Christ to join together as a community. This community has both a spiritual and physical connotation. The sacred text of Scripture refers to this community

[12] Ibid., 126.

of faith as the Body of Christ. The Body has a responsibility to build up the members through following Christ. This responsibility is part of the task of discipleship, and it is one of the many functions of the faith community. The goal of the discipleship is maturity in the faith and growth in Christlikeness. Within the Colossian pericope, can one find the aspect of community and how does that community factor into the process of transformation of character? What are the expectations of a member of that community towards other members and how can they co-facilitate characterological change?

3.4.5 Ethics

Character shapes ethical behavior. That behavior flows from deeply held values and beliefs built upon the foundation of what one considers as right or wrong, on both private and corporate levels. The model of right and wrong for the follower of Christ is the moral standard set by God in Scripture. The struggle of redeemed humanity is the conflicting desire to both *adhere to* and to *rebel against* the commands of God. The Colossian pericope presents a clear picture of the spiritual struggle that exists in the lives of believers. It portrays both the pre-conversion activity (in vices) as well as the activity that should typify the life of a follower of Christ (in virtues). The lists of vices and virtues serve as a model of things to abandon in life and things to which one should seek to develop, respectively.

A writer chooses words in order to influence the reader to respond in a particular fashion. Is the writer of the passage advocating a self-generated transformation of character achieved through a process of refusal to act according to vice and consciously choosing to act in a virtuous manner? Is the goal of character transformation behavior that aligns with the commands of God? Within the passage, is there a model of character after which followers of Christ are being shaped? If so, what is the origin of that model and how can Christ-followers facilitate the process of transformation? To what end is the believer being transformed? What is the τέλος of character transformation?

This research seeks to discern the intent of the writer of the selected text and determine any correlation between that intent and the transformation of character. Why is character transformation necessary? What is its purpose and what are the implications of that transformation? What is the writer's image of a transformed character? The methodology of theological reading seeks to discover the possibility of a model of the transformational process that applies to the lives of those who interact with the text.

3.5 Spirituality and Embodiment

Spirituality can be defined as a lived expression of faith. Multiple spiritualities can be created within a person as their perception of reality is altered by an encounter with the divine. This transformed perception of reality finds expression through belief and behavior. This research investigates the spiritualities created by interaction with the divine from two specific standpoints arising in the pericope: internalization and externalization.

The first methodological approach of the research into a spirituality reading is an examination of the spiritualities created within the lives of the recipients as they encounter the text of the pericope itself. The writer of the text chose words with intentionality and specificity to create potential spiritualities in the lives of the recipients. The passage does not exist in a contextual vacuum. The writer communicates to individuals in their particular context. As an individual interacts with the text and subsequently embraces the text, there is an internalization of the ideological values represented in the message of the passage. These values are incorporated, and they impact the perception and behavior of the recipient. The depth of impact can alter the recipient's worldview and potentially run counter to the prevailing worldview of the culture in which the recipient lives. If embraced and *internalized*, how does the selected passage potentially alter the worldview of the recipient? What spiritualities are created within the recipient's life? Is there a desired outcome based on the structure and rhetorical choice made by the writer?

The *internalization* of the text leads to a lived experience of faith. As a person interacts with and embraces the text, the creation of spiritualities leads to an *embodiment* of the text. The spiritualities created through the *internalization* of the text lead to the *externalization* of the text as God is embodied to others through the lives of the recipients. What is the character of God that is externalized through the embodiment of the pericope? Is there a teleological goal of embodiment and what does that look like as it is expressed and externalized in the lives of the recipients? What is the role of the community of faith in the embodiment? Is there any connection to the imagery of the faith community as embodiment? If so, is there a connection between a person's externalization and the broader, corporate embodiment? Does the text present a model for embodiment?

The methodologies undertaken in this research allow for an examination of character and transformation of character from a broad spectrum of disciplines. The investigation into the selected biblical passage utilizes multiple approaches in order to ascertain the writer's intent concerning the transformation of character and the teleological goal for that transformation. After the application of the investigative methodologies, this

research synthesizes the findings and presents conclusions regarding transformation of character and the existence of a proposed process of transformation that arise from the Colossian pericope.

3.6 Thesis Structure

The thesis will consist of seven chapters, and a brief description of each chapter follows the structural outline.

Chapter 1: Introduction
Chapter 2: A Review of Relevant Literature
Chapter 3: The Methodology for an Examination of Transformation of Character and Created Spiritualities in Colossians 3.1-17
Chapter 4: A Socio-Historical Examination of Colossians 3.1-17 and Related Environs
Chapter 5: Inner and Intertextual and Exegetical Analysis of Colossians 3.1-17
Chapter 6: Theological and Embodiment Textures of Colossians 3.1-17 and the Spiritualities Fostered Through Textual Encounter
Chapter 7: Findings and Conclusions
Chapter 8: Bibliography

Chapter One, "Introduction" gives the personal motivation for an investigation into the transformation of character and background to the issue of character. The rationale for the thesis derives from the perspective of perceived increase of interest in character and transformation of character from five specific disciplines of study. The research examines the five disciplines for an overall approach to the issue of character and their respective prominent theories regarding its existence, formation, and mutability.

Chapter Two, "A Review of Relevant Literature" includes critical reviews of commentaries relevant to Colossians 3.1-17. This chapter demonstrates the gap in scholarly research connecting the pericope and character transformation as well as indicates the need for additional research. This chapter includes the research problems to be addressed and the academic contributions made by the findings of this thesis.

Chapter Three, "The Methodology for an Examination of Transformation of Character and Created Spiritualities in Colossians 3.1-17," presents an explanation of the specific components of the historical-critical research methodology utilized in this thesis. The chapter also offers a rationale for the incorporation of selected terminology from Robbins (*Exploring the Texture of Texts*). The chapter also explains the motivation for the examination of the pericope within a framework of the textures of theological reading and

embodiment, along with the spiritualities these mechanisms generate.

Chapter Four, "A Socio-Historical Examination of Colossians 3.1-17 and Relevant Environs," investigates the socio-historical world of the Colossian pericope and elaborates on the various influences that impact the understanding of character and transformation of character. The research applies critical thinking skills to the various influential aspects involved in the transformation of character in order to ascertain an accurate theological perspective that aligns with biblical teaching.

Chapter Five, "Inner and Intertextual and Exegetical Analysis of Colossians 3.1-17," includes the application of specific components of the historical-critical methodology mentioned in Chapter Three and exploits the mechanisms of discourse analysis in order to present an accurate exegetical picture of the pericope and related relevant texts both within and external to the Bible.

Chapter Six, "Theological and Embodiment Textures of Colossians 3.1-17 and the Spiritualities Fostered Through Textual Encounter" makes application of selected theological textures defined by Robbins (*Exploring the Texture of Texts*) to the pericope. The research examines embedded semantic networks within the text that are related to the theological texture in light of the spiritualities that are created upon interaction with the text. Further, the texture of embodiment is explored as a linear texture. Embodiment reflects the integration and congruence between the text and the lived experience of the follower of Christ.

Chapter Seven, "Findings and Conclusions" includes a discussion of the findings from the research and draws conclusions related to them. From the research done with Colossians 3.1-17 and the investigation of the academic disciplines mentioned above this research integrates the results in order to draw relevant conclusions regarding a potential process of character transformation.

Chapter Eight, "Bibliography of the Thesis," is the bibliography of works utilized for the thesis. The bibliography reflects extensive research on the particular epistle as well as wide-ranging research into the relevant literature from a variety of academic disciplines. The research incorporates biblical and extra-biblical sources that are semantically connected to the pericope as well as those that bear a theological connection. In order to gain a broader historical view of character and transformation of character, original source documents are consulted wherever possible. These are reflected in the bibliography. Sources that are mentioned in referral as supporting documentation but not

explicitly utilized for the research are noted in the text by author and year of publication but not included in the bibliography.

3.7 Delimitations and Final Matters

3.7.1 Delimitations

The research for the thesis involves investigation into areas of psychology, sociology, and philosophy. This thesis does not address areas of psychology outside of those directly related to character and character transformation. The thesis is also limited to research in areas of philosophy directly related to the theological study of virtue, virtue ethics and teleological virtue ethics as they specifically relate to character development and the transformation of character. Within the area of sociology, the scope of this thesis is limited to the sociological/educational impact on the development of character and the transformation of character.

CHAPTER 4

A SOCIO-HISTORICAL EXAMINATION OF COLOSSIANS 3.1-17 AND RELEVANT ENVIRONS

4.1 Colossae: An Introduction to the Cultural and Religious Milieu

Any endeavor to understand and grasp the significance of the focal Colossian epistolary discourse necessitates an exploration of the geographical, historical, socio-cultural, and religious environments of the original recipients as well as those of the writer. "Authentic *Religionsgeschichte* requires the attempt to understand a cultural context on its own terms, not just as the 'background' to a single historical figure." [13] Merely understanding the bibliographic details of the author of the Colossian epistle, or if possible even the Colossian believers themselves, while essential, yields an incomplete picture through which one would attempt to construct an accurate interpretation of the particular textures of the text. The Colossian pericope of 3.1-17 is written from a specific context to recipients within a specific context. Thorough exegesis of the focal passage of Colossians 3.1-17, situated in the entirety of the epistle, requires critical thinking and a deductive investigation into "the social and cultural 'location' of the [epistolary] language chosen and the type of social and cultural world [that] language evokes or creates."[14] This research explores the social and culture texture surrounding the Colossian environment. The exploration commences with an analysis of the geographical and historical backdrop in which Colossae existed at the time of receiving the epistle from the apostle Paul. With such a foundation one can investigate the complex and varied influence of cultural and religious elements present in the lives of the Colossians and how these intersect with those same elements in the life of the apostle Paul. All of these components allow construction of a socio-historical texture. This texture is both culturally realistic and historically appropriate and speaks directly to the issues related to character and the transformation of character from the Colossian perspective.

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[13] John Barclay and Simon Gathercole, eds., *Divine and Human Agency in Paul and His Cultural Environment* (New York: T&T Clark, 2006), 5.

[14] Vernon K. Robbins, *Exploring the Texture of Texts* (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 1996), 71. Bracketed words are my own insertion for clarity and relevance.

4.2 Geographical and historical environment of Colossae

The proposal for a precise geographical location of the ancient city of Colossae shifts over the course of history. Despite the various opinions, the consensus is that the most reliable archaeological site is located within the Lycus Valley in the region of Phrygia; an area also known as Anatolia.[15] "In contrast to the newer towns, Laodicea and Hierapolis, it was ancient and autochthonous, i.e. populated by natives of Phrygia."[16] The preponderance of archaeological evidence dates the habitation of the area to the Bronze Age, but some evidence exists that could date back as far as the Chalcolithic Age.[17] Situated on the major trade route from the city of "Sardis to Kelainai (the later Apameia),"[18] Colossae is depicted as a town, smaller than that of "Apameia Cibotus, as it is called, and Laodicea, which are two of the largest Phrygian cities."[19] The poet Claudian describes the agrarian aspects of the Phrygian territory, praising the "universal Mediterranean triad, cereals, vines, and olives, followed by the district's characteristic livestock, horses, and sheep."[20] The region of Colossae was known for its wool industry due to the superior

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[15] For a thorough investigation into the historical controversy over the physical location of the city of Colossae and the reasons related to such see Allan H. Cadwallader and Michael Trainor's *Colossae in Space and Time: Linking to an Ancient City* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 2011). While the focus of this research is limited to the socio-historical setting directly related to the timeframe of the recipients of the epistle, Cadwallader and Trainor provide scholarly background and rationale as to the paucity of archaeological evidence and artifacts from Colossae. This lack of reliable evidentiary material explains much of the ongoing debate surrounding the myriad of questions arising from the epistle. Cadwallader and Trainor provide extensive source material that connects many gaps in the current research of Colossae.

[16] Sherman E. Johnson, "Laodicea and Its Neighbors," *The Biblical Archaeologist* XIII no. 1 (1950): 5.

[17] Allan H. Cadwallader, "A Chronology of Colossae/Chonai," in *Colossae in Space and Time: Linking to an Ancient City*, eds. Allan H. Cadwallader and Michael Trainor (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 2011), 301.

[18] Sir William Mitchell Ramsay, *The Cities and Bishoprics of Phrygia: Being an Essay of the Local History of Phrygia from the Earliest Times to the Turkish Conquest*, Vol. 1, part II (London: Clarendon Press, 1895), 209. Cadwallader and Trainor identify the city as a "key station on the Royal Road" as far back as the 5th or 4th Century B.C.

[19] Strabo, *The Geography of Strabo,* 12.8.13. ed. H.L. Jones (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Univ. Press, 1924), accessed July 16, 2014, http: perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=urn:cts:greekLit: tlg0099.tlg001.perseus-eng1:12.8.13. Though see the annotation within the online edition and note the reference to the lacuna in the text following the terminology of "small towns" and the apparent inclusion of "places, among others." See also Cadwallader and Trainor, p165, concerning Strabo's word choice and the fact that "no nicety of distinction between πόλις and πόλισμα had come to his notice. The momentum seems to have been a nineteenth century one, when exploration seemingly failed to uncover surface evidence of a profound ancient city." With such an amended reading it is possible that the designation of declining significance compared to earlier historical statements regarding Colossae may lack a degree of accuracy.

[20] Peter Thonemann, *The Maeander Valley: A Historical Geography from Antiquity to Byzantium*, (New York: Cambridge, 2011), 53. While Strabo agrees with Claudian regarding the cultivation of olives, there is cause for doubt given the evidence of the area's weather patterns. Though, as Thonemann

quality of the sheep and the soft, dark purple or raven colored wool, "generally known as Colossian,"[21] surpassing that of the Milesian flocks.[22] Much is left to speculation about the actual city of Colossae itself. "The site of Colossae has never been excavated, and the visible ruins of the city are meager, consisting mainly of some ruins of the acropolis and a few seats of the amphitheater."[23] By the Roman imperial period, the city of Colossae, while still significant, is "overshadowed by its neighbors, particularly Laodicea."[24] It is an area of underground rivers and caverns, making it susceptible to earthquakes. The historian Tacitus records the destruction of nearby Laodicea in 61/62 A.D.[25] stating, "one of the famous cities of Asia, Laodicea, was that same year overthrown by an earthquake, and, without any relief from us, recovered itself by its own resources."[26] The area around Colossae is also an area predisposed to fire; "the alluvial soil is very fine and dry, full of salts and very flammable."[27] It is possible that as a result of the earthquake that devastated Laodicea in 61/62 A.D. [28] "the [Colossian] population eventually relocated to the neighboring town of Chonae (Honaz)."[29] The historical documents produced after the

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points out, the real cause for the demise of the cultivation of olives in the area is likely the result of shifting cultural demands. As Hellenization increased in antiquity, the need for olive oil for the gymnasiums increased, thereby increasing the possibility of cultivation. When the Graeco-Roman culture faded, so did the urgency of the need for oil and the cultivation of the olive groves.

[21] Bo Reicke, "The Historical Setting of Colossians," *Review and Expositor* 70 (1973): 429.

[22] Ibid., 12.8.16.

[23] John B. Polhill, *Paul and His Letters* (Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 1999), 331.

[24] Ibid.

[25] The discrepancy in the dating of the earthquake is due to two different reports: one by Tacitus of 61 A.D. and that of Eusebius, dating the earthquake in 62A.D. The exact timing of the earthquake is, for this research, of less significance than the impact the catastrophe had upon the residents of Colossae. The dating does help establish the writing of the epistle; most likely prior to 61 or 62 A.D. See Reicke, "The Historical Setting of Colossians," 432 for a more thorough explanation of the different choices for the date of the earthquake as well as validation for Pauline authorship before that event.

[26] Tacitus, *Annals,* 14.27, trans. Alfred J. Church and William J. Brodribb, accessed July 17, 2014, http://classics.mit.edu/Tacitus/annals.10.xiv.html.

[27] Strabo, *The Geography of Strabo*, 12.8.17.

[28] However, see Witherington III, *The Letters to Philemon, the Colossians, and the Ephesians*, 34-5, where he cites Eusebius, *Chronicle* 1.21-22, "The city was destroyed by an earthquake in A.D. 63-64 and was apparently not rebuilt for some time." He also cites Lincoln, *Colossians,* where he states that "there is no evidence of habitation of Colossae after A.D. 63-64 until coins reappear in the late second century," 580. Apparently, there is a shroud of uncertainty that surrounds the specifics of the historical events and the resultant impact upon the residents (and by association the church(es) at Colossae.

[29] Clinton Arnold, 'Colossae', *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, ed. David N. Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 1090. See also Cadwallader and Trainor, *Colossae in Space and Time*, 300, for an explanation of the apparent linking between the two names. "The relationship between the two names is

earthquake of 61/62 A.D. "contain no concrete remarks on the city of Colossae."[30] This absence of any substantive historical documentation or further significant mention of the city leads to a conclusion that it failed to overcome the geographical challenges of its original location.[31]

The origins of the people of Phrygia "are heavily shrouded, but it would seem they were in Macedonia and Thrace before moving into Asia Minor probably around 1200-1000B.C."[32] The historical environment in which Colossae is situated at the time of receiving the Pauline epistle is one that reflects an area at the epicenter of sweeping cultural shifts and changes as far back as its composition as part of the Persian Empire following "Cyrus' overthrow of Croesus, king of Lydia, in 546 B.C."[33] For over 200 years the region comes under Persian cultural and religious influence until the advance of Alexander the Great conquers Asia Minor in 334 B.C. Alexander brings Hellenism and Greek culture throughout his kingdom lasting until the wresting of control from the Seleucid Dynasty in by Antiochus III in 188 B.C. and a shift to the kingdom of Pergamum. Roman influence increases as the Roman empire expands and in 133 B.C. "the last king of Pergamum bequeathed his realm to the Romans,"[34] until the fall of the Roman Empire and the rise of the Byzantine Empire in 476 A.D.

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disputed, with some taking the names as indicating two separate sites while others understand the names as a sequential change for basically the same site. However, all are agreed that Colossae and Chonai are so strongly related that one cannot be understood without reference to the other."

[30] Reicke, "The Historical Setting of Colossians," 430. See further Reicke's use of historical documents, citing Tacitus and Pliny and their failure to mention the city of Colossae following the earthquake of 61/62 A.D. and the omission of the church in the list of churches in Revelation 2.11 as plausible implicit reasoning that the city no longer existed. In contrast to this position, see also Clinton Arnold's postulation for the city's relocation in the *Anchor Bible Dictionary*, 1090. While no definitive conclusion can be drawn without extensive archeological excavation, this research will take the position of nearby relocation to Chonae (modern Honaz) due to the various geographical challenges faced by the originally proposed site and subsequent clues suggesting such a plausible, if not probable, hypothesis. This position is also supported by Johnson, "Laodicea and Its Neighbors," 7.

[31] Though see R. Janin, "Colosses," in *Dictionnaire d'Histoire et de Géographie Ecclésiastiques*, Vol. XIII, (Paris, 1956), col. 341 where there is the mention of Epiphanius, as bishop of Colossae c. 451 A.D. as well as Cosmas taking part in the Council of Trullo in 692 as bishop of Κολοσζῶν ἤτοι Χωνῶν. This historical documentation, while not conclusive, gives credence to the theory of Colossae's relocation.

[32] Rick Strelan, "The Languages of the Lycus Valley," in *Colossae in Space and Time: Linking to an Ancient City,* eds. Allan H. Cadwallader and Michael Trainor (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 2011), 96.

[33] F.F. Bruce, "Jews and Christians in the Lycus Valley," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 141 (Jan. 1984): 3.

[34] Ibid.

The cultural and religious milieu of the Lycus Valley and Colossae is rich and diverse. The remnants of Persian pagan[35] culture and worship,[36] combined with Hellenism, Roman domination, Greek and Roman mythology; all of which become intertwined in its culture and provide the backdrop for a more thorough understanding of the particular lives of the Colossian Christians.

The historical environment of Anatolia and the area surrounding Colossae also includes the influence of Judaism. Evidence exists of a significant Jewish settlement in the region of Phrygia dating back to the third century B.C. when Antiochus III takes 2000 Jewish families from Babylonia and settles them in Phrygia, "in order to stabilize the region."[37] The Jews are granted houses and land as well as exemption from taxation for ten years, "and they were to have the right to live under their own laws."[38] After this settlement and the governmental benevolence, the numbers of Jews in the area significantly increases; population estimates range from 9,000 to 14,000 males over the age of 20 years.[39] While the details of their cultural and religious practices are scarce, the inclusion of Jewish cultural identity and their religious commitment to monotheistic practices would provide potential precursors to the gospel message that was to come.[40] "It should be noted that on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2.9-10), Jews were gathered in Jerusalem from Asia and Phrygia. The evidence would suggest, therefore, that Colossae was a cosmopolitan city at the time

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[35] Within the context of this research, the term "pagan" is used to distinguish religious belief that is not within the major belief monotheistic belief systems of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. It is not intended as a derogatory or pejorative term but merely as a means of differentiating the systems of belief.

[36] See Ulrich Huttner, *Early Christianity in the Lycus Valley*, trans. David Green (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 30. Huttner asserts that there is little evidence of lasting Phrygian culture in the areas of Colossae and within the Lycus Valley. While there is evidence of the cultic pre-Greek worship in rural areas, Huttner posits that the process of Hellenization was through by the time of the writing of the Colossian epistle. See his discussion on the ethnic diversity in nearby Laodicea (Macedonian and Ionian) and the inscription bearing names reflecting Hellenistic influence and lacking any local cultural representation.

[37] Ian Smith, *Heavenly Perspective: A Study of the Apostle Paul's Response to a Jewish Mystical Movement at Colossae* (New York: T&T Clark, 2006), 3.

[38] Bruce, "Jews and Christians in the Lycus Valley," 2.

[39] See Smith, *Heavenly Perspective*, note 11, page 4 for an interesting discussion of the estimation of the number of Jewish males in Laodicea in 62/61 B.C. Of particular interest is how the difference in the numbers of adult males affects the system of weight used to calculate the half-shekel temple tax as well as the relation of gold to silver at the time.

[40] However, see Ramsay's discussion of the possibility of religious laxity amongst the Jewish communities of the diaspora and the assimilation of Hellenistic names, especially as they are found on cemetery epitaphs. These names may be linked to protection of the graves. Ramsay, *The Cities and Bishoprics of Phrygia*, 538; 668-9.

of Paul, populated by both Jews and Gentiles."[41]

Despite the relative paucity of evidentiary material, there remains a great deal that can be discovered about the area of Colossae and the likely makeup of the church to which the apostle Paul wrote. Situated within a specific geographical and historical setting, the city of Colossae and its inhabitants were influenced by a number of cultural factors and religious systems. The existing culture and local religions of the area impacted the early Colossian Christians and threatened the nascent Christianity such that the apostle discerned a need to address the most pressing issues through his epistle. A further discussion of some of those factors and pressures permits insight into the recipients of the epistle and locates the writing within a framework that allows for a reliable hermeneutic.

4.3 Cultural and religious environment of Colossae

By the time the apostle Paul writes the Colossian epistle, there are three primary worldviews, each with resultant socio-cultural and religious systems, which bring significant influence to bear on the emerging Christian church of Colossae. The first of the three is the Mediterranean worldview. Despite the multicultural world in which the people of the first-century world around Colossae lived, they "had similar religious experiences, shared social customs and possessed a common Mediterranean worldview."[42] The second worldview is Hellenism; comprising the Greco-Roman culture, philosophy, and religious impact brought on by military conquests of both Alexander the Great and later Roman Imperialism. The third system is Judaism and the cultural and religious character it conveys to the area surrounding Colossae. The presence of the Jewish population in the Lycus Valley and the Judaic worldview the apostle Paul brings to the writing of the Colossian epistle influence not only how the early Colossian Christians hear the message but the content of the message itself.

Worldview gives shape to cultural and religious beliefs, the understanding of reality and appropriate behavior, as well as corporate and personal identity.[43] The early Colossian Christians do not come to faith in Christ with a *tabula rasa* but bring the deeply held cultural and religious beliefs of these powerful systems into their discipleship as

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[41] Ibid., 4.

[42] David B. Capes, Rodney Reeves and E. Randolph Richards, *Rediscovering Paul: An Introduction to His World, Letters and Theology* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2007), 24.

[43] Kwast, "Understanding Culture," 398ff.

followers of Christ. Their process of character transformation and growth into Christlikeness is one which requires a simultaneous "putting off" of their old systems of belief and practice while "putting on" the new Christian system of beliefs and practices taught by the apostle Paul and other significant sources of doctrinal instruction.

Following an exploration into the relevant socio-cultural influence of these three worldviews, there is an investigation into the characterological issues arising from the Hellenistic religious system. The influence of the Jewish population within the Lycus Valley is examined for the cultural and religious impact and then a subsequent inquiry into the apostle Paul; his cultural and religious background, and how those factors shape the focal pericope. Each of these areas of investigation is examined in light of the Colossian believers who experienced them, the relatedness to the text of Colossians. 3.1-17, and their respective impact on the transformation of the believers' character into Christlikeness.

4.3.1 Mediterranean worldview

Within the Mediterranean world of Colossae and the Lycus Valley an underpinning of worldview, with its cultural beliefs and values, significantly shapes the formation of human character. Within the Mediterranean context, arguably the most influential of these beliefs and values are dyadic orientation, honor/shame, and purity codes. All three of these are intertwined and, according to Canavan, are rooted in issues of "dyadic relationships and collective identity"[44] that shape a person's character. How a person conducts oneself, and the corresponding expression of character is tied to a large degree on these three components of worldview. They are worthy of investigation in order to better understand the transformation of character expressed in the focal Colossian pericope.[45]

4.3.1.1 Dyadic relationships and collective identity

Current Western worldview places a great deal of emphasis on the personhood and identity of the individual. This is not the understanding of the person from a Mediterranean worldview and those around the area of Colossae.[46] Individuals are part of

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[44] Rosemary Canavan, *Clothing the Body of Christ at Colossae: A Visual Construction of Identity* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2012), 64.

[45] Joseph Plevnick, "Honor/Shame," in *Biblical Social Values and Their Meaning: A Handbook,*" eds. John J. Pilch and Bruce J. Malina (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1993), 95.

[46] "Individualistic cultures are a rather recent phenomenon in recorded history," not appearing

a larger picture of dyadic relationships and collective identity.[47] Neyrey locates the identity and value of the individual within their "relationship with someone or something else;"[48] that someone or something else being their "dyad." The character and conduct of the individual are inextricably linked to the dyadic relationship. The individual behaves in a way that is commensurate with the relative character and conduct expected of their larger dyadic "identity group." The dyadic "identity group" is a deeply held value within the Mediterranean worldview and permeates all stages of life. The dyad significantly influences and shapes the character of the individual. Thus, for Colossian believers, their identity is now tied to their dyad of being associated with Christ and their fellow believers. The apostle Paul "can instruct people through traditional lists of virtues and vices about commonly held values"[49] in anticipation of obedience to the instruction. Obedience is directly related to the collective approval or disapproval of the individual and the represented dyad. However, this approval or disapproval is not limited only to the individual but extends to the public opinion of the group as a whole. As one person of the dyadic relationship is known for their conduct, the greater collective of the group shares that identity. The converse is also true: know the group and the individual is known.

The Mediterranean worldview of those in the area around Colossae understood that individuals only have an identity as they are part of the larger collective. This collective identity brings order to society. It is through the collective (be it family, village, or social grouping) that the individual learns how to understand the world around them. This collective mentality brings about a group-oriented conscience that determines the boundaries of right and wrong. In this way, the collective identity shapes the individual

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until the sixteenth or seventeenth century. See Bruce Malina, "Collectivism in Mediterranean Culture" in *Understanding the Social World of the New Testament*, eds. Dietmar Neufeld and Richard E. DeMaris (New York: Routledge, 2010), 19.

[47] Cultural anthropology (see *Biblical Social Values and their Meaning: A Handbook*, eds. John J. Pilch and Bruce J. Malina, 1993, for numerous contributing authors to the topic) provides excellent insight into this aspect of the Mediterranean worldview. In contrast to a monadic identity, often the case in Western culture where the individual is the singular starting block of all relationships and identity, a dyad is a minimum of two. This interconnectedness is the core element in understanding self. The individual is always understood by society (and those on the outside of the individual's dyadic relationships) and understands himself or herself in light of the connectivity with some "other" or group of "others." In such an environment the individual becomes embedded or "nested" within a group and draws identity from that dyadic relationship. This manner of relationship brings to bear all of the expectations of the group upon the individual, mainly as it relates to morality, character, and behavior.

[48] Jerome H. Neyrey, "Dyadism," in *Biblical Social Values and Their Meaning: A Handbook,*" eds. John J. Pilch and Bruce J. Malina (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1993), 49.

[49] Ibid., 51.

identity and character to reflect the character of the group and the dyadic authority. "The social construction of the personality is primarily to meet the expectations of the group rather than to develop as a unique individual."[50] Behavior is determined by those who confer honor through public recognition or by those of the influential "in-group." The collective group grants the individual honor by virtue of association. "To go outside the limits of these pre-determined social roles is to risk disapproval and rejection by the very people upon whose approval the person depends not only for affirmation but for identity."[51]

Individuals exist as they are embedded within a system of association. This association can be kinship, clan, tribe, or ethnocultural relationship. Identity is directly tied to the collective in which one is embedded. The collectivity-oriented "personality is one who simply needs another continually in order to know who he or she really is."[52] This collectivistic identity and the importance of embeddedness is not unlike what is observed with a set of matryoshka dolls. Each is "nested" within another such that when you see the unit, it is comprised of an ordered set of "individuals" that receive an identity from being a part of the whole. It is the same idea noted in the focal pericope of Colossians. 3.1-17, with special emphasis on 3.2-4, "τὰ ἄνω φρονεῖτε, μὴ τὰ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς. ἀπεθάνετε γὰρ καὶ ἡ ζωὴ ὑμῶν κέκρυπται σὺν τῷ Χριστῷ ἐν τῷ θεῷ ὅταν ὁ Χριστὸς φανερωθῇ, ἡ ζωὴ ὑμῶν, τότε καὶ ὑμεῖς σὺν αὐτῷ φανερωθήσεσθε ἐν δόξῃ." The individual believer is embedded within Christ and finds identity there. For those with this collectivistic identity, the will and good of the individual is superseded by the will and good of the group. This understanding begins to shed light on the statement by Caiaphas the high priest in John 11.50, "You do not understand that it is better for you to have one man die for all the people than to have the whole nation destroyed." While the statement by Caiaphas has soteriological implications, to the high priest he merely stated the appropriate dyadic response when the collective identity and authority is under potential threat from the Roman government because of Jesus' teaching and conduct.

Within the dyadic relationships and collectivistic identity "responsibility for morality and deviance is not on the individual alone but on the social body, the group in

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[50] Carolyn Osiek and David L. Balch, *Families in the New Testament World* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1997), 41.

[51] Ibid.

[52] Bruce J. Malina, *The New Testament World: Insights from Cultural Anthropology* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001), 62.

which the individual is embedded."[53] Character and the transformation of character is an issue of concern for both the individual and the group. It is for the individual to take responsibility, but the group into which the person is embedded bears responsibility as well. Thus, the apostle Paul can write to the Colossian believers in 3.16, "Ὁ λόγος τοῦ Χριστοῦ ἐνοικείτω ἐν ὑμῖν πλουσίως, ἐν πάσῃ σοφίᾳ διδάσκοντες καὶ νουθετοῦντες ἑαυτούς, ψαλμοῖς ὕμνοις ᾠδαῖς πνευματικαῖς ἐν [τῇ] χάριτι ᾄδοντες ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις ὑμῶν τῷ θεῷ." Character traits that are harmful to the group and the individual embedded within it are to be "put off." Likewise, those character traits that reflect stability and the moral health of the individual as well as the dyadic relationships from which the person derives collective identity are to be "put on." A critical motivation for this "putting off" and "putting on" becomes apparent in an investigation into issues of honor and shame.

4.3.1.2 Honor and shame

In the Mediterranean worldview, honor and shame are "the dominant values of popular morality."[54] Not only dominant, honor and shame "are the core values in the Mediterranean world."[55] According to Crook "they were and (for the most part) remain pivotal cultural values."[56] Malina describes honor as that which defines how a person or collective group 'fits' within society and their social status. Honor is the summation of value and social standing bestowed on an individual and his or her dyadic relationships by the community as well as the value of the individual from the individual's perspective. Honor is both "ascribed and acquired."[57] Ascribed honor is that which an individual receives as being part of an esteemed group through relationship or ancestry. Ascribed

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[53] Ibid., 65.

[54] Peregrine Horden and Nicholas Purcell, *The Corrupting Sea: A Study of Mediterranean History* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Pub., 2000), 489.

[55] Plevnick, "Honor/Shame," 95.

[56] Zeba Crook, "Honor, Shame, and Social Status Revisited," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 128 no. 3 (2009): 591.

[57] Malina, *The New Testament World*, 52. Though see detractors of Malina's honor/shame system: especially David deSilva, *Despising Shame: Honor Discourse and Community Maintenance in the Epistle to the* Hebrews (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2008); Louise Lawrence, *An Ethnography of the Gospel of Matthew: A Critical Assessment of the Use of Honor and Shame Model in New Testament Studies* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003); David G. Horrell, "Models and Methods in Social-Scientific Interpretation: A Response to Philip Esler," in *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 78 (2000): 83-105, and Cyril Rodd, "On Applying a Sociological Theory to Biblical Studies," *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament*, 19 (1981): 95-106. While there are detractors to Malina's system, the endurance of the theory and the general acceptance of its veracity are sufficient for this research to provide acceptance and reliability.

honor is that which society attaches to a person based on some perceived meritorious behavior. Honor is taken from one person and given to another since honor is a limited resource.[58] When one person's honor increases through ascription, another person's honor correspondingly decreases. In a dyadic relationship based society with collective identities, a person would want to behave in such a way that does not jeopardize the collective honor and risk loss. In this sense, honor shapes character and behavior since it is an innate understanding that to behave in a dishonorable manner is to bring disgrace upon the collective group as well as the individual as part of the group.[59]

Shame is not so much the opposite of honor as it is "a person's sensitivity to what others think, say, and do with regard to his or her honor."[60] Shame has a distinctly "female" quality in that as males would be expected to protect and defend honor, the behavior of women would be such that they would protect honor by a sensitivity to and a rejection of behavior (most often sexual in nature) outside of its perceived proper environment.[61]

> The values of honor and shame are instilled in the young through constant example and exhortation. They become animated by *egoismos* – a word meaning self-regard, but which might suitably be translated as an obsessive concern with others' evaluation of oneself.[62]

With such a pervasive influence into all aspects of an *agonistic*[63] society, honor and shame and the character and conduct which brings gain or loss of honor and shame, all become of paramount importance in people's lives. Of course, morality, like beauty, is "in the eyes of the beholder." What is deemed moral by one culture may be immoral to another. Even deceit or lying can be seen as an honorable and acceptable activity if it is used to withhold the truth from someone deemed unworthy of truth and a threat to honor.[64] A

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[58] See Malina's description of the concept of "limited good," in *The New Testament World,* 33, 89-90.

[59] Ibid., 52-3.

[60] Ibid.

[61] Horden and Purcell, *The Corrupting Sea*, 490-1.

[62] Ibid, 491.

[63] Agonistic here refers to a society that views all interactions with outsiders and those within the circle of influence such as friends and peer groups as combative and an attempt to give or take honor from each other. See Malina, *The New Testament World*, 36 for a fuller definition.

[64] Malina, *The New Testament World*, 41.

person's behavior and actions become crucial in the assessment of the person's (and by association, the collective's) identity and character. In order to define what is acceptable and unacceptable, the society develops specific "rules" or codes that separate that which is acceptable (sacred and pure) and that which is unacceptable (profane and impure).

4.3.1.3 Purity codes

Purity as a value is directly tied to issues of honor and shame in that it "directs each member of a society to respect and observe the system of space and time lines that human groups develop to have everything in its place and a place for everything."[65] These lines designate that which is pure and that which is impure. The Old Testament goes to great lengths to clarify the lines of acceptable and unacceptable and what one must do to move that which has become impure and unclean back to its proper place of purity[66]. This cleansing rituals of the Old Testament and the attempt to restore purity is the process of sanctification. The word sanctify means to make (*-fy*) sacred or holy (*sancti-*).[67] Thus, when we come to the vice and virtue lists in our focal pericope of Colossians 3.1-17 Paul lays out a purity code that sets a clear demarcation of what is acceptable and that which is unacceptable in the life of a believer. There is that which is out of place in the character of the believer (earthly and of the "old self") and impure (Col. 3.5-8), and that which is the ideal of character (the new self, "ὡς ἐκλεκτοὶ τοῦ θεοῦ ἅγιοι καὶ ἠγαπημένοι"), set apart, rightfully in place, and pure (Col. 3.12-16). This process of sanctification is the ongoing, concomitant activity of radical removal ("Νεκρώσατε οὖν τὰ μέλη τὰ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς") and "putting off" of that which is impure and the restorative renewal that comes as a result of "putting on" the new and pure ("ἐνδυσάμενοι τὸν νέον τὸν ἀνακαινούμενον").

4.3.1.4 Implications for the Colossians and their character formation

The Mediterranean worldview has a significant potential impact on the lives of those in the Lycus Valley. It factors into a consideration of the way in which the original recipients of the Colossian epistle hear the words of the apostle Paul. The foundational comprehension of dyadic and collectivistic relationships, honor/shame, and the purity codes facilitate an understanding of how those hearing the Colossian pericope would

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[65] John J. Pilch, "Purity," in *Biblical Social Values and Their Meaning*, eds. John J. Pilch and Bruce J. Malina (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Pub., 1993), 151.

[66] See Leviticus 11-15.

[67] Malina, *The New Testament World*, 163.

perceive it from the perspective of their worldview. The whole idea of being embedded "in Christ," gives a new dyadic identity and reorients the collectivistic relationship of believers. Christ becomes the one for whom behavior is evaluated and the one whom believers seek to honor through behavior characteristic of one who is embedded "in Christ."

An epistolary example is noted in Colossians 2.11-15 where Paul describes the new identity that is received as evidenced through baptism. "Baptism is *pars pro toto* of the conversion" experience.[68] The person exchanges their old dyadic identity and collective relationships in life for a new dyadic identity and life in a collective relationship with Jesus publicly displayed through the act of baptism. Based on this new identity the issue of an attempt by outsiders to bring shame due to perceived misconduct is re-evaluated and rejected in Colossians 2-16-23. Instead, Paul provides a reminder in 2.20 of the believers' new identity through identification with Christ and the fact that "with Christ" they have died.

With this understanding of the new dyadic identity and collective relationship, one can examine Colossians 3.1-4 for the embedded orientation. Paul speaks of being "raised with Christ," and the believers' lives are now embedded and "hidden with Christ in God." He reassures the Colossian believers that "ὅταν ὁ Χριστὸς φανερωθῇ, ἡ ζωὴ ὑμῶν, τότε καὶ ὑμεῖς σὺν αὐτῷ φανερωθήσεσθε ἐν δόξῃ," revealing the depth of embeddedness and the promise of honor to come.

Since the believers have this new identity, Paul reorients their understanding of honor and shame to reflect their embedded relationship "in Christ." The vices listed in Colossians 3.5-8 are now attitudes and activities that, though they were a normal part of their previous identity, they do not bring honor and are not reflective of a dyadic identity with Christ.[69] Cessation of such activities would demonstrate a character that, by adopting a new set of purity codes, would not bring shame and dishonor upon their collective

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[68] Volker Rabens, *The Holy Spirit and Ethics in Paul: Transformation and Empowering for Religious-Ethical Life,* 2nd ed. (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2013), 107.

[69] Consideration should be given to Malina, *The New Testament World*, 89-104 and his detailed explanation of the concept of "limited good" and its impact upon behavior. Does the concept provide nuance to the vice of πλεονεξίαν in Colossians 3.5? The "greed" carries with it more than just desire to accumulate but involves "desiring to have more than one's due" and covetousness (See Arndt, et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 824). This greed would also set one at odds with the purity code of the 10 Commandments and the final commandment regarding covetousness as well as the idea of honor and for one to have more of anything in the "limited good" what does exist must be acquired through the corresponding loss (and dishonor) of another.

relationship. This new identity "in Christ" and the corresponding transformed character are both the outward manifestations of God's ongoing renewal (Col. 3.10b).

One can see the extent of the paradigmatic identity shift in Colossians 3.11 where Paul reconstructs the collective relationships through the dismantling of traditional barriers.[70]

> Issues surrounding purity codes and honor-shame dynamics are engaged when people change identities. The mention of 'Greek and Judean' and 'circumcision and uncircumcision' in Colossians 3.11 immediately indicates that purity codes may be at issue.[71]

In the same manner, in Colossians 3.12-14 Paul outlines transformed character traits that are reflective of the desire to bring honor to the collective relationship with Christ. In a worldview of "limited good," inner qualities of the "eyes-heart"[72] such as listed in 3.12-14 reconstruct the responses that would have been typical and necessary in their previous identity in order to defend the honor of their collective relationship.[73] Paul sums up the pericope with an embedded dyadic reality in 3.15-17 when he commands the believers to "let the peace of Christ rule in their hearts" (eyes-heart); the word of Christ to dwell in them richly," (mouth-ears); and allow all of their words (mouth-ears) and their actions (hands-feet) to be done "ἐν ὀνόματι κυρίου Ἰησοῦ." All of these words and actions are to be done with an inner attitude (eyes-heart) that is "εὐχαριστοῦντες τῷ θεῷ πατρὶ δι' αὐτοῦ." The transformative depth of this dyadic relationship is evidenced through the totality of speech and actions that demonstrate the character of the person of Jesus himself;

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[70] Within the worldview, such "us-them" barriers were typical and seen as essential in order to defend one's collective identity from the threat to honor by outsiders, who, within this Mediterranean worldview, were viewed as suspect at best and more often than not as hostile enemies. Additionally, these barriers also reflected designations of pure and impure, sacred and profane. Those outside of one's group were the impure, the profane, the unclean and rejection of association was a typical response of protection. See Malina, *The New Testament World*, 36-7.

[71] Canavan, *Clothing the Body of Christ at Colossae*, 64. Just as circumcision represented a physical symbol of the identification as God's people in the covenant between Abraham, his offspring, and God that set apart the Jewish nation from the Gentiles, so also baptism is an outward manifestation of an inward change of identity: from those "outside of Christ" to those "in Christ."

[72] The trifold combination of "eyes-heart," "mouth-ears," and "hands-feet" provide a Mediterranean worldview understanding of collective personality and differ from the Greco-Roman philosophical understanding. See Malina, *The New Testament World,* 68.

[73] These "eyes-heart" attitudes in Colossians 3.12-16, as will be will be demonstrated later, reflect an even deeper collective identity and dyadic relationship with God the Father, in whom Jesus is embedded in the Father-Son relationship. They are the very qualities expressed by God; now to be expressed through radical character transformation and the believer's newly embedded relationship with Christ.

all of which is permeated with an attitude of thankfulness to God the Father through him.

4.3.2 Hellenistic worldview and religious system

The Mediterranean worldview is not the only force shaping behavior and character development among those in the area of Colossae. The Hellenistic worldview and culture begin to permeate the area due to the conquests of Alexander and subsequent Roman conquests. In the post-Alexandrian, Greco-Roman world of Hellenistic culture, the influence and consequences of assimilation of other cultures under the broad umbrella of Hellenism make a definitive description of any unique Hellenistic culture untenable. However, there are relevant characteristics of Hellenistic culture that permeated the assimilated cultures of the area around Colossae and the Lycus Valley.[74] Particularly relevant to the issue of character and transformation of character is the Hellenistic emphasis on education and philosophical thought.

4.3.2.1 The family and education

The core element of the expression of culture within the Hellenistic "state" is found within the household unit. It is within the environment of the household unit that the development of character begins. According to Aristotle, the state is comprised of household units which include all individuals within the household, both slave and free.[75] Within those household units are "those members of a household who are related," that comprise the distinct "family" unit and it functions on a public and private level. The precise role of that family unit varies depending on the kingdom or state, but the private arena provides the most significant sphere of influence "in terms of personal identity and definition."[76] The father is the legal authority for the family, but it is the mother that attends to the majority of the daily chores and rearing of the children within wealthier families. In cases where the wealth of the family allows, the discipline of the male child is relegated to

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[74] However, for a counter-argument as to the extent of Hellenization and the tenacity of the Phrygian language, see W. M. Ramsay, *The Letters to the Seven Churches of Asia and Their Place in the Plan of the Apocalypse* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1904), 119, accessed March 9, 2016, https://archive.org/details/letterstosevench00ramsrich.

[75] Aristotle, *Politics I,* 1253b, ed. W. D. Ross (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1957). Accessed February 9, 2016, www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.01.0057%3Abook%3D1%3Asection%3D1253b.

[76] Dorothy J. Thompson, "The Hellenistic Family," in *The Cambridge Companion to the Hellenistic World*," ed. Glenn R. Burgh (New York: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2006), 95.

a slave who takes the position of a pedagogue. According to Lohse, this is not a position of teaching as much as it is the responsibility to ensure proper conduct and behavior on the part of the child.[77] In families of the lower economic class, husbands and wives generally share the household responsibilities.[78]

> The goal and obligation of parenting is to control and direct the child's behavior and to produce a 'good' child (who will be obedient and conform). Parents are to mold the child to a predetermined pattern; secure control by regulating habits, and training to accept authority and discipline.[79]

The preponderance of the "non-elite" lived an agrarian lifestyle, and their children begin to work as soon as they are strong enough to do so. The majority of the children's education, whether related to agrarian production or academic pursuit, consists mainly of ". . . learning by doing. For boys and girls, slaves and free this would include reading, writing, and counting, although our sources do not give us much information about these children."[80]

Opportunities for education within the Greco-Roman period varied. The location of teaching depended in part upon the wealth and social status of the family providing the education. In its earliest stages, the context of teaching was diverse such that "the teacher could be a child's parent, a slave working in the household, a private tutor, or a low-paid teacher running a class in a makeshift location like the street, colonnade, tomb, or country."[81] Training and education, whether through general education of literacy and numeracy (ἐγκύκλιος παιδεία)[82] or through the learning of a trade for employment, was ultimately the responsibility of the family. Formal schooling was a luxury that subsistence,

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[77] Eduard Lohse, *The New Testament Environment*, trans. John E. Steely (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1971), 214.

[78] Helmut Koester, *History, Culture, and Religion of the Hellenistic Age* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, & Co., 1995), 64.

[79] Bruce Malina, *The New Testament World*, 54.

[80] Osiek and Balch, *Families in the New Testament World*, 67.

[81] David M. Carr, *Writing on the Tablet of the Heart: Origins of Scripture and Literature* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2005), 179.

[82] The complexity with which Hellenization approached the educational process, the intentionality of παιδεία, and how such education shaped those in society is beyond the scope of this research though germane to the understanding of how it relates to character. See John M.G. Barclay, "Paul Among the Diaspora Jews: Anomaly or Apostate?" *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 60 (1995): 96. "Of course Greek παιδεία was the medium not just of certain literary resources, but of a system of values which constituted, in Greek eyes, the essence of civilization."

agrarian living did not generally afford. "In agrarian societies 1-3% of the population usually owns one- to two-thirds of the arable land. In agrarian societies 90% of the population was rural" and "90-95% of the population was engaged in so-called 'primary' industries: farming and extracting raw materials."[83] The elite class "is small by nature, given the fact that the surplus produced by the peasants is limited, and that those at the summit of the social pyramid live for the most part in luxury."[84] Wealth and social status often dictated the extent and duration to which a child had access to education. Education progressed through a series of stages in the educative program but, "class and status – and, to a much lesser extent, merit – determined who continued."[85]

Regardless of the source of the instruction, life in the Greco-Roman world of the New Testament necessitates the incorporation of some essential elements of a Hellenized system. These systems included training in at least a minimal and rudimentary literary education. An indispensable aspect of the education was the ability to communicate in Greek; the language of Hellenism. "The Hellenistic training system effectively disenfranchised those who were not prepared to fully embrace Greek culture and language."[86] For those families that desired their children to take part in Greco-Roman culture and society an understanding of language comprised a critical component of their early learning in order "to compete on a more equal footing with their peers. Therefore, 'Hellenization' was not merely an individual choice; it was a generational concern."[87] There were social and economic benefits in acquiescing to the dominance of Hellenism and its assimilation of subjugated cultures. "The attractions of Hellenism were undoubtedly enormous, since adopting Greek language and customs could substantially elevate one's position and remove much of the disadvantage of being a member of a conquered race."[88]

Education within the Greco-Roman world and, by association, the area of

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[83] Richard L. Rohrbaugh, "Agrarian Society," in *Biblical Social Values and Their Meaning: A Handbook*," eds. John J. Pilch and Bruce J. Malina (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1993), 5-6.

[84] Santiago Guijarro, "The Family in First-Century Galilee," in *Constructing Early Christian Families: Family as Social Reality and Metaphor*, ed. Halvor Moxnes (New York: Routledge, 1997), 56.

[85] Raffaeilla Cribiore, *Gymnastics of the Mind: Greek Education in Hellenistic and Roman Egypt* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton Univ. Press, 2001), 3.

[86] Timothy Clark, "Jewish Education in the Hellenistic Period and the Old Testament," *St. Vladimir's Theological Quarterly* 54 no. 3-4 (2010): 286.

[87] Ibid.

[88] Ibid., 288.

Colossae in the Lycus Valley, provided a significant source of influence to shape an individual's character and ethics. The historical record and extant sources from writers within the Christian community are scarce. The paucity of evidentiary material is compounded by the apparent lack of attention given to children and their early childhood education in particular. "Christian writers' passing mentions of actual children are for the most part references to the responsibility of parents to bring them up with the proper discipline. These references are in keeping with the usual Greco-Roman and Jewish understanding of children as investments in the family's future; potential adults in need of stern training in order to produce persons worthy of their family's expectations."[89]

The Hellenistic educative system used grammar and select passages of literature to provide instruction for moral positives and to teach how to distinguish those characteristics from moral negatives and character flaws. These passages "were supposed not to be morally harmful, and, if possible, to be instructive."[90] Students were taught to use these analytical techniques of grammar in order to discern the moral intentions of the author. Poetry provided an excellent moral laboratory for students to distinguish desirable character traits from those highlighted as undesirable and flawed.[91] All of these teachings were the precursors for training in rhetoric and philosophy.

4.3.2.2 Hellenistic philosophy

The writings and teachings of Hellenistic philosophers are available as a historical record, but the majority of the teaching during the timeframe of the Colossian epistle is largely targeted towards "trained professionals" and the culturally elite.[92] While the actual teacher-student interaction may have been available to a limited number of people, the impact of philosophical thought permeated all of Hellenistic society and the underlying worldview.[93] The goal of philosophy was to understand life and the place of humans in this world. "Hellenistic philosophy did . . . have as its overriding concern how

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[89] Osiek and Balch, *Families in the New Testament World*, 165.

[90] Theresa Morgan, "The Socialization of Children in Education," in *A Companion to Families in the Greek and Roman Worlds*, ed. Beryl Rawson (West Sussex, UK: Blackwell, 2011), 513.

[91] Ibid.

[92] Phillip Mitsis, "The Institutions of Hellenistic Philosophy," in *A Companion to the Hellenistic World*, ed. Andrew Erskine (Malden, MA: Blackwell Pub., 2005), 464.

[93] John T. Fitzgerald, "Greco-Roman Philosophical Schools," in *The World of the New Testament,* eds. Joel B. Green and Lee Martin McDonald (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2013), 137.

a person might best live his or her life."[94]

It is arguably possible that the majority of the members of the early Colossian church were part of the common people, or *poloi*.[95] However, one can also deduce the possibility of at least a segment of the church that could have had access to the higher education and philosophical thought at the time.[96] Paul's epistle was to be read in the Colossian church, and they were also to read the epistle that was addressed to the church at Laodicea (Col. 4.16). The epistle to the "Colossians . . . seem(s) to presuppose an audience capable of a rather high degree of abstract and profoundly theological and philosophical thinking."[97] The manner of transmission of the message would indicate that there was a portion of the church that was literate. Additionally, ownership of slaves was not prevalent among the poor majority, yet the apostle Paul sends with Tychicus the slave-believer Onesimus back to Philemon, identified in a canonical letter addressed to him. This same Philemon, whom Witherington states "could appreciate a good rhetorical address when he heard one,"[98] is generally identified as the leader of a house church in Colossae.[99] With the reasonable plausibility of the educationally elite making up a segment of the church in Colossae, the correlative hypothesis is that Hellenistic methodology of philosophical education would also be part of their scholastic experience.

Oliver records that, "the common feature for the political and intellectual elite in the Greek world was their education and cultural background, wrapped up in the term *paideia*. Rhetoric and philosophy were significant elements in a typical education."[100] The

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[94] Robert Sharples, "Philosophy for Life," in *The Cambridge Companion to the Hellenistic World*, ed. Glenn Burgh (New York: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2006), 224.

[95] A hypothesis based strictly on statistical population breakdown at the time and percentages of those considered "common" as opposed to those considered elite.

[96] See Rodney Stark, *The Rise of Christianity* (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1997), 45-6. Stark makes an interesting case for a church community consisting of "solid citizens of the empire," with justification based upon state recognition of Christianity as an "illicit religion" rather than a "*political* threat." "Christians were not a mass of degraded outsiders but from the early days had members, friends, and relatives in high places – often within the imperial family – this would have greatly mitigated repression and persecution."

[97] Witherington III, *The Letters to Philemon, the Colossians and the Ephesians*, 35.

[98] Ibid.

[99] MacDonald, *Colossians and Ephesians,* 183.

[100] Graham Oliver, "History and Rhetoric," in *The Cambridge Companion to the Hellenistic World*, ed. Glenn Burgh (New York: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2006), 126. Most certainly Oliver did not mean the typical education of those outside of the elite minority, class in society. See Cribiore, *Gymnastics of the Mind*, 3, for a clarification on the recipients of philosophical education. While it may have been limited to

methodology of educational training consisted largely of literacy and memorization so that one could prepare oneself for oral recitation. Actual texts were difficult to acquire and memorization allowed for the dissemination of knowledge and information. "The mental gymnastics practiced in school became so integral a part of a student's being as to shape deeply his adult thinking."[101] The goal of such training was not for the sake of knowledge alone but rather "was supposed to be a mastery of oneself, both intellectually, emotionally, and physically."[102] While there are degrees of definition to the term "knowledge,"[103] one can begin to appreciate the quest for knowledge in the Hellenistic world since it is perceived to give a person the desirable virtue of self-control. The relatedness between knowledge and virtue is strengthened when juxtaposed with Socrates, Aristotle, and other Hellenistic philosophers and their association of knowledge with virtue.

> This means that, given the appropriate knowledge, one cannot fail to have virtue, and given that one is truly virtuous, one cannot fail to have the appropriate knowledge. They simply are the same thing. For Aristotle, however, the knowledge condition was not so strong. Knowledge is not identified with virtue; rather, the right sort of knowledge or wisdom is a necessary and sufficient condition for virtue.[104]

Hellenistic philosophers shared a common understanding of the goal of every person's life, and that goal is happiness, or *εὐδαιμονία,* as we see in Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics I*.[105] While this fundamental orientation of Hellenistic philosophy is toward the individual and the happiness of the individual, the foundational Mediterranean worldview does not allow one to neglect the impact of the individual on the collective of

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the elite, philosophical thought was a component of the Hellenistic worldview and as such, provided at least indirect influence on the people groups conquered through Greco-Roman expansion and dominance.

[101] Cribiore, *Gymnastics of the Mind*, 240.

[102] Ibid., 285.

[103] One example of a definition of knowledge comes from Linda T. Zagzebeski, *Virtues of the Mind: An Inquiry into the Nature of Virtue and the Ethical Foundations of Knowledge* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1998), 148. She states, "Knowledge is a state of cognitive contact with reality arising out of intellectual virtue." She further explains that an intellectual virtue can be understood to be an act that comes as a result of a motivational component of the virtue and is something that a person with the particular virtue would typically do in a given situation, leading to a fulfillment of the original intent and motivation to perform such an act.

[104] Driver, *Uneasy Virtue*, 2. Though see Driver's argument for the lack of substantiated connection between knowledge and virtue, mainly as it relates to what she terms the *virtue of ignorance*. Such an argument, if accepted, would radically alter the current understanding of virtue ethics which is the direct result, in large part, of the contribution of Hellenistic philosophy. For the counter-argument see John McDowell, "Virtue and Reason," *The Monist* (July 1979): 331–50 and Martha Nussbaum, *The Fragility of Goodness* (New York: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2001).

[105] Sharples, "Philosophy for Life," 224.

kinship and community. The Mediterranean and Hellenistic worldviews of the Colossian believers are forced to collide at this point. The resultant interweaving of the Hellenistic philosophy and the dyadic relationships of the Mediterranean worldview simply reorients the primary concern away from the group and back to the embedded individual who then operates with the community in mind. The happiness that the individual strives to achieve is the basis for character and morality. "The starting point of Hellenistic ethics is not therefore how we can determine which ways of acting towards other people are right and which wrong; the emphasis is rather on what sort of life I should aspire to for myself."[106]

This aspiration and the corresponding choice impacts the collective lives around the embedded person as well. It is in this light that the apostle Paul can write to the Colossian believers in 3.13 and instruct them to "ἀνεχόμενοι ἀλλήλων καὶ χαριζόμενοι ἑαυτοῖς ἐάν τις πρός τινα ἔχῃ μομφήν καθὼς καὶ ὁ κύριος ἐχαρίσατο ὑμῖν, οὕτως καὶ ὑμεῖς." The sort of life to which the believers aspire is introduced in 3.1-4. Now, as Paul considers appropriate behavior within the collective identity of the group and based on the forgiveness which the believers have received "in Christ," they are to express that same forgiveness to others with whom they share the dyadic relationship.

The Mediterranean worldview of the priority of the dyadic group and the Hellenistic philosophical influence of aiming for *εὐδαιμονία* in the individual converge with mutual benefit for both the group and the individual. Self-awareness and thinking on this level presuppose an ability on the part of the individual, embedded within the community, to rationally consider choices in behavior that express a person's real character.

The ancient world and the vast majority of Hellenistic philosophers viewed character as immutable, though that term requires clarification. The historian Tacitus writes regarding the life of Tiberius (*Annals*, 6.51.3) and comments on the five-stage revelation of the Roman emperor's real character as his life progressed towards its end.

> His character too had distinct periods. It was a bright time in his life and reputation, while under Augustus he was a private citizen or held high offices; a time of reserve and crafty assumption of virtue, as long as Germanicus and Drusus were alive. Again, while his mother lived, he was a compound of good and evil; he was infamous for his cruelty, though he veiled his debaucheries, while he loved or feared Sejanus. Finally, he plunged into every wickedness and disgrace, when fear and shame being cast off,

[106] Ibid., 224-5.

he simply indulged his own inclinations.[107]

While it may appear that Tiberius' character shifted as his life progressed, Tacitus views the revelation differently. The observable characterological manifestation at the end of Tiberius' life is simply an expression of 'the real' that was, up to that point, skillfully hidden. "Consequently, if a person seemed to change his character, it could only be that in the earlier stages of his life his real character was not yet revealed."[108]

Whether or not the revelation reflects a character that is already established and previously unexposed or degradation of character through intentional choices and particular circumstances is the topic of much debate.[109] It is likely that Hellenistic philosophy did not posit that character is immutable in the sense that one is born with the character with which they die; impossibly altered or affected. A more thorough investigation into understanding the predominant thinking of the various philosophical schools[110] leads to a conclusion that the predominant disposition within Hellenistic philosophy is that a number of factors are significant in the development of character.[111] Therefore, Hellenistic philosophy did not view character as 'static' but that a person's character is 'molded' and 'shaped' in the course of life with all of the choices and circumstances that make up that life. Any consideration of the impact of Hellenistic philosophy would be deficient without at least a brief investigation into the ubiquitous impact of Aristotle's teaching on virtue ethics, his views on character, and any potentially applicable influence his teaching could have had upon the believer's in Colossae.

When it comes to the immutability of character, Aristotle seems to indicate that a person's character is indeed changeable. Such change occurs, as indicated previously, by

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[107] Tacitus, *Annals*, Book 6.51.3, trans. Alfred John Church and William Jackson Brodribb, accessed Feb. 19, 2016, www.sacred-texts.com/cla/tac/.

[108] Ronald Martin, *Tacitus* (Berkeley, CA: Univ. of California Press, 1981), 105.

[109] See Christopher Gill, "The Question of Character Development – Plutarch and Tacitus," *The Classical Quarterly*, New Series 33 no. 2 (1983): 483, where he states an alternate viewpoint that "Tacitus' own account of Tiberius contains some passages which would seem to fit a theory of degeneration rather than of unchanging character." The argument Gill makes for multiple levels of influence on character development, as expressed by the various philosophical schools of the day is valid from a character-formation perspective.

[110] See John T. Fitzgerald, "Greco-Roman Philosophical Schools," 138, for his succinct discussion of the term "school" of philosophy. According to Christopher Gill, by the Roman Period, "there was no institutional 'school' as there was in the Hellenistic Age, there were numerous Stoic teachers." Christopher Gill, "The School in the Roman Imperial Period," in *The Cambridge Companion to the Stoics*, ed. Brian Inwood (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2003), 33.

[111] Ibid., 469-70.

habituation.

> Habituation is the process of acquiring "habits" (ἔθη) by repeatedly engaging in actions of a similar type. The type of habituated state a person acquires is determined by the type of actions she engages in: for example, one becomes brave by engaging in brave actions. Habituated states of character are not states we are born with. Rather, we are born with the *ability to acquire* such states, states that form a person's 'second nature' and that are difficult, though not impossible, to change.[112]

Through the process of the habituation of a particular character trait, the 'nature' of that trait becomes part of the person's nature. The more the person undertakes the action related to the trait, the further the person becomes the kind of person reflected by the trait; in a sense the embodiment of the trait itself. The converse is also true: the less of a particular action a person carries out, the less that person becomes the kind of person identified with that action.

Thus, the apostle Paul can write to the Colossian believers and instruct them to "put to death" (Col. 3.5) and "put off" (3.8) certain behaviors in order to make way for character traits that are to be "put on" (3.12-14) in the life of the person embedded "in Christ." He can instruct them to habituate these new behaviors since there was a definitive, aorist point in time when they "put on" the new person (3.10). This new person is characterized by behaviors that are vastly different than "old person." Through habituation, the behaviors of the "new person" are put on, and through an ongoing process, they become renewed "in knowledge" in the image of their creator (3.10).

Aristotle realized that the process of habituation and character transformation is not an easy one. "Although it may be quite difficult to begin to acquire a new habit, it will, if one continues on the same course, get easier and easier, and correspondingly more and more difficult to act contrary to the newly acquired habit (*Categories* 13a23-31)."[113] Thus,

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[112] Iakovos Vasiliou, "Virtue and Argument in Aristotle's Ethics," in *Moral Psychology*, ed. Sergio Tenenbaum (New York: Rodopi, 2007), 42.

[113] Ibid. For Aristotle's view on the possibility of character change, see especially William Bondeson, "Aristotle on Responsibility for One's Character and the Possibility of Character Change," 60. Of particular interest is note 2 where he discusses the potential manner in which a bad person is changed for the better. He recognizes Aristotle's use of the passive voice and notes that it "might indicate that a man is being reformed morally by someone other than himself but it does not rule out the possibility . . . that a man might be his own moral reformer." If the passive voice indicates an action being done by another to the person to transform character and if there is the corresponding allowance for the person's own responsibility in transforming character, there are potentially significant implications for divine/human agency in the paraenetic pericope of Colossians 3.1-17. Also noted is Jay E. Adams' outline for biblical change and the process of dehabituation and rehabituation in *The Christian Counselor's Manual* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1973), 191-210. The process of putting off and putting on vis-à-vis dehabituation and rehabituation is given a more thorough examination in the discussion of embodiment in a subsequent chapter.

the more one habituates a particular virtue (or vice), the more the person will respond in any given situation in keeping with that habituated nature.

Aristotelian ethics continued to influence other philosophical thought as well. Among the six major schools of philosophy at the time of Paul's epistle to the Colossians, the Stoics provide interesting and relevant insight into beliefs regarding character and behavior.[114] Started under Zeno of Citium, Stoicism came to be the leading influence among the schools of philosophy during the late Stoa (ca. 31 B.C.- ca 200 A.D.). It was more commonly referred to as Roman Stoicism,

> with some of its most important representatives being Cornutus, Dio Chrysostom (who also reflects Cynic ideas), Epictetus, Hierocles, Marcus Aurelius, Musonius Rufus, and Seneca. The Stoics attached great importance to the ancient practice of spiritual exercises, which were a source for Christian monasticism.[115]

In Stoic philosophy, virtue is a natural part of the human existence and is instilled in humanity as "part of our natural function as rational animals."[116] Virtue is directly equated to wisdom and is all that is necessary for genuine happiness.[117] The development of moral virtue in a person is expressed through actions that move the person "away from a natural self-centeredness"[118] and towards the goal of "living consistently."[119] As the Stoics examined behavior that is expressed in positive and negative character, they developed lists of virtues and vices.

> Stoics, who maintained that virtue is the only good and vice the only evil, were especially fond of compiling extensive lists of the various virtues and vices. They accepted Plato's fourfold division of virtue (*aretê*) into *phronêsis* (wisdom, prudence, understanding*), sôphrosynê* (moderation, temperance, self-restraint), *dikaiosynê* (justice), and *andreia* (courage), they divided these cardinal virtues into numerous

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[114] John T. Fitzgerald, "Greco-Roman Philosophical Schools,"143-6, identifies these schools as The School of Plato, The School of Aristotle, The School of Epicurus, The Cynics, The Stoics, and the School of Pythagoras.

[115] Ibid., 145-6.

[116] Brad Inwood and Pierluigi Donini, "Stoic Ethics," in *The Cambridge History of Hellenistic Philosophy*, eds. Algra Kiempe, Jonathan Barnes, et al. (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1999), 675.

[117] Robert Sharples, *Stoics, Epicureans and Sceptics: An Introduction to Hellenistic Philosophy* (London: Routledge, 1996), 100.

[118] Troels Engberg-Pedersen, *Paul and the Stoics* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2000), 67.

[119] Malcolm Schofield, "Stoic Ethics," in *The Cambridge Companion to The Stoics*, ed. Brian Inwood (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2003), 241.

sub-types.[120]

When the apostle Paul utilizes lists of virtues and vices in the focal Colossian pericope, there is a similarity in the structure that bears a resemblance to Stoic teaching such that some would posit that Paul was at least aware if not influenced by Stoic teaching.[121] When one considers the concept of the transformation of character in Colossians 3.1-17, it bears a remarkable similarity to the Stoic philosophy that

> entertained a similarly radical conception of complete change . . .. In Paul, a total self-identification with Christ (something outside the individual person, to which he or she now sees himself or herself as belonging) results in a complete restructuring of the mind which means that the mind is now taken up by a single set of attitudes that will always and everywhere make the person do the proper acts.[122]

As the Colossian believers, now in a collective relationship "in Christ," hear the ethical instructions of Paul in the focal pericope, their radical, characterological transformation and new dyadic identity finds them "ἐνδυσάμενοι τὸν νέον τὸν ἀνακαινούμενον εἰς ἐπίγνωσιν κατ᾽ εἰκόνα τοῦ κτίσαντος αὐτόν" (Col. 3.10). The possible relationship between that "complete restructuring of the mind" and the ongoing act of renewal "in knowledge" warrants further attention in a later examination.

Hellenistic philosophy provides a means for those within the Lycus Valley around Colossae to "order" and make sense of their universe as well as relate to the divine. Morality and the relationship of humanity to the divine are intertwined in Stoic philosophy and thought. To the Stoics, "the distinction between what we would try to label 'religion' and 'philosophy' was not at all sharp."[123] Theology is linked to the "governing principle of the cosmos, insofar as this could also be labeled 'god,'"[124] and is one aspect of the overall philosophy of the Stoics. Theology is "part of physics . . . and how this cosmic theology relates to popular forms of religion and worship."[125]

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[120] John T. Fitzgerald, "Virtue/Vice Lists," in *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, vol. 6 (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 857.

[121] Troels Engberg-Pedersen, *Paul and the Stoics*, addresses the multiplicity of areas which can be construed as an overlap between the teachings of Paul and the Stoic philosophy.

[122] Ibid., 165.

[123] Wilson, "The Hope of Glory," 7.

[124] Keimpe Algra, "Stoic Theology," in *The Cambridge Companion to The Stoics*, ed. Brian Inwood (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2003), 153.

[125] Ibid.

How humans interact with and relate to the gods is an integral part of Stoic philosophy and theology. Behavior is expressed with an attitude reflecting the "virtue of piety (*eusebia*) and the opposite vice of impiety (*asebeia*),"[126] how a person views the events in life, related to providence and fate, and the way in which a person can obtain insight into the workings of the cosmos through oracles and divination. Greco-Roman philosophy extends into all dimensions of life and being and the relationship of the human to the divine. An examination of the Hellenized religion of the Lycus Valley gives further focus to the elements of this human-divine relationship and brings to light a more thorough understanding of how the local believers would hear the words of the apostle Paul as he writes the epistle to the Colossians.

4.3.2.3 Hellenized religious system

While the historical account of the Hellenistic period is replete with intrigue and changing leadership, the Hellenistic religion proved more stable; with an enduring system of religious beliefs and systems of worship. Within the specific area of the Lycus Valley, the lacunate nature of source material makes it difficult to pinpoint and define the precise religious background of the people prior to the historical recording of the Greco-Roman influence.[127] Archaeological evidence is limited to a few coins and inscriptions that note some of the religious influence in the area. "None of our sources really stands outside the Greek cultural milieu, so that it is difficult to identify isolated pre-Greek or epichoric elements that had great local importance."[128] By the time the apostle Paul wrote the epistle to the church at Colossae, Hellenistic religion, with all of its variances, was a dominant belief system in the Lycus Valley.

> The Greeks' readiness to assimilate exotic divinities to their own gods made the Hellenization of regions like Thrace or Anatolia much easier. It was enough to dress up local gods in Greek or Hellenized garb, to give them an anthropomorphic look, for the Greeks to join the ranks of native worshippers, thus helping these cults to survive in their infinite variety.[129]

Fundamental to the Hellenistic system of beliefs is the freedom to incorporate

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[126] Ibid.

[127] Jaime Alvar, *Romanising Oriental Gods: Myth, Salvation and Ethics in the Cults of Cybele, Isis and Mithras*, trans. and ed. Richard Gordon (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 25.

[128] Ulrich Huttner, *Early Christianity in the Lycus Valley*, 42.

[129] François Chamoux, *Hellenistic Civilization*, trans. Michel Roussel (Oxford: Blackwell, 2002), 344.

and co-opt other deities and religious systems. Hellenism assimilated other religious systems and by doing so added to the Hellenistic pantheon of deities as well as allowed for religious harmony amongst those conquered by the territorial advances of Alexander the Great. The Hellenistic assimilation did not diminish or extinguish the extant deities but instead adapted itself to them, and 'adopted' them. Assimilation simply puts a 'Hellenistic face' on the deities of the region. This assimilation brought about effective cultural transformation while mitigating major resistance by the co-opted cultures. This conglomeration of deities and beliefs would be largely culturally and territorially dependent such that "it is erroneous to imagine a single form of Hellenistic religion that was practiced by all or even a majority of Greeks at any one time."[130] Thus as Hellenization spread throughout the Lycus Valley, those in the area around Colossae would bring their own local cult beliefs and practices into the worship of Hellenistic deities. Hellenism significantly altered the expression of local religion to the point that it is difficult to isolate where pre-Hellenistic religion stops and the Hellenized form begins. This lack of a clear break from one form of worship to another would likely lead to a syncretistic composite of beliefs in the lives of those in the area around Colossae.[131]

The exposure to Hellenistic religious systems and the presence of the various deities was a pervasive element in the lives of those within the Lycus Valley; already immersed in a rich system of beliefs that helped bring order and understanding to their lives.[132] The exposure to deities confronted a person in one form or another in every aspect of public and private life.

> Signs of divine presence met a person on every side. Corresponding gestures of respect and gratitude to the *indigitamenta*-the gods who were associated or even identified with every place and activity-accompanied every daily activity.[133]

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[130] Jon D. Mikalson, "Greek Religion – Continuity and Change in the Hellenistic Period," in *The Cambridge Companion to the Hellenistic World*, ed. Glenn R. Burgh (New York: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2006), 208. Though, also see the opposing opinion of Moyer Hubbard in "Greek Religion," in *The World of the New Testament*, eds. Joel B. Green and Lee Martin McDonald (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2013), 105.

[131] Witherington III, *The Letters to Philemon, the Colossians, and the Ephesians*, 31.

[132] Pagan myths and cults often arose as a result of the attempt to make sense of the various hydrologic and geologic peculiarities of the region – from the travertine formations in the area to reports by Herodotus of the Lycus river that disappears into the ground, only to rise back up some distance beyond and flow into the Maeander. See Herodotus, *The Histories*, 7.30, translated by A.D. Godley (Cambridge: Harvard, 1920), accessed February 4, 2016, http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus:text:1 999.01.0126:boo =7:chapter=30.

[133] Luke Timothy Johnson, *Among the Gentiles: Greco-Roman Religion and Christianity* (New Haven, CT: Yale Univ. Press, 2009), 32.

The constant encounter with Hellenized deities at every turn in life provided an opportunity for people to ensure proper maintenance and preservation of relationship with the deities and allowed people the occasion to better their station in life. The ever-present relationship and exposure to deities presented a vertical dimension to the dyadic relationships which directly impacted the horizontal dyadic relationships among kinship and family. The primary goal for the individual was much less about how one should conduct oneself in life "but with how to earn material blessings from the gods and how to avoid their wrath."[134] Failure to maintain public and private requirements of the vertical dyadic relationship with deities invited their wrath and could yield dire consequences for both the individual and those in their horizontal dyad. Further pressure to preserve honor and avoid public disapproval led to careful obedience in conduct with regard to expectations related to worship.

> There was nothing more important in such circumstances than the exact observance of ritual, the holding of traditional festivals at fixed dates, public prayers, processions, sacrifices, the maintenance of sacred buildings and their appointments, the consultation of oracles.[135]

From the perspective of both the horizontal and vertical dyadic relationships, the Hellenistic religious system provided a sense of order for life and those relationships.[136] The comparative ease with which the Hellenistic religious system infiltrated, assimilated and adapted local cultures vastly increases the potential numbers of the pantheon of deities to investigate. A small sampling of Hellenized Phrygian deities worshipped in the Lycus Valley includes Sabazius, Dionysus, Attis, the Persian god Mithras and his companion Anahita, as well as the mother-goddess Cybele. During the Roman period, numismatic evidence from Colossian coins identify graphical representations or mention by name both Artemis the huntress and Artemis of the Ephesians.[137] There is also evidence that "in the Roman period Isis and Serapis were worshipped here, together with Helios, Demeter,

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[134] Moyer V. Hubbard, "Greek Religion," in *The World of the New Testament*, eds. Joel B. Green and Lee Martin McDonald (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2013), 106.

[135] Chamoux, *Hellenistic Civilization*, 324.

[136] See Malina, *The New Testament World*, 104 for the order and structure of the Mediterranean social world. Just as there were *horizontal* relationships and the struggle within the agonistic system for honor and shame that resulted in a kind of social "ladder," there was also a *vertical* "ladder" of the relationships that ranged from "God" at the top to "gods," angels, humans, and lastly sub-humans. Just as in the horizontal relationships, there is always a struggle to maintain or "better" one's place on the ladder.

[137] Barth and Blanke, trans. Beck, *Colossians*, 11.

Selene . . . and the native Phrygian god Men."[138] Present research is limited to those that give evidence of their cultural and religious influence upon the Colossian believers with specific relevance toward their impact upon the development of character and their relatedness to the paraenetic material of Colossians 3.1-17.[139]

4.3.2.4 Hellenized Phrygian deities and mystery religions

Among the pantheon of Phrygian deities there are three that stand out as a source of potentially significant influence in the lives of those within the Lycus Valley at the time the apostle Paul wrote to the Colossian church: Attis, the Phrygian Great Mother, also known in Asia Minor as Cybele, and Sabazius, also known as Dionysus.[140] These three have distinctly Phrygian origins as well as specific purification and regeneration rites involved in their worship. Their locus of veneration and worship along with particular aspects of their worship ritual would potentially influence the lives of those coming to faith in Christ in the area around Colossae.

Perhaps the most identifiable aspect of the Hellenized religious system operating within the Lycus Valley is the phenomenon of 'mystery cults.' These mystery cults

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[138] Johnson, *Among the Gentiles*, 6.

[139] Within the entirety of the Colossian epistle, numerous sections of the text are readily applicable as a potential repudiation of particular aspects of the multitudinous cultic and religious belief systems extant in the Lycus Valley. The apostle Paul may well have chosen specific wording in the epistle with such systems in mind. For example, the Colossian "hymn" of 1.15-20 may indeed have been included to remind believers of the supremacy of Christ over the Roman imperial cult and self-imposed divine nature attributed to rulers of the time. This research is more inclined to look at a link to the Phrygian god Attis and his cosmic role as creator, though such a view is speculative and without substantive evidence. See Jaime Alvar, *Romanising Oriental Gods*, 37-8 for a more thorough discussion. Paul may have seen some proto-gnostic tendencies, particularly as the term relates to cosmological and somatic dualistic belief systems, and addressed these elements in Colossians 2.8ff and 3.1-5. See Edwin Yamauchi, *Pre-Christian Gnosticism* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1983), 37, where he cites Thomas Oden, "The gnostic dichotomy of body/spirit is resolutely denied by Paul, . . . But he borrows gnostic language in his description of man's predicament." Thomas Oden, 'From Event to Language: The Church's Use of Gnostic Mythology," in *Religion in Life,* 36 (1967), 97-8. One arguably could find a warning against Gnostic indifference to somatic decadence in Paul's exhortation against sexual immorality among the Colossians in 3.5 as well as a refutation of Gnostic disbelief in bodily resurrection in Paul's words of assurance in Colossians 3.1-4. H. Wayne House provides a brief overview of potential sources towards which Paul addressed his words in "Heresies in the Colossian Church," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 149 (Jan.-Mar. 1992): 46, accessed February 15, 2014, *ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials*, EBSCO*host*. See Lohse, *Colossians and Philemon*, 1971, for the pagan mystery religion theory; Bruce, "The Colossian Heresy," in *Bibliotheca Sacra* 141, 1984, for the Jewish mystic or apocalyptic Essene theory; Bornkamm, "The Heresy of Colossians," in *Conflict at Colossae,* 1952, for the proto-gnostic theory; and Carson, *Colossians and Philemon,* 1984, for a theory that Paul's challenged heresy was a syncretistic admixture of several sources. These are all fascinating speculations and are worthy of investigation. Within the parameters of this research, they are noted where applicable and without in-depth consideration.

[140] See Barth and Blanke, trans. Beck, *Colossians*, 11, for a more thorough explanation of the relationship between Sabazius and Dionysus and the interchangeability of their names.

distinguish themselves from other religious cults in that "membership required some formalized procedure or initiation, usually under the patronage of a particular deity."[141] The name itself seems to shroud the cults in the realm of the unknown, and there is an element of mystery surrounding the inner workings of the initiation rites and ceremonies. Details of the rites of initiation and their ceremonies are incomplete "though the accounts that have survived mention rituals of purification, sacrifices, the recitation of oaths, sacred vows, rituals involving the symbolic death and rebirth of the initiate, and sacred meals."[142]

The worship of the three Phrygian deities of Attis, Cybele, and Sabazius is located within the identification of 'mystery cults.' These cults significantly influenced the association and worship of their adherents. A common element among many of the mystery religions is the public religious festival and feast celebration. These celebrations engendered close communities of adherents and fostered a view of the deity that was more intimate than that which came through the civic worship of deities. "Historians frequently speculate that this feature of the theology of mystery religions, together with their promise of a blissful afterlife, was particularly important in attracting followers."[143]

The mystery cults filled a significant place of felt need in the lives of people. Their origins come from an attempt to answer some of the most fundamental questions of life and death as people looked to nature and the changing of seasons and the 'birth-death-birth' cycle for reassurance of 'immortality.' Initially, these mystery religions were "intended to strengthen fertility; later they were supposed to secure individual immortality by making man share the life of the god."[144]

From the perspective of honor and shame, the mystery cults allowed a person the opportunity to express a degree of exclusivity from other non-initiates. The mystery religions "asserted a fundamental distinction between those who had been initiated and those who had not. One category of persons was thus granted superiority, at least of a moral kind, over another."[145] The mystery religions created an environment in which the human

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[141] Luther H. Martin, "Graeco-Roman Philosophy and Religion," in *The Early Christian World,* vol. 2, ed. Phillip F. Esler (London: Routledge, 2000), 67.

[142] Moyer V. Hubbard, Greek Religion," 120.

[143] Ibid.

[144] E. von Dobschütz, "Christianity and Hellenism," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 33 no. 4 (1914): 249.

[145] Jaime Alvar, *Romanising Oriental Gods*, 111-12.

could approach the divine on an individual basis. "The mystic cults appealed to individuals, to human beings one by one. They admitted women and slaves as members, and encouraged them to break away from the bonds of family and city to find among their co-religionists fresh social ties."[146]

One of the most prominent mystery religions in the Lycus Valley is the worship of the Phrygian god Attis[147] who is the creator "of things that come into being and perish."[148] Attis took the place of significance in Phrygian worship and held a position of priority within the pantheon. "Sometimes Attis (probably under Semitic influence) was called Hypsistos, 'the highest [god].'"[149] During the reign of the emperor Claudius, the annual spring feast celebration of Attis became one of the most popular in Rome.[150] He is the consort of Cybele, "the Phrygian Mother Goddess."[151] "The Mother loves Attis and gives him heavenly powers (signified by the [Phrygian] cap)."[152] The various myths surrounding the origin of Attis are replete with intrigue and tragedy, mainly as they address the relationship with Cybele, the *Mater Magna,* and the manner of his death and subsequent 'resurrection' or rejuvenation.[153] Alvar provides an excellent assimilation of the accounts that summarizes the essential elements of the beliefs around Attis as an attempt to bring

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[146] Percy Gardner, "The Pagan Mysteries," *The Modern Churchman* 16, no. 6-8 (Oct. 1926): 316.

[147] See Gardner, "The Pagan Mysteries," 127, for the relationship between Attis and Cybele with the Greek gods Adonis and Aphrodite.

[148] Jaime Alvar, quoting Sallustius 4, p. 8 11.3-7, as translated by Nock, 37.

[149] Barth and Blanke, trans. Beck, *Colossians*, 11. However, see Giulia S. Gasparro, *Soteriology and Mystic Aspects in the Cult of Cybele and Attis* (Leiden: Brill, 1985), 32, where he states that "he (Attis) does not appear in the sources as a personality of equal rank to the Great Mother."

[150] Hans J. Klauck, *The Religious Context of Early Christianity*, eds., John Barclay, et al., trans. Brian McNeil (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2000), 124. See also Arthur Nock, *Conversion: The Old and the New in Religion: From Alexander the Great to Augustine of Hippo* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1933), 69, for the length of the festival of Attis and dating on the state calendar.

[151] Lynn E. Roller, *In Search of God the Mother: The Cult of Anatolian Cybele* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1999), 64.

[152] Ibid., again quoting Sallustius, p. 8 lines 8-10.

[153] See Moyer V. Hubbard, Greek Religion," in *The World of the New Testament,* for his explanation of the Hellenistic rejection of an actual bodily resurrection. Much of this may be due at least in part to the dichotomist view of the body and spirit; with the body something to be discarded. Gasparro views the reclamation of Attis from the dead, not as an act of resurrection but rather as salvation from "complete annihilation," Gasparro, *Soteriology and Mystic Aspects in the Cult of Cybele and Attis*, 42.

"chaos into order."[154] The chaos of life and death and the life cycle are brought into order through Attis, his power to do so attested by his experience with life and overcoming death. The 'ordered chaos' brought about by the worship of Attis offers assurance and understanding to the people of the Lycus Valley for issues related to life and death as well as life after death. Closely tied to the worship of Attis is the worship of the goddess Cybele.

Cybele, the *Magna Mater*, originated in Anatolia where she originally "took shape there as a black stone the size of a fist, probably a meteorite, set as the face of a silver statue."[155] According to Roller, "her name first appears in Phrygian inscriptions of the seventh century B.C., where she is addressed as Matar or "Mother" in the Phrygian language."[156] Cybele is worshipped as the omnipotent goddess mother of the earth. "Her names are innumerable - Britomartis and Dictynna, Cybele and Mâ, Dindymene and Hectate, Pheraia and Artemis . . ."[157] She is believed to be the same Artemis worshipped in Ephesus, referred to in Acts 19.28 and held to be the goddess of fertility. Cybele "is a goddess whose position of power over the natural environment, rather than any specifically maternal function, was the chief factor that gave her the status of a Mother."[158] As the fertility goddess, it is through her that all life comes into being.

Over time, her enduring and often debatably problematic relationship with Attis as his goddess and consort shifts with respect to power and authority. As previously noted, Attis came to be worshipped by some as 'the high god." The worship of one primary male deity in Attis (Hypsistos), even though that god was known by many different names, seems to run counter to the idea of an omnipotent *Magna Mater*. "Eventually, the cult of the male godhead, which sometimes was reserved for men only, was merged with the worship of Cybele, which was accessible to all people."[159]

The assurance provided by the worship of Attis, Cybele, and other deities within the mystery cults allows for ordered life concerning obedience within the observance of

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[154] Alvar, *Romanising Oriental Gods*, 71.

[155] Joscelyn Godwin, *Mystery Religions in the Ancient World* (London: Thames and Hudson Ltd., 1981), 110.

[156] Roller, *In Search of God the Mother,* 2.

[157] Erich Neumann, *The Great Mother*, trans. Ralph Manheim (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1974), 275.

[158] Ibid., 7.

[159] Barth and Blanke, trans. Beck, *Colossians*, 12.

the cultic rites. Further, these mystery cults provide an explanation for the connection between life and death. The worship and orgiastic festivals of the cultic deities creates an atmosphere of celebration perhaps unparalleled as it is observed in the mystery cult of Sabazius, "often equated with Dionysus."[160]

Sabazius is primarily worshipped in Thrace and Phrygia. Historical accounts of the cult bear a striking resemblance to that of Dionysus.[161] Sabazius was originally the god of vegetation and worship of him spread from that region down into Athens by the 5th Century B.C.

> Sabazius was once an agricultural and medical deity, calling for bloody rites of purification and regeneration that were rejected and prohibited when they spread to Rome. At later times, Sabazius promised the souls of the departed a guide to the festival table set up in the other world.[162]

As with many cultic deities, the precise origination of the cult and its deity is blended into myth and culture, overlapping cultural integration through Hellenization and bearing similarities to other locally worshipped deities, merely assuming different names and various aspects of a localized personality. Such is the case with Sabazius and Dionysus, and their names are often used interchangeably, both bearing similarity in the mystery cult surrounding them.

> According to certain myths, after Dionysus came to Phrygia, the Great Mother of Gods (known in Asia Minor as Cybele and among the Greeks called Meter -- Gaea, Rhea or Demeter) initiated him into her mysteries and he assumed the name Sabazius. For this reason, Sabazius was worshiped in Athens -- in the 5th century BC -- in the same temple as the goddess Meter (Rhea).[163]

It is in Athens that Sabazius became equated with Dionysus, the god of wine, at times referred to as Dionysus Sabazius. "Of all the Mystery Gods, it is Dionysus whose character has become most firmly fixed in the collective imaginations. His worship spells

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[160] Hans Klauck, *The Religious Context of Early Christianity*, 114. See also Franz Cumont, *The Oriental Religions in Roman Paganism* (Chicago: The Open Court, 1911), 278, "thus Attis became one with the Dionysus-Sabazius of the conquerors, or at least had some of his characteristics," for a further blurring of distinct lines of identity between Attis, Sabazius, and Dionysus. Further identification of Sabazius with Zeus is seen in iconography, see Eugene N. Lane, "Towards a Definition of the Iconography of Sabazius," in *Numen* 27 Fasc. 1 (June 1980): 11.

[161] Sherman E. Johnson, "Sabaoth/Sabazios: A Curiosity in Ancient Religion," *Lexington Theological Quarterly* 13 no. 4 (Oct. 1978): 100.

[162] Barth and Blanke, trans. Beck, *Colossians*, 11.

[163] Alena Trckova-Flamee, "Sabazius," in *Encyclopedia Mythica, 2016*, accessed March 10, 2016, http://www.pantheon.org/articles/s/sabazius.html.

orgies and drunkenness; he personifies the uncontrollable urges of man and beast . . ."[164] These mystery ceremonies and orgiastic festivals of Dionysus Sabazius were common in Anatolia and organized by groups called *thiusoi*, often called Bacchants from the sobriquet Bacchus, given to the Dionysus Sabazius. "Female thiusoi might celebrate these mysteries, and their reputation could very well suffer as a result: hence the famous senatorial edict of the year 186, forbidding the celebration of Bacchanalia, its avowed purpose being to protect the Roman people's morality."[165]

Both Sabazius and Dionysus rituals offer the person "the chance to become one with the deity through ritual. That is, both Dionysian and Sabazian rituals emphasized the temporary extinction of the individual personality in favor of unification with divinity . . ." [166] This unification leads to the potential existence of a connection between the significant Mediterranean worldview element of dyadic relationship and the attraction of the absorption of the individual into the collective identity within the mystery cult of Dionysus and Sabazius. Such a connection and hopes for the afterlife would enhance the desire to associate with the mystery cult.

With all of the contradicting stories and blurred identities of the cultic deities in the Lycus Valley, the precise detail of their respective practices of worship is difficult at best. What is discernable with a relatively high degree of reliability is the depth to which all of these deities influenced the daily lives of those in the area of Colossae. The chaos of life and the uncertainties associated with living and dying allowed an environment in which the cultic worship presented clarity and understanding. It is into that rich soup of culture and belief that the apostle Paul wrote to the nascent church in Colossae and sought to reorder their understanding of life and their relationship with the divine.

4.3.2.5 Implications for the Colossians and their character development

The Hellenization of the Lycus Valley brings both subtle and sweeping influential pressure to bear on the church at Colossae. The Hellenistic worldview and religious systems permeate the daily lives of those within the Lycus Valley. Regardless of the conclusions one draws about the actual social status of those within the church at

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[164] Godwin, *Mystery Religions in the Ancient World*, 132.

[165] Chamoux, *Hellenistic Civilization*, 331.

[166] Peter D. Olson, "The Mask of Dionysos: Illusion and Representation in Euripides' Bacchae," in *The Rackham Journal of the Arts and Humanities* (Ann Arbor, MI: Univ. of Michigan, 1989), 81.

Colossae the impact of Hellenism is evident within the family and social structures.[167]

Hellenization brings an emphasis on education and with it an economic and social incentive for learning the Greek language. Greek literature and rhetoric provide a rigorous training environment in which students learn culture as well as the socially acceptable way of life within a Hellenized society. This training calls for a substantial degree of discipline and self-control that impacts behavior. The teaching of the various philosophical 'schools' brings order to the totality of life and establishes one's place in the cosmos. Such a locus influences the understanding of virtue, the kind of life to which people must aspire if they are going to achieve the τέλος in a life of true happiness, and the transformational process by which one habituates characterological traits congruent with that goal.

As the apostle Paul writes the paraenetic material of Colossians 3.1-17 to the Colossian church, the spiritualties created within the hearers and their corresponding embodiment of the text is directly related to their understanding of character and its potential mutability. If both Paul's presupposition and the Colossian understanding is that character is immutable in the sense of being static and unchangeable, then any ethical shift in conduct merely postpones the ultimate revelation of what is characterologically unalterable. No opportunity for genuine transformation exists. Any change in conduct only achieves an external behavioral modification.

To more closely identify with the Christ of their new dyadic relationship, and to live up to the ethical expectations of that collective relationship, such a behavioral shift would be appropriate so that the group honor is preserved and new purity codes established. Alternatively, if character *is* moldable and malleable, then Paul's lists of vices and virtues in Colossians 3.5-8 and 3.12-16 set the standard for behavior and give the Colossians an objective reality by which they must live so that it reflects well on the collective identity of the church and its relationship with Christ. If this latter, "formative" character is indeed possible, then the external evidence of behavior bears witness to a fundamental shift in inward motivation. The old nature (and corresponding characterological conduct) is to be "put to death" (Col. 3.5) and "put off" (Col. 3.8) when they enter into the new dyadic relationship and it is replaced with a new nature (and corresponding characterological

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[167] See Margaret MacDonald's excellent chapter on "Kinship and Family in the New Testament World," in *Understanding the Social World of the New Testament,* eds. D. Neufeld and B. DeMaris (New York: Routledge, 2010), 29-43.

conduct) which is to be "put on" and is simultaneously in the process of continual renewal (Col. 3.10).[168]

The manner in which the apostle Paul describes the former way of life and behaviors of the Colossian believers bears a striking resemblance to the expression of behavior influenced by a combination of both a Hellenized worldview intertwined with an inescapably powerful influence from the mystery cults of the area. For Colossian believers immersed in this Hellenized society, Paul outlines a teleological goal of a life that is both *collective* in its identity "with Christ" (Col. 3.1-4) and bearing an *individual* as well as *corporate* responsibility to "put to death" and "put off" (Col. 3.5-8) behaviors reflective of their previous collective identity of a life that was 'earthly.' They are to live a life focused on seeking things 'above' and focusing their minds on the things 'above' (Col. 3.1-2). The goal of life is neither an Aristotelian *εὐδαιμονία* nor is it one based on appeasing capricious deities through secretive initiation rites and ceremonies. Further investigation into the apostle Paul's understanding of the transformation of character will add thickness to an understanding of his underlying premise and anticipated outcome for the Colossian believers.

Hellenistic influence extends far beyond economic, educational, and philosophical impact. The nascent religious orientation of those within the Lycus Valley facilitated the influence Hellenization. Worship is a foregone conclusion and an inescapable part of life for those coming to be a part of the Colossian church. The paradigmatic shift for the new Colossian believers is the reoriented object of their worship. "Hellenic polytheism put at the disposal of humanity's weakness a prodigious variety of divine personalities, with which the inexhaustible resources of that people's imagination had filled their world."[169] The Phrygian deities with their new Hellenized 'faces' are an integral part of the entirety of the cycle of life. These deities shape the manner in which people live and express their relationship to the various deities. Religious celebrations and festivals often validate a degree of "moral" behavior as a normative part of life that would otherwise be unacceptable. It is out of this lifestyle and life orientation that the new

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[168] The concomitant activity of "putting off" and "putting on," while appearing on the surface to be one-time events, have an element of repeatability, as demonstrated by the need for the ongoing renewal in Colossians 3.10. "Putting off" and "putting on" have eschatological dimensions as well as somatic and pneumatological aspects that bear further examination and exegetical analysis in the appropriate section of this research.

[169] Chamoux, *Hellenistic Civilization*, 323.

believers come into the Colossian church, bringing with them habituated characters and deeply established systems of worship.

Within the Lycus Valley, the religious beliefs likely practiced by the inhabitants would bring intense syncretistic pressure upon the believers in Colossae. Additionally, "since converts joined the community as adults . . . with already formed religious practices, the problems created were real and difficult."[170] It would be expected that many of the members of the local church in Colossae came out of such belief systems and mystery cult practices and would naturally bring some of those same beliefs and practices into their new relationship with Christ.

> The exact nature of these practices is uncertain though it is clear that they contained a mixture of pagan elements and Jewish ascetical practices, combined with the worship of local and foreign deities. What resulted was a religious syncretism in which authentic Christian teachings of the gospel appeared intermingled with pagan and folk religious elements.[171]

The mystery religions in the Lycus Valley allowed a level of intimacy and personalization to the relationship with the deity previously unexperienced in the public forms of the various cultic worship practices. "Mystic cults appealed to individuals, to human beings one by one. They admitted women and slaves as members, and encouraged them to break away from the bonds of family and city to find among their co-religionists fresh social ties."[172] While there is no documented evidence of specific pagan beliefs reflected in the lives of the believers at Colossae beyond implication in Colossians 3.7, the association of behavior related to the mystery cults in the area would be a plausible explanation for specific referential material in the focal pericope.

The Phrygian cults of Attis and Cybele provided a level of access to divinity not known in traditional Hellenistic religion. The union of Attis and Cybele cult worship allowed a broadened circle of inclusion that neither on its own offers. In the union of the two both men and women, slave and free had equal access to the deities.

The possibility exists that it is from such a backdrop that the apostle Paul writes to the Colossian believers in 3.11 as he instructs them that "ὅπου οὐκ ἔνι Ἕλλην καὶ

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[170] Johnson, *Among the Gentiles-Greco-Roman Religion and Christianity*, 138.

[171] Michael Trainor, "Unearthing Ancient Colossae in Southern Turkey: theology and archaeology in dialogue," *Compass*, 36 no. 4 (2002), np, accessed online February 5, 2016, http://compassreview.org/summer02/8.html.

[172] Gardner, "The Pagan Mysteries," 316.

Ἰουδαῖος, περιτομὴ καὶ ἀκροβυστία, βάρβαρος, Σκύθης, δοῦλος, ἐλεύθερος, ἀλλὰ [τὰ] πάντα καὶ ἐν πᾶσιν Χριστός." The knowledge of the divine in their new-found faith is not exclusively the possession of a limited circle of initiates based on ethnic, social, or gender association. Rather, Christ is 'in all' who are 'in him,' and there is a new community that is unified in its dyadic relationship and collective identity focused in Christ.[173]

The general understanding is that much of the specificities of cultic worship arose out of a need to understand the cosmos and the cycle of life and death observed through the rhythm of the agrarian lifestyle. The worship of Attis and Sabazius reflects such a desire to make sense of life and death for both the humans and for the agrarian elements that sustain them. Belief in Attis allows for hope that in the afterlife there exists at least some form of 'rejuvenation' as is demonstrated by the concession to allow the Attis corpus to continue to grow hair and to move a digit after his tragic demise.

Sabazius, linked to Dionysus in the focus on unification with the deity and assurance of passage in the afterlife to a feast table, gives believers both a sense of joy for their present lives and hope for the life to come. Worship of Sabazius allows for celebrations that would validate licentiousness and immorality, cloaked in the form of worship that leads to life everlasting.

The apostle Paul writes to Colossian believers that, if they have not been direct participants in Attis and Sabazius worship, they are without question familiar with them and their practices. He can write in Colossians 3.1-4 about the new union the believers have with Christ and instruct them to change their focus (Col. 3.1-2). The mystery of their life presently hidden with Christ, who is their life, is an absolute reality yet be revealed (Col. 3.3). Their resurrection is a past event (Col. 3.1) with both a present and future reality (Col. 3.4).

In this new reality of union with Christ, the type of immorality promised in the worship of Sabazius has no place in their new relationship with Christ. For the follower of Christ, there is no longer a *cycle* of life and death to their lives. They *have* died, and they *have been* raised. Behavior that represents their former way of living (Col. 3.7) is to be put to death (Col. 3.5) because their resurrection with Christ (Col. 3.1) is a reality that brings a concomitant and ongoing characterological and behavioral transformation (Col. 3.10).

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[173] See Barth and Blanke, trans. Beck, *Colossians*, 416-17, for a discussion of the various ethnic groups and the rationale for their inclusion in the list as well as a plausible though debatable Stoic connotation in the formulaic "ἀλλὰ [τὰ] πάντα καὶ ἐν πᾶσιν Χριστός" in 3.11.

The religious soup in which the Colossian believers find themselves at the time of receiving the apostle Paul's epistle includes not only Hellenized religious system with an infusion of Phrygian deities and their worship. It also includes the influence of Judaism through a significant population of Jews in the Lycus Valley. The socio-cultural world in which the new believers in Colossae find themselves is in part a result of interaction *with* and the influence *of* these Jews.

4.3.3 Judaism and the Phrygian Jews in the Lycus Valley

While the preponderance of inhabitants in the area around Colossae would be considered Gentile,[174] evidence for the presence of a Jewish minority in the Lycus Valley is found in an Aramaic-Lydian inscription that dates back as early as 455 B.C.[175] There is additional canonical evidence for an exilic Jewish presence from the writings of the Old Testament prophet Obadiah who refers to "the exiles of Jerusalem who are in Sepharad" (Obadiah 20). Sepharad is generally accepted to be a reference to Sardis,[176] the capital of Lydia in Asia Minor and one of the seven churches mentioned in the book of Revelation.

While evidence exists for a Jewish migration into the areas of Lydia and Phrygia,[177] the most substantive movement of Jews into Phrygia is recorded in Josephus' account of Antiochus III and the relocation of 2,000 Jewish families "in an attempt to maintain internal security in the region."[178] The Jews were granted a significant degree of religious freedom and expression of their faith tradition, but there is not a consensus in their acceptance by those already residing in the area.

> Josephus tells of a letter sent by the Laodiceans . . . to Gaius Rabirius, proconsul of Asia, informing him that in obedience to his command they will permit the Jews to keep the Sabbath and their sacred rites and that the Jews will be regarded as their friends and confederates (*Ant. xiv. 10.20*) – this although the citizens of Tralles,

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[174] The term Gentile in the context of this research refers to those of non-Jewish ethnicity.

[175] Avraham Negev, "Sepharad," in *The Archaeological Encyclopedia of the Holy Land* (New York: Prentiss Hall, 1990), np.

[176] Though see Paul Trebilco, "Jewish Communities in Asia Minor," *Society for New Testament Studies,* Monograph Series (69), ed. G.N. Stanton (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1991), 38 for a more skeptical view on the relationship between Sepharad and Sardis.

[177] For a historical trace of the Jewish immigration see Smith, *Heavenly Perspective*, 3.

[178] Paul Trebilco, "Jewish Communities in Asia Minor," 5. See also Josephus, *Antiquities, 12.147-153*.

further down the Maeander valley, were opposed to the decree. Thus, there is evidence for oppression of the Jews in the region.[179]

By 62/61 B.C., Barth estimates that there were as many as 10,000-11,000 tax-paying Jews in the area of Laodicea and that "at least 500 of them were in Colossae."[180] Whatever the number of Jews that resided in the Lycus Valley at the time of the Apostle Paul's letter to the church at Colossae, this research agrees with Polhill in that "a considerable Jewish community resided in Phrygia."[181] That community brought to bear a degree of Jewish influence into the cultural and religious contexts of the inhabitants of the area.

An overall lack of specific evidentiary material prevents the construction of a precise picture of life for the Jewish population in the Lycus Valley. "There are no papyri from Asia with which to construct a profile of the social and economic condition of the Jews."[182] While historical documentation is not available, some observations are arguably plausible as one considers the overall environment in which the Jews find themselves at the time of the apostle Paul's writing of the Colossian epistle.

The Jews that located within the Lycus Valley brought with them their particular cultural and religious beliefs and practices of Judaism. They were distinctly different than the Gentiles in the area, and those differences were noted. "When the pagans refer to the most distinctive Jewish practices, namely circumcision and observance of the Sabbath and the dietary laws, they imply that these are characteristic of the Jews in general that are universally observed by Jews." [183] These characteristics brought about an obvious differentiation between the Jews and Gentiles in the area, but those differences went

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[179] Johnson, "Laodicea and Its Neighbors," 8.

[180] Barth and Blanke, trans. Beck, *Colossians*, 14. Dunn states, that "when families are included we may have to allow a total Jewish population of Colossae during this period of as many as two or three thousand." Dunn, *The Epistle to the Colossians and to Philemon*, 22. Clinton Arnold, "Colossae," in *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, ed. David N. Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 1089, places the number of Jews in the region at upwards of 7,500 based on the amount of Temple tax confiscated by the proconsul Flacus in Laodicea in 62 B.C. (see Cic. *Flac.* 26.28). Polhill, *Paul and His Letters*, 332, estimates 11,000 Jewish males in the region of Phrygia. William Barclay, *The New Daily Study Bible: The Letters to the Philippians, Colossians, and Thessalonians* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2003), 108, states that by the year 62 A.D. "we may well put the Jewish population as high as almost 50,000."

[181] Polhill, *Paul and His Letters*, 332.

[182] John M.G. Barclay, *Jews in the Mediterranean Diaspora* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1995), 259.

[183] Louis Feldman, *Jew and Gentile in the Ancient World* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1993), 49.

beyond mere external practices.

The religious structure and teaching of the Jews within this "diaspora" was the responsibility of Levitical priests.[184] Many of the Levitical teachings with their foundational belief systems would have run counter to the prevailing beliefs and practices of the Hellenized Gentiles of the area. Strict monotheism, Levitical holiness and purity codes, and a central sacred text are aspects of Judaism not found in Hellenized religious expression.[185] The degree to which the extant Jewish population adhered to their traditional beliefs while living in the Lycus Valley is not entirely clear.[186] The influence of Hellenism most certainly exercised pressure upon all who resided within the area and constant exposure to the Hellenized system of beliefs, as previously discussed, was a part of the normal fabric of everyday living; thus the plausibility of syncretism is not easily dismissed. The presence of ubiquitous worship of multiple Hellenistic deities, the foundational Phrygian religious system already in place when the Jews relocated to the area, and the geographical separation from the center of worship in Jerusalem all provide challenges to monotheistic worship and opportunities for a comingling of religious beliefs and practices. According to Betz, "Jewish magic was famous in antiquity."[187] What would

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[184] Barry F. Parker, "'Works of the Law' and the Jewish Settlement in Asia Minor," *Journal of Greco-Roman Christianity and Judaism* 9 (2013): 47.

[185] Though there are elements of Stoicism that tend toward monotheism and the idea of *theos hypsistos* and the worship of Attis as Hypsistos seem to indicate at least the *presence* of monotheistic thought among the Hellenized Gentiles, whether or not this was practiced in the manner of Judaism is doubtful. See Stephen Mitchell and Peter van Nuffelen, eds., *One God: Pagan Monotheism in the Roman Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2010) for a more thorough discussion.

[186] Barclay in "Paul Among the Diaspora Jews," *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* (60), 1995:90, quotes Martin Hengel, et al., in stating that "almost all Jews in the first century were Hellenized to some degree." Plutarch accused the Jews of worshipping Dionysus and that the Sabbath was a festival of Sabazius. Plutarch. *Symposiacs*, iv, 6. The veracity of Plutarch's claim is disputed. Hans Conzellman and Andreas Lindemann, in *Interpreting the New Testament: An Introduction to the Principles and Methods of New Testament Exegesis* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1994), 356, counter the accusation and any evidence of syncretism on the part of the Jews as it relates to the Phrygian worship of Sabazius. "As to syncretism with the cult of Sabazius, Kraabel has demonstrated that, although Sabazius was worshipped in Sardis from the fourth century B.C.E. through at least the second century C.E. none of the more than eighty Jewish inscriptions from Sardis show any knowledge of Sabazius, nor is there any evidence in the otherwise sharp attacks on the Jews by Melito, the second-century bishop of Sardis, that Jews were guilty of syncretism or that they were apostates to any degree." Louis Feldman supports this lack of evidence regarding syncretism, (Louis Feldman, *Jew and Gentile in the Ancient World,* 74). Martin Hengel, in *Jews, Greeks, and Barbarians*, 106, takes the more syncretistic viewpoint. The lack of clarity regarding the "religious laxity" of the Jews in the Lycus Valley is further identified by Bruce, "Jews and Christians in the Lycus Valley," 7. Further examples can be seen in the undertaking of "the costs of the marble wall decoration in the great assembly hall of the synagogue" as well as the costs of wall paintings, though the Torah prohibited the creation of images. See Pieter W. van der Horst, *Jews and Christians in Their Graeco-Roman Context* (Tubingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006), 51.

[187] Hans D. Betz, "Introduction to the Greek Magical Papyri," in *The Greek Magical Papyri in*

have been unacceptable in Jerusalem was perhaps overlooked in the outlying area of the Lycus Valley and there is the possibility that syncretism would find its way into the religious expression of the Phrygian Jews "yet the evidence for this is somewhat precarious."[188]

For the Jews of the Lycus Valley seeking to live life under תּוֹרָה, the struggle for moral purity and holiness among the Hellenized Gentiles was a constant battle from both external and internal forces. Early 1st Century rabbinic Judaism explained the internal conflict with the theory of competing יצרים.[189] There is an inclination (יצר) or longing; both to do good and a counter-desire and inclination to do evil. The יצר הרא (evil desire) is present throughout the entirety of a person's life and is the initiator of sin and disobedience. The יצר הטוב (desire for good) becomes evident at puberty. Thus, the evil desires and passions supersede any inclination towards good and proper desires in the child until an appropriate coming of age. At that point the יצר הטוב becomes apparent but in no way extinguishes the presence of the יצר הרא. Both evil intention and good intention reside within the human heart.[190] According to van der Horst, "the evil inclination is humankind's greatest and most implacable enemy."[191]

> The best means of controlling this formidable tempter are the precepts of the Torah (b. *Qiddushin* 30b; *Sifre Deut.* 45; cf. Ben Sira 21:11). It is therefore incumbent upon believers to attempt to subdue it (m. *Avoth* 4:1) and to exercise self-control with the help of Torah study, prayer, and God's grace. They should have their good *yetser* wage war against the evil one (b. *Berakhoth* 5a; *Eccles. Rabba* 9:7). As the rabbis say in *Avodah Zarah* 5b: "As long as they [the Israelites] occupy themselves with study of the Torah and works of loving kindness, the evil inclination is mastered by them.[192]

The Jewish sacred text of the תּוֹרָה provides both the command to holiness

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Translation, ed. Hans D. Betz (Chicago: The Univ. of Chicago Press, 1986), xlv.

[188] Andrew T. Lincoln, and A. J. M. Wedderburn, *The Theology of the Later Pauline Letters* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1993), 9.

[189] van der Horst, *Jews and Christians in Their Graeco-Roman Context*, 60. יצרים (the plural form of יצר) are, according to van der Horst, passions and desires or inclinations of the individual toward either good or evil.

[190] Ibid., 60. Perhaps this is the intent behind the advice given by the Old Testament sage in Proverbs 22:15, בְּלֶב־נַעַר קְשׁוּרָה אִוֶּלֶת. That folly is "bound up" or even the alternate translation of "conspires" Francis Brown, Samuel Driver, Charles Briggs, "קָשַׁר," *The New Brown-Driver-Briggs-Gesenius Hebrew and English Lexicon*, 905, provides insight into the forces that shape character within the lives of Jewish pre-adolescents.

[191] Ibid., 61.

[192] Ibid.

(Leviticus 19: 1-2) and the separation *from evil*. But there is also the command to holiness and the separation *to God* with an ethic, behavior, and character commensurate with that of those who belong to God and represent God to others. Holiness "is a positive concept, an inspiration and a goal associated with God's nature and his desire for man. To be holy means to imitate God's goodness as well as his separation, by a life of ethics and kindness."[193] There is, within the commands, an apparent divine and human agency to the holiness prescribed. God has provided the Torah as a divine agent through which the people are given the commands for holiness and how to fulfill those commands. At the same time, the Jewish people are to imitate God in his holiness, moral goodness, and character. "While this imitation is not fully attainable, Israel must continually strive for it. She is elected to represent God, not simply to separate from evil."[194] The struggle to fulfill the commands for holiness and overcome the יצר הרא is always present. "The endeavor to create perfect holiness and wear down impurity on a daily basis is a lifelong pursuit."[195]

The presence of any Jewish converts to Christianity within the congregation at Colossae is circumstantial though not without merit of consideration. Of the individuals mentioned in Colossians 4.7-17, the only names referenced with the designation of being "ὁ ἐξ ὑμῶν" are distinctly Gentile in origin.[196] While the likelihood of a contingency of Jews within the city of Colossae exists,[197] there is inferential textual evidence that at least some of the Colossian believers may have come from a Jewish background. The references to circumcision in Colossians 2.11 and the Sabbath in Colossians 2.16 seem to indicate a degree of familiarity with the Jewish practices on the part of the congregation; perhaps originating from within the congregation or from external Jewish pressures being brought to bear upon their distinct Christian identity.[198] One potential source for such familiarity is

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[193] Hannah K. Harrington, *Holiness: Rabbinic Judaism and the Graeco-Roman World* (New York: Routledge, 2001), 183.

[194] Ibid. See Hannah Harrington's connection between the sanctification that comes through the study of Torah and the holiness produced in the lives of people, evidenced in the Jewish liturgical prayer, "Sanctify us by your commandments." She states, "Nevertheless, the endeavor to create perfect holiness and wear down impurity on a daily basis is a lifelong pursuit."

[195] Ibid., 187.

[196] The individuals mentioned by name in Colossians 4.7-17 are Tychicus, Onesimus, Aristarchus, Mark, the cousin of Barnabas, Jesus, who is called Justus, Epaphras, Luke, Demas, Nympha, and Archippus. Witherington III, *The Letters to Philemon, the Colossians, and the Ephesians*, 204, notes that "the only Jewish Christians still among his coworkers are Mark, Aristarchus, and Jesus Justus." The only individuals noted as being ὁ ἐξ ὑμῶν are Onesimus and Epaphras, both of Gentile origin.

[197] Barth and Blanke, trans. Beck, *Colossians*, 14.

[198] See Nicholas Wright, *Paul: In Fresh Perspective*, (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2005), 117

the controversial 'Colossian heresy' which may have arisen "from within the milieu of Jewish mysticism"[199] present in the Lycus Valley at the time of Paul's epistle to the Colossians. It is also plausible that the distance from Jerusalem, and the evidence of Jewish converts to Christianity in other areas, allowed for a portion of the Colossian church to be comprised of believers with Jewish backgrounds and heritage. According to Feldman,

> The relative lack of contact between the Jews of Asia Minor and the fountainhead in the Land of Israel may explain why Christianity seems to have made relatively great progress in Asia Minor, presumably among Jews, by the beginning of the second century, because we find fledgling Christian groups generally in cities—Pergamum, Thyatira, Smyrna, Philadelphia, Ephesus, Tralles, Hierapolis, Magnesia, Laodicea, Colossae, and Miletus—where we usually know that there are Jewish communities.[200]

The presence of Jews in the Lycus Valley brings cultural and religious influence to the Gentile population in the area. Within the emerging church at Colossae, there is the possible incorporation of new believers from a Jewish background as well as external pressures arising from the Jewish population present in the area. There is the additional possibility of Gentiles that, at some point, became 'God-fearers' or converts to some form of Judaism as evidenced in the Phrygian contingent present at the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:10). If these Phrygians were among those converted on the Day of Pentecost, the possibility exists that at least some of them were from the area of Colossae. They would then bring into the church their experience with a Hellenistic form of worship, their adopted Jewish beliefs and now an experience of conversion to Christianity.

> The diverse backgrounds of early Christians, and the varieties of their ongoing contexts, provide sufficient explanation for diverse views amongst the Christians themselves, although we can never rule out the potential impact of outside views, or of worldviews or philosophies coming directly from an outside context.[201]

For all three situations, there are significant implications for the lives of the Colossian Christians especially as they relate to their spiritual development and transformation of character.

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for an interesting optional reading of Colossians 2.8 and Paul's admonition not to "let anyone en-synagogue you, drag you into the synagogue," and the reaffirmation of an identity found in Christ that leads to holiness, "rather than hoping to attain that goal by taking upon yourselves the regulations of Torah."

[199] Smith, *Heavenly Perspective*, 39.

[200] Louis Feldman, *Jew and Gentile in the Ancient World*, 73.

[201] Paul Trebilco, "Christians in the Lycus Valley," in *Colossae in Time and Space*, eds. Alan H. Cadwallader and Michael Trainor (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 2011), 187.

4.3.3.1 Implications for the Colossians and the transformation of their character

The strict monotheistic stand espoused in traditional Judaism provides a new context for a people of pantheistic background. In many expressions of Hellenized pantheism, there is a hierarchical structure to the power and dominion of the various gods. In Colossians 3.1-4 the apostle Paul, writing from his background in a strict form of Judaism, clearly distinguishes the role and relationship of Christ with the Colossian believers. Taken together with the intertextual exhortation in Colossians 1.15-23, the Colossian believers are confronted with a monotheistic approach to a personal relationship with the creator God (Col. 3.10) through Christ (Col. 3.1-4) not previously encountered in their Gentile, Hellenized form of religious expression.[202] Their new dyadic relationship and collective identity have no room for idols of any expression which would displace the one true God (Col. 3.5-6). Their election into the new filial dyad with a monotheistic creator God is based exclusively on their relationship with Christ rather than any kind of ethnicity; be it Jewish or Gentile (Col. 3.11-12). As part of the collective identity 'in Christ,' the Colossians would naturally seek to adopt the particular qualities of character and character traits of their new found relational identity. These traits would, in many cases, run counter to their traditional and cultural characterological identity found in their former way of living (Col. 3.7).

New Colossian believers with Jewish backgrounds would be most familiar with purity codes and the Levitical teachings on holiness presented in the Torah. The approach to sanctification and transformation through the study of the Torah finds a different expression in the sanctification and transformation now found through the relationship with God through Christ.

> Unlike the rabbinic concept, there is among the early Christian Church the notion that a mystical, miraculous transformation happens at conversion which creates a holy person, who is at least equal to the holy status a Jew receives by ethnicity. Believers are "God's temple" and the Holy Spirit dwells in them. . .. Thus, the continuance of the holy people in Christ, just like its creation, is enabled by the Spirit.[203]

The outward expression through the dyadic relationship with Christ (Col. 3. 5-

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[202] See Malina, *The New Testament World*, 73ff, for discussion of the three-zone model to God, as experienced through the Mediterranean worldview and cultural predisposition such as embodied in the lives of those of the Lycus Valley and Colossae.

[203] Harrington, *Holiness: Rabbinic Judaism and the Graeco Roman World*, 188.

9, 11-12) transcend the ethical commands of the תּוֹרָה and Levitical purity codes. The יצרים that illuminate comprehension of the inner struggle with ethical conduct is now understood from the perspective of the old self and the new self (Col. 3.9-10). It is a new self: *formed* through a union with Christ and concomitantly *unformed* through the cessation of practices habituated in their former way of living. This new self is in the ongoing process of being '*reformed*' and renewed in the "knowledge of its creator" (Col. 3.10).[204] The יצר הרא as the old self is to be put to death and stripped off as a garment (Col. 3.5-9) along with its corresponding behavioral expressions of character. The יצר הטוב is personified as the new self rather than merely an inclination to good (Col. 3.10).

> Union with Christ, because it puts us in a new relationship to sin and brings us into the sphere of the Spirit's power, *will* impact the way we live. Ultimately, then, the imperative 'put to death' in this verse must be viewed as a call to respond to, and cooperate with, the transformative power that is already operative within us.[205]

The Colossian Christians are called into an "ongoing participation of believers to become what they are already"[206] brought about by the creator God in a renewal process that recreates that which God designed and intended in Gen. 1.26-27.

The command of God in the תּוֹרָה to "be holy as I am holy" (Lev. 19.1-2) is now lived out in the lives of those Colossian Christians for whom the dyadic relationship with Christ is a new reality. The positive virtues of Colossians 3.12 that the believers are commanded to express "are all predicated elsewhere of God[207] or of Christ."[208] Holiness as a manifestation of the very character and behavior of God is possible for the Colossian believers in their union with Christ.

The genitive construction '(chosen) of God' is of decisive significance in this

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[204] The spiritualities created through the interaction between the text of Colossians and the reader provides the framework for a more detailed examination of the process of character transformation. Much appreciation is expressed to Kees Waaijman for the *formed-unformed-reformed-conformed-transformed* template by which such a transformation process takes place. His template is overlaid upon the focal pericope and reveals remarkable insight into the overall characterological transformation of the Colossian believers. See Kees Waaijman, *Spirituality*, 455-482.

[205] Moo, *The Letters to the Colossians and to Philemon*, 255.

[206] Pao, *Colossians and Philemon*, 226. See also Lincoln, *Paradise Now and Not Yet* for a more thorough discussion of the tension between Paul's theology of the "now" and the "not yet."

[207] For the Old Testament references to the character traits of God expressed here see Barth and Blanke, trans. Beck, *Colossians*, 419.

[208] Daniel Harrington, *Paul's Prison Letters*, 122. Harrington lists five: heartfelt compassion (Rom. 12.1; 2 Cor. 1.3), kindness (Rom. 2.4; 11.2), humility (Phil. 2.8), gentleness (2 Cor. 10.1), and patience (Rom. 2.4; 9.22).

> connection. The behavior which they are urged is to reflect upon the one who is choosing them, to God, which means it is to mirror the Lord of the chosen ones, the Messiah.[209]

Their ongoing renewal aligns the believers' character with the image of the one who created their new selves, and Christlikeness in every word or action is the anticipated τέλος (Col. 3.17).

The sacred text of the תּוֹרָה with all of the ethical commands is no longer limited to scrolls prepared by scribes but now resides within the lives of the Colossian believers in the word of Christ (Col. 3.16). Grammatical construction suggests that it is to be an integral part of the worship expressed by the Colossian believers.[210] The word of Christ and the message of the gospel that gives the believers life is to find a 'rich' dwelling among them in their corporate worship.

> [T]his constant reference to the word of Christ should not be superficial or passing but . . . should be a deep and penetrating contemplation that enables the message to have transforming power in the life of the community.[211]

The texture of the spiritual heritage that the Phrygian Jews bring to the church at Colossae cannot be understated. Their religious experience and the backdrop of the Old Testament allows them a fuller understanding as to the purpose and plan of God for redemption in Christ. The influence of the Phrygian Jews brought its particular difficulties with which the church wrestled, but they were not an isolated source of struggle. The impact of the Mediterranean worldview and the Hellenized system of philosophy and religious belief all contributed to the spiritual makeup of the church at Colossae.

It is into that diverse cultural and religious environment that the apostle Paul wrote the epistle to the Colossians and he did so from his worldview and religious background. An investigation into the cultural and religious background of the apostle Paul as well as his interaction with the church at Colossae allows for the development of a more thorough socio-historical hermeneutic of Paul's letter to the Colossians.

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[209] Barth and Blanke, trans. Beck, *Colossians*, 418.

[210] See Moo, *The Letters to the Colossians and to Philemon*, 286.

[211] Ibid.

4.4 The Apostle Paul: the impact of his cultural and religious background

The intersection of the life of the apostle Paul and the Christians in the church at Colossae which led to the writing of the Colossian epistle is best understood from both the perspective of the Colossian Christians and that of the apostle Paul himself.[212] Much has been written about Paul in attempt to understand the man who contributed such a large percentage of the New Testament corpus and who has, other than Jesus, arguably, had more influence upon Christianity than any other person of historical note. However, much of the current knowledge of the historical person of the apostle Paul is derived from indirect conclusions and is episodically inferential at best. The primary sources for information on Paul are the presentation of Paul's ministry through Luke's account of the Acts of the Apostles and Paul's autobiographical sections included in his epistolary writings.[213] By accepting these sources as authoritative, the portrait provided through these referential markers, in conjunction with historical insight into the background of certain identifiable elements provides a better understanding of the person of Paul as well as his cultural and religious environs. All of these cultural and religious aspects within Paul's life are formative in shaping the person and are influential in the outworking of Paul's transformational experience with Jesus Christ (Acts 9.1-30).

There are three primary cultural and religious factors shaping the life of the apostle Paul particularly relevant to the fuller understanding of the focal Colossian pericope. First, Paul identifies himself as possessing Jewish lineage and heritage with Roman citizenship (Acts 22.25-29, 23.6; Phil. 3.5-6) and education as a Pharisee trained under Gamaliel (Acts 22.3). Secondly, his life fits historically within a thoroughly Hellenized society and he utilizes "the rhetorical style of the Greek world"[214] in much of his writings and verbal interactions. Third, the Jewish and Hellenistic influence on Paul's life converge at the point of his radical conversion to faith in Jesus as the Messiah. These three cultural and religious dimensions of the apostle Paul shape his understanding of the

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[212] Excellent scholars have given much time and space to the debate over the authorship of Colossians and have come to equally valid conclusions for both Pauline and deutero-Pauline authorship. Appreciation is expressed for their scholarly work. The lack of a definitive judgment, though undoubtedly disputed by many on either side of the debate, allows freedom here to consider the original author of the text to be the apostle Paul.

[213] See Alan F. Segal, *Paul the Convert: The Apostolate and Apostasy of Saul the Pharisee* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1990), 12, for references to Acts 16.37,18.1-3, 22.3, 22.25-29, 23.6; 1 Cor. 9.1, 15.8-10; Gal. 1.13-17; Phil. 3.5-6.

[214] Wright, *Paul in Fresh Perspective*, 4.

transformation of character, affect his interaction with the Christians at Colossae, and give form to the paraenetic material of Colossians 3.1-17. In the research that follows, the impact of Judaism and Hellenism upon Paul are examined in light of his post-conversion writings as well as his transformative experience related in the biblical account of his conversion and referenced in his biographical pericopae.[215]

4.4.1 The cultural and religious impact of Judaism upon Paul

"Knowledge of Saul the *Jew* is a precondition of understanding Paul the *Christian*."[216] Paul[217] was a citizen of Tarsus,[218] born into a family with Roman citizenship,[219] and reared in Jerusalem.[220] "During the twentieth century, the pendulum swung back and forth between viewing Paul as a Hellenized Diaspora Jew and viewing him as a somewhat traditional "Palestinian" Pharisaic Jew."[221] Locating Paul within Judaism is not merely a matter of 'Diaspora' versus 'Palestinian.' "Palestinian Judaism, too, was Hellenistic in critical respects."[222] Regardless of the swing of the pendulum, *prima*

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[215] See e.g. Acts 9.3-8; 22.6-11; 26.13-19; 1 Cor. 9.1; 15.8-9; Gal. 1.11-12, 15-16; Phil. 3.4-6. This post-conversion frame of reference for investigating the influence of both Judaism and Hellenism on Paul is essential in light of the lack of autobiographical pre-conversion extant writings or references. Conjecture regarding his beliefs *prior* to conversion, while intriguing, lacks academic *gravitas*. The post-conversion material provides such a rich resource for discussion.

[216] Martin Hengel, *The Pre-Christian Paul* (Philadelphia: Trinity Press International, 1991), xiii.

[217] To avoid confusion and awkward construction the name Paul will be used throughout this research to identify both the pre-conversion Saul and the post-conversion Paul.

[218] Though see Richard Wallace and Wynne Williams, *The Three Worlds of Paul of Tarsus* (London: Routledge, 2003), 142, for the argument regarding Paul's citizenship and the questions behind the legitimacy of that claim. "It is unlikely that the Jews of Tarsus as a group were citizens, and it is certainly not the case that Paul's Roman citizenship would have brought him Tarsian citizenship automatically." See also Stanley E. Porter, "Paul as Jew, Greek, and Roman: An Introduction," in *Paul: Jew, Greek, and Roman*, ed. Stanley E. Porter (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 3, esp. n.8 for further discussion of Paul's Roman citizenship.

[219] W. C. van Unnik, *Tarsus or Jerusalem: The City of Paul's Youth*, trans. George Ogg (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 1962), 7.

[220] The location of Jerusalem is principally an argument of deduction and supported by Hengel's recognition that the Pharisees were primarily located in Jerusalem and were not found in the Diaspora. If this is true, it excludes an upbringing in Tarsus of Cilicia. See Hengel, *The Pre-Christian Paul*, 27.

[221] Ben Witherington III, *The Paul Quest: The Renewed Search for the Jew of Tarsus* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1998), 53. Appreciation is extended to Witherington for his statement regarding "main relevant New Testament texts" and the desire to adhere as closely as possible to them rather than to "get so bogged down in secondary scholarly literature that we never actually discuss primary material of direct relevance in the quest for the historical Paul." (Ibid., 55, n. 7). This research attempts to follow that pattern where possible.

[222] Victor Furnish, "On Putting Paul in His Place," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 113 no. 1

facie evidence from Paul's autobiographical statements identify him as a Jew of Jewish lineage and not a proselyte (Phil. 3.4-6) from Gentile parentage. He is, in his words, "ἐγὼ Φαρισαῖός εἰμι, υἱὸς Φαρισαίων."

According to Paul, he received his training as a Pharisee[223] under the teaching of Gamaliel (Acts 22.3),[224] though little is known about his instructor.[225] The precise manner and substance of his instruction cannot be made with indisputable certainty.[226]

> If we had to construct components of the curriculum of studies that Paul would have followed at the feet of Gamaliel, that is, under the auspices of the patriarch, it would include questions of liturgy, mourning, treatment of slaves, observance of the Sabbath (travel on the Sabbath, carrying objects from one domain to another on that day), preparation of the Passover offering, preparation of food on the festival, intercalation of the calendar, matters of uncleanness – nearly the whole of the Pharisaic program involving Sabbath and festival observance and cultic cleanness that is well-attested to first-century venue.[227]

What is known from Paul is that he identified his training and his particular sect of Pharisaism within the strictest of the sect's keeping of תּוֹרָה (Phil. 3.5). He further states that he advanced far ahead of his contemporaries because he was "περισσοτέρως ζηλωτὴς ὑπάρχων τῶν πατρικῶν μου παραδόσεων" (Gal. 1.14). Beyond the zeal for the law

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(Spring, 1994): 9. See especially n. 13.

[223] There are those who claim that Paul remained a Pharisee even after his conversion and during his apostolic ministry. See Jacob Jervell, *The Unknown Paul. Essays on Luke-Acts and Early Christian History* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress Press, 1984), 71.

[224] Gamaliel is referenced in Acts 5.34 though the precise determination as to the identity of the two men bearing the name Gamaliel and the possibility it is the same individual, while likely, cannot be made with certainty. In either case, this reference in Acts 22.3 is the only direct link established between Paul and Gamaliel. The writer of Acts, while quoting Paul, is the only one who associates Paul with Gamaliel and does not make any additional clarification to assist with the identification of the teacher. Nowhere else does Paul make that connection. This is a curious omission, especially in light of his autobiographical "boasting" in Phil. 3:3-6. Why Paul leaves out such a significant detail is not known. For an informative discussion on the speculative nature of Paul's identification with Gamaliel and the unreliability of inferential assumptions about the training Paul may or may not have received, see Mortin S. Enslin, "Paul and Gamaliel," *The Journal of Religion* 7 no. 4 (1927): 360-364.

[225] For the questionable relationship between Gamaliel I and Hillel or Gamaliel as a possible successor to Hillel in the Pharisaic teachings and traditions see Jacob Neusner, *The Rabbinic Traditions About the Pharisees Before 70* (Leiden: Brill, 1971), 294-5.

[226] See Martin Hengel, *The Pre-Christian Paul*, trans. John Bowden (Philadelphia: Trinity Press, 1991), 28, for the difficulty in identifying the Gamaliel associated with Paul as the same person in Acts 5, also associated with the school of Hillel, as opposed to the school of Shammai. According to Hengel, Paul's "interest in Jewish mission and influence of Greek thought could connect Paul more with Hillel, the 'zealot for the law,' more with Shammai."

[227] Bruce Chilton and Jacob Neusner, "Paul and Gamaliel," in *The Review of Rabbinic Judaism: Ancient, Medieval, and Modern*, vol. 8, ed. Alan J. Avery-Peck (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 146.

expressed by Paul, "it is not at all clear what more we can deduce about his Pharisaic background, because we know little about pre-70 A.D. Pharisaism from other sources."[228] Perhaps the most reliable source of material regarding the Pharisees before 70 A.D. is from the Jewish historian and Pharisee, Josephus.[229] According to Josephus, in comparison to the Hellenistic philosophical schools, the teachings of the Pharisees would most closely resemble that of the Stoics.[230]

> . . . and when they determine that all things are done by fate, they do not take away the freedom from men of acting as they think fit; since their notion is, that it hath pleased God to make a temperament, whereby what he wills is done, but so that the will of man can act virtuously or viciously. They also believe that souls have an immortal rigor in them, and that under the earth there will be rewards or punishments, according as they have lived virtuously or viciously in this life; and the latter are to be detained in an everlasting prison, but that the former shall have power to revive and live again.[231]

Despite the lack of precision in identifying specific teachings within the school[232] in which Paul received his training as a Pharisee, some deductions can be made based on Paul's immersion within Judaism that are plausible with a relative degree of certainty. These assertions and suppositions are derived primarily from Paul's autobiographical statements and compared with historically reliable research; including biblical and extra-biblical sources. This research limits the scope to a framework that

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[228] Witherington III, *The Paul Quest*, 59. See E.P. Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism,* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1977) for a more thorough understanding of first-century Judaism than the limitations of this research allow. Also, see Jacob Neusner, *The Rabbinic Traditions About the Pharisees Before 70* (Leiden: Brill, 1971), 212-373 for further explanations and comparisons of the major traditions of Hillel, Gamaliel, and Shammai. One of the strengths of Neusner's work is his extensive use of primary sources.

[229] Jonathan Klawans, *Josephus and the Theologies of Ancient Judaism* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2012), 4. For primary (translated) source material validating Klawans assertion see Josephus, *The Life of Flavius Josephus*, 12.62, trans. William Whiston (The Floating Press, 2008), 17, where Josephus refers to himself and his fellow Pharisees, accessed April 13, 2016, https://books.google.com/books?id=xRqCW7I9mtoC&printsec=frontcover&source=gbs_ge_summary_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q=legates&f=false. Though see Segal, *Paul the Convert,* 81-3 for an interesting viewpoint on the veracity of Josephus' commitment and actual membership within the sect of the Pharisees.

[230] Dieter Lührmann, "Paul and the Pharisaic Tradition," *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 36 (1989): 76.

[231] Josephus, *Antiquities* 18.13-14, trans. William Whiston, 1737, accessed online, April 12, 2016, http://sacred-texts.com/jud/josephus/index.htm.

[232] See Chilton and Neusner, "Paul and Gamaliel," 149-56, for the likelihood of Gamaliel's association with Paul, based on the evidentiary material of Gamaliel's views in the Mishnah, the Tosefta, and the Talmud. Beyond the similarities seen between Paul's writing and the patriarchate views of Gamaliel, there remains only inferential determination. However, according to Chilton and Neusner, the "analogy of logic or argumentation" allows for a comparison of thought between Paul and Gamaliel's *halakhah*, and "we discover a resonance between the two."

facilitates an understanding of Paul's approach to character and the transformation of character.[233]

Prior to conversion, Paul held to a strict regard for תּוֹרָה and for keeping the law according to the covenant outlined in his understanding of the requirements for a relationship with God. "Paul could not have been charged with any violations of the Mosaic law or been accused of wrongdoing by a Jew."[234] His own autobiographical account records his passion for תּוֹרָה and he is deeply indebted to the "previous character of his life as lived within the terms of Israel's covenant with God"[235] for his requisite understanding of behavior for a person seeking to live a life pleasing to God.[236] The תּוֹרָה, including the Decalogue and Levitical moral/purity codes, shaped the character of Paul such that Paul's zeal for תּוֹרָה led to a persecution of the nascent Christian Church (Phil. 3.6). However, Paul's understanding of תּוֹרָה changed with his radical conversion and transformation (Acts 9). Without wading into the complex debate on the role of תּוֹרָה in post-conversion Pauline soteriology, suffice it to say that Paul viewed the law as "incapable of giving what Christ and the Spirit can give. The law is not a bad thing, but it cannot empower someone to do the good."[237]

For Paul, zeal for תּוֹרָה became supplanted by zeal for "ὁ νόμος τοῦ Χριστοῦ" (Gal. 6.2) expressed by Christ in the "new commandment" (Mathew 22.37-40) as the

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[233] The immense amount of scholarly work devoted to an accurately revised understanding of Pauline soteriology is noted and appreciated here. The work of Wright, *Paul in Fresh Perspective* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2005); James D. G. Dunn, *The New Perspective on Paul* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008); E.P. Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1977); Cornelius Venema, *Getting the Gospel Right: Assessing the Reformation and New Perspectives on Paul* (Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 2006); D. A. Carson, Peter T. O'Brien, Mark A. Seifrid, eds., *Justification and Variegated Nomism* (Tubingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004); and Simon J. Gathercole, *Where is Boasting: Early Jewish Soteriology and Paul's Response in Romans 1-5* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002) are noted and are all excellent in their own right and make for lively discussion on Paul but this research focuses on the ongoing results of justification as it is lived out in the doctrine of *sanctification*. The latter presupposes and assumes the reality of the former, and so the intricacies of the process of justification are left to others for research and debate. How one experiences the work of sanctification and Paul's instruction to the Colossians to facilitate their growth toward Christlikeness and transformation of character is the subject under examination here.

[234] Witherington III, *The Paul Quest*, 62.

[235] See James D.G. Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), particularly chapters 6, 14, and 23 for Dunn's excellent dialogue on the nature of Paul's interaction with תּוֹרָה and the dimensions of ὁ νόμος τοῦ Χριστοῦ upon Paul's theology and ethics. For the latter, see especially 649-58.

[236] Ibid., 349.

[237] Witherington III, *The Paul Quest*, 67.

unifying element for "all the Law and the Prophets." Paul is still "bound to the law" but the prescriptive and descriptive elements of that law take on a vastly different appearance in his post-conversion experience. For Paul, the Law is embodied in the person of Christ.

> The law that Paul urges is founded on Christ as the norm and the norm-giver, Christ as the example and the lesson and the instructor. If this is Judaism, it is certainly not like the Judaism Paul says he left behind.[238]

The essential aspects of תּוֹרָה find fulfillment in the lives of Christ-followers "not because they continue to be obligated to it but because, by the power of the Spirit in their lives, their conduct coincidentally displays the behavior that the Mosaic law prescribes."[239] The תּוֹרָה is now written on the hearts of humans, and the keeping of the law of Christ becomes a matter of the Spirit empowering the believer to do so. This Christ-law, now in effect in the lives of believers, inculcates both behavioral and characterological transformation that the תּוֹרָה, written on stone, was powerless to achieve (Rom. 8.3). For Paul, it is the cultural and religious impact of Judaism that provides the fertile soil in which an understanding of a pneumatological empowered transformation of character finds full expression.

4.4.2 The cultural and religious impact of Hellenism upon Paul

While the apostle Paul likely received a tremendous amount of influence through traditional Judaism, the expression of Judaism itself was not immune to cultural influence. "The Apostle Paul was not only a product of Palestinian Judaism, but of Hellenistic Judaism as well."[240] Hellenism as a worldview permeated every aspect of life and culture. Locating Paul within the framework of a Hellenized culture provides more than historical detail regarding the existential person.[241] The cultural milieu shaped the worldview of Paul and as such directly influenced Paul's understanding of issues related to character

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[238] Ibid., 65.

[239] Frank Thielman, *Paul and the Law: A Contextual Approach* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1994), 140.

[240] T.C. Smith, "Influences That Shaped the Theology of Paul," *Perspectives in Religious Studies,* 25 (1998): 153.

[241] Bruce J. Malina and Jerome H. Neyrey, *Portraits of Paul: An Archaeology of Ancient Personality*, (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press), xiii.

formation and transformation.[242]

> Paul operated "within a milieu in which issues that engaged him and his converts were already widely discussed. As his readers appropriated some elements from that discussion to describe their Christian existence, so did Paul.[243]

Thus, Paul's rhetorical structure takes on a stylistic dimension reflective of his cultural influence and provides a rich context of particular relevance to the original recipients of his instruction.[244] "Paul was in fact a *spermologos*, in the sense that he picked up scraps of knowledge from everywhere . . .."[245] While it appears that Paul's knowledge of Greek philosophy and literature may have been of a rudimentary nature and extended little beyond "common proverbial sayings,"[246] the apostle was still able to take those "scraps of knowledge" from diverse cultural and religious sources and apply them in a

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[242] Joseph J Kotva, in his excellent work, *The Christian Case for Virtue Ethics*, provides some fascinating insight into Paul's choice of terminology utilized to describe the transformation process. He states, "Paul's references to 'transformation' are also instructive. The term, deriving from Roman mythology, was current in Paul's day. He applies this term to the Christ-event and sees Christ gradually reshaping us. For instance, 2 Cor. 3:18 pictures salvation as a process with the goal of conformity or likeness to Christ: 'and all of us, with unveiled faces, seeing the glory of the Lord as though reflected in a mirror, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another; for this comes from the Lord, the Spirit.' Similarly, Rom. 8:29 stresses God's antecedence in our growing conformity to Christ, and Rom. 12:2 calls believers to a metamorphosis of the mind, not just external change." (Kotva, 125).

[243] Abraham J. Malherbe, "Determinism and Free Will in Paul: The Argument of 1 Corinthians 8 and 9," *Paul in His Hellenistic Context*, ed. Troels Engberg-Pedersen (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995), 255.

[244] While rhetorical criticism and analysis may be of some use in understanding thematic movements within the writings of Paul, there are counter-arguments that there is too much emphasis on such analysis. The opinions vary, but the basic argument is that rhetorical criticism attempts to force-fit something that is not within the text. See Michael F. Bird, "Reassessing a Rhetorical Approach to Paul's Letters," *Expository Times* 8 vol. 119 (2008): 374-79 where he allows for the utilization of rhetorical criticism to analyze the writings of Paul, but the approach is not without specific parameters that guide application. See also Philip Kern, "Rhetoric and Galatians: Assessing an Approach to Paul's Epistles," *Society of New Testament Studies Monograph Series 101* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1998) and his position that Paul's style is not in alignment with the historical texts and handbooks that outline rhetorical methodology. Those who would take issue with minimizing the application of rhetorical overlay present their case with a degree of validity yet without compelling conclusive evidentiary material. Perhaps the moderate approach of Markus Bockmuehl, *The Epistle to the Philippians*, Black's New Testament Commentaries (London: Bloomsbury Pub., 1997), 39, is preferred as he suggests an approach that exercises caution in application of rhetorical methodology given that the nature of Paul's writing differed in intent from other more specific rhetorical styles of the day. In Dirk van der Merwe's article, "Pauline Rhetoric and Discernment of the Wisdom of God According to 1 Corinthians 2," *Journal of Early Christian* History, 3 no. 2 (2013): 110, he presents an excellent alternative approach from the perspective of Paul's "rhetorical strategy," rather than a strict diagnosis and assignment of a rhetorical methodology that cannot be substantiated without incontrovertible evidence. That approach of rhetoric based upon strategy is most applicable to the present study and is the framework for an understanding of Paul's writing.

[245] Troels Engberg-Pedersen, "Stoicism in Philippians," *Paul in His Hellenistic Context*, ed. Troels Engberg-Pedersen (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995), 256.

[246] Barclay, "Paul Among the Diaspora Jews," 105.

contextualized manner to effectively communicate and gain a hearing among whatever audience he found himself. An investigation into this influence of Hellenized religion and culture on Paul's understanding of both character and the possibility of character transformation allows a bridge for application to followers of Christ in Colossae.

The extent to which Hellenism pervaded Judaism, and thus affected the apostle Paul, is "a very complicated and even contradictory phenomenon."[247] As Hengel points out, while there is a degree of "mutual interpenetration," Hellenization and the predominate Stoic philosophical thought of the time set the stage for a framework of understanding humanity as "world citizens" and promoted a breakdown of ethnic delineation, opting for a classification "in accordance with their *arête* or *kakia*."[248] The Hellenized Stoic characterological delineation of humanity according to their virtues or vices allows for a recognition of commonality that transcends ethnic or religious boundaries. At the same time, the strict nationalism of Judaism and its commitment to תּוֹרָה opposed the pervasive influence of Hellenism and gave rise to Hasidism, the Essenes, and the Pharisees.[249] It is the adherence to the ethical and ritual aspects of Judaism that distinguished Judaism from nascent Christianity; further exacerbated by the "increasing paganization or Hellenization of Christianity."[250]

Of particular import to a fuller comprehension of the impact of Hellenized religion and culture upon the apostle Paul is the influential effects of Stoic[251] and

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[247] Martin Hengel, *Jews, Greeks, and Barbarians*, trans. John Bowden (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1980), 54.

[248] Ibid, 68.

[249] See Hengel, *Jews, Greeks, and Barbarians*, 123-26. As Hengel notes, the complexities of Hellenistic influence on Judaism are many and occur at various levels with no minor amount of contention. For this research, the scope of Hellenistic influence is limited to the issues of character and its transformation with particular emphasis on how the apostle Paul may have experienced the cultural and worldview milieu of such "mutual impenetration."

[250] David E. Aune, "Orthodoxy in First Century Judaism? A Response to N. J. McEleney," *Journal for the Study of Judaism*, 7 (1976): 10. See also Barclay, "Paul Among the Diaspora Jews," 98, for a dissenting opinion of the widespread hostility. He states that "despite the rhetoric of the Maccabean literature, 'Judaism' and 'Hellenism' were not inherently, or in all respects, antagonistic." It should also be noted that, in contrast with Aune's sweeping statement here, while aspects of Hellenization most certainly influenced early Christian understanding and behavior, it is an uninformed leap to assume it was an infiltration of Christianity, to the extent that Christianity abandoned ethical standards carried forth from Judaism, especially with respect to behavior and adherence to cultic practice. Of particular relevance is Philo, *On Virtue* 102-4, where he describes the abandonment of idols and gods on the part of the converts to Christianity. Morality was still an important component of character and behavior. Barclay concludes that "prudence, justice, courage, and moderation were the cardinal virtues which constituted moral ἀρετή, as part of a common discourse of cultural ideals" (Barclay, "Paul Among the Diaspora Jews," 98).

[251] From a historical perspective, Stoicism has roots in Cynic thought and aspects of the Stoics

Aristotelian thought upon the apostle's understanding of character and transformation of character.[252] Each of these philosophical schools of thought place a significant amount of effort into the explanation of the origin and development of character. The extent of direct influence of these two aspects of Hellenistic thought on the apostle Paul is debatable and impossible to determine with precision.[253] The degree of influence is discerned primarily through inference of the apostle's extant writings and knowledge of the historical environment at the time of the apostle though the apparent connections are within the realm of plausibility to the extent that they warrant further investigation.[254]

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have apparent parallels in Cynicism. Similarities between the Stoic and Cynic teachings include virtue as the chief expression and τέλος of life. See Abraham J. Malherbe, *Paul and the Popular Philosophers* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1989), for a more thorough explanation of the similarities and differences between Cynics and Stoics. Of relevant note is his description of the Cynic emphasis upon the role of virtue in life and its resultant influence upon a person's character. "They shared the view that man has to be reformed by being taught to unlearn his vices. Unlike vice, which enters the soul spontaneously, they held that virtue was acquired by practice, and happiness consisted in living according to nature. Virtue could be taught and, once learned, could not be lost. What Cynics called for was a decision to improve oneself, to make a deliberate choice to change from one's previous condition . . .. It is by virtue alone that [humankind's] souls can be purified of its diseases, and it is the Cynic who is the physician able to bring about their cure." (Malherbe, *Paul and the Popular Philosophers*, 16-7). Many aspects of this role of virtue flow into the Stoic views of humankind's character and the teleological goal of those virtues.

[252] The influence of Hellenized culture extends far beyond issues related to character and character transformation. As a worldview, Hellenization permeates every aspect of perceived reality, both cultural and religious. Paul's motivation for addressing the "Colossian philosophy" in the epistle brings such Hellenistic influence to light and its extension into aspects of Judaism. Examination of Hellenistic cultural and religious influence upon the apostle Paul under present study is limited to aspects particularly germane to issues of character and the transformation of character. See Eduard Lohse, "Pauline Theology in the Letter to the Colossians," *New Testament Studies* 15 (1969): 211-200 for a more thorough explanation of the much debated "heresy" in Colossians from a theological perspective.

[253] See Mary E. Andrews, in "Paul, Philo, and the Intellectuals," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 53, no. 2 (1934): 152, where she cites significant sources in the debate as to the extent of Stoic influence on the apostle Paul.

[254] Whether it finds expression through interpretation and bias toward sacred text or historicity of influence, eisegesis is a risky endeavor. The same line that exists between synchronic and diachronic analysis exists here as well. That line is very fine at many points as we seek to understand the influence upon the apostle Paul and what if any prior knowledge he had concerning particular concepts. Potentially incorrect (though often very firm) determinations can be stated as fact though they lack any basis in actual knowledge. It is possible to read Paul looking for Stoic, Cynic or Aristotelean influence and miss the equally plausible reality of divine inspiration and original thought. The extensive influence of Hellenization upon every aspect of life, and a thoroughly Hellenized culture in existence at the time of Paul, makes the likelihood of influence difficult to dispute though the precise degree of that influence is indeterminable at best. It is wise to heed the counsel of Martin Hengel in, *The Pre-Christian Paul,* 27, "We need always to be cautious where we know so little." Additionally, familiarity with ideas and terminology does not by necessity imply thorough knowledge. A contextualized understanding of Paul allows for the distinct possibility that the apostle was familiar with terminology and ideology, but a direct line of thought that assumes thorough exposure to all of the teachings would be an unsupported leap of logic. It is likely a case of Paul effectively utilizing aspects of philosophical thought in order to connect with his hearers who were more thoroughly immersed in the aspects of Hellenized religion and the philosophical thought and products of the teachings prior to their conversion.

4.4.2.1 Stoic influence upon Paul

Whatever the scope of Paul's exposure to Stoicism, such exposure very likely predates his conversion experience.[255] Acts 21.39 records Paul's autobiographical reference to Tarsus in Cilicia as his city of birth, which Paul describes as an "important city." Tarsus was the location of a major university and the "center of Stoicism due to the fact that several Stoics were born there including Athenodorus, the confidant of Augustus Caesar."[256] The city of Paul's birth and the location for his formative education differ. The former is the city of Tarsus in Cilicia and the latter is Jerusalem, where he received training in the school of the Pharisees. If significant education occurred in Tarsus, Paul is silent regarding its nature and content.

While it is unfortunate that the exact teachings of the Pharisees in their training is not known, the historical record of the Jewish historian Josephus allows insight into similarities between the Pharisees and Stoics. In his quest for education, Josephus, himself an adherent to the principles espoused by the Pharisees, embarked on a study of the teachings of the Pharisees, Sadducees, and the Essenes earlier in his life. Desiring to choose the best of the three he opted for the Pharisees who were "of kin to the sect of the Stoics, as the Greeks call them."[257] Many Pharisaic teachings bear a remarkable similarity to the teachings of the Stoics, and it is understandable how an association seems apparent. Under closer scrutiny, the relationship between the two is "more to a certain basic ethical and religious attitude than to demonstrable direct influences."[258]

Much like in traditional Judaism of the Pharisees, the Stoic concept of "a single

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[255] Troels Engberg-Pedersen would posit that "we know nothing about how Paul might have become acquainted with ideas in Stoic ethics and politics. Nor do we know which particular brand of Stoicism he might have come across." Troels Engberg-Pedersen, "Stoicism in Philippians," 264.

[256] Smith, "Influences That Shaped the Theology of Paul," 159. Counter to this thought is the possibility of Paul's substantive tutelage and rearing in Jerusalem (Acts 22.3) rather than Tarsus per se. It is possible that the place of his birth, while entirely accurate, was utilized to legitimize Paul's Roman citizenship when it was expedient to do so rather than locate the place of his educative experience. Paul's autobiographical description of his education in Acts 22.3 places emphasis on the teaching received "at the feet of Gamaliel, educated strictly according to our ancestral law." Again, precision is elusive, but the extent of Hellenization would allow for the plausibility of Stoic influence on Paul's thought.

[257] Josephus, *The Life of Flavius Josephus*, trans. William Whiston (The Floating Press, 2008), 5. Accessed January 10, 2017, https://books.google.com/books?id=xRqCW7I9mtoC&printsec=frontcover&source=gbs_ge_summary_r&cad=0 – v=onepage&q=legates&f=false. Though for the limitations of influence see also Louis H. Feldman and Gohei Hata, eds., *Josephus, the Bible, and History* (Leiden: Brill, 1989), 407.

[258] Martin Hengel, *The 'Hellenization' of Judaea in the First Century after Christ*, trans. John Bowden (London: SCM Press, 1989), 51.

creator god"[259] diverged from traditional Hellenistic pantheism. "The Stoic Musonius Rufus held that a human "is the earthly image or copy of God, and only when a person becomes like God . . . could that person be virtuous and therefore happy."[260] Again, like traditional Judaism, Stoics believed fundamentally in a life that is lived in congruence with virtue, though the source of that virtue, the manner in which that virtue is achieved and expressed, and the ultimate τέλος of life, bear closer resemblance to Aristotelian philosophy (with some noted distinct differences) than traditional Judaism. A brief examination of the Stoic foundation for virtue can facilitate the understanding of the Stoic concept of character, the Stoic τέλος of the person of character, and the subsequent possibility of influence upon the apostle Paul.

Within the Stoic philosophy, a person is expected to live a virtuous life out of duty merely because the creator god requires such. The τέλος for the Stoic is, as has been noted for Aristotelian philosophy to be, the flourishing life of lived virtue referred to as εὐδαιμονιά. The expression of that εὐδαιμονιά for Stoics is not just according to the virtues but also in congruence with one's true self and the created order of nature. This life of virtue lived out in congruence with nature as the creator god has ordered it extends to the cognitive realm of thoughts about life and the actions of one's life and finds its expression in living in congruence with one's true self. These thoughts would also find agreement with the thoughts of the creator god about that life and those actions. This congruence is further expressed as a person's thoughts and actions begin to mirror the thoughts and actions of the creator god, with the resultant ethical and behavioral outcomes that those thoughts and actions may bring about. The living of a virtuous life and "in the activities of virtue . . . we quite literally think god's thoughts, insofar as they concern ourselves and our lives."[261]

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[259] John M. Cooper, *Pursuits of Wisdom: Six Ways of Life in Ancient Philosophy from Socrates to Plotinus* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton Univ. Press, 2012), 151. The Stoic monotheistic creator god may reflect more of a "Hellenistic face" and bear little resemblance in nature to the monotheistic Judaism's understanding of God.

[260] Wayne A. Meeks, *The Origins of Christian Morality* (New Haven: Yale Univ., 1993), 150.

[261] Ibid., 156. There is an interconnectedness in both Aristotelian and Stoic thought regarding the divine and the concept of the ψυχή or soul; corresponding to the essence of one's *true self* as identified in Stoic philosophical thought. Cooper gives an excellent and succinct explanation of this complex subject on 158ff. The Aristotelian concept of a divided ψυχή between practical wisdom, a cognitive virtue, and virtues of character is one of interconnectedness. They are intrinsically linked and interdependent in Aristotelian thought. However, such a dichotomy does not exist within a Stoic understanding of the ψυχή. For Stoics, one's true self and the concept of ψυχή run parallel. The ψυχή lives the life of virtue, and that virtue finds its locus in cognition. Any expression of virtue in life originates in the mind and comes about through cognitive awareness and subsequent action based on that awareness. It is through that cognitive training that the soul's capacity toward εὐδαιμονιά is advanced and with the "well-trained mind we will know

For the apostle Paul, the expression of the life of virtue lived out finds real fulfillment in the character transformation process as the mind of the follower of Christ is conformed to that of the triune God. Paul states in Rom. 12.2 that the follower of Christ is to resist "συσχηματίζεσθε τῷ αἰῶνι τούτῳ, ἀλλὰ μεταμορφοῦσθε τῇ ἀνακαινώσει τοῦ νοὸς[262] εἰς τὸ δοκιμάζειν ὑμᾶς τί τὸ θέλημα τοῦ θεοῦ, τὸ ἀγαθὸν καὶ εὐάρεστον καὶ τέλειον." It is through that transformation of the νοῦς that the follower of Christ can discern the will and desire of God; for those thoughts and desires of God are good, acceptable, and perfect. In his epistle to the church at Philippi, Paul encourages the believers there to "τοῦτο φρονεῖτε ἐν ὑμῖν ὃ καὶ ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ" (Phil. 2.5). It is in the thoughts and attitude of Christ and their resultant actions arising from such right attitudinal thinking that followers of Christ are to find a pattern for their behavior. Such behavioral patterns lead to the actions of Christ lived out in the lives of believers.

Within the *corpus Paulinum*, there is a discernable link between the locus of transformative activity in the νοῦς and the living of a life of virtue. This link is revealed in Paul's instruction to Ephesian believers to "ἀνανεοῦσθαι δὲ τῷ πνεύματι τοῦ νοὸς ὑμῶν καὶ ἐνδύσασθαι τὸν καινὸν ἄνθρωπον τὸν κατὰ θεὸν κτισθέντα ἐν δικαιοσύνῃ καὶ ὁσιότητι τῆς ἀληθείας" (Eph. 4.23, 24). The two elements of renewal in the spirit of the νοῦς, an interestingly passive process, and the action of putting on of the new self; which finds antithesis in the actions observed in the believers' former way of life, are inextricably linked in Paul's exhortation to living a life "ἐν τῷ Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ" (Eph. 3.10)

Similarly, though with distinct fundamental theological differences, the Stoics found that the singular source for virtuous behavior and character lay in the realm of the νοῦς as it related to cognition and cognitive advancement. The manner by which congruence with the natural order is discovered is by means of the reason and is achieved through cognitive (knowledge and belief) agency. It is solely through cognitive ability that a person can achieve virtue and live a virtuous life. This singular focus upon the cognitive aspect of reason is a departure, as noted, from that of Aristotle, who allowed for both the cognitive and the affective (desires, feelings, and human emotion) dimension of life to

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not to, and never will, behave in bad or wrong ways." (Cooper, "*Pursuits of Wisdom*," 161).

[262] Much can be noted about Paul's understanding of νοῦς and the role of the νοῦς in the overall conforming process to the image of Christ for the Christian. That attention is beyond the scope of this research. At this point, it is important to note the concomitant element of νοῦς in that it encompasses the φρονέω and the actions that result from thinking find their origins in the νοῦς but for the apostle Paul the νοῦς is far more than merely the locus of thought and the activity of thinking.

facilitate development into a person of virtue. "The Stoics conclude that human good consists in excellent rational activity, for a person can guide his actions by rational choice, no matter what misfortunes he may encounter."[263]

In Stoic philosophy, as the individual moves towards the teleological ideal of congruence between one's soul, the natural order, and the creator god-mind, there is a change in the disposition of the soul toward the ideal, which is the essence of character transformation. It is through the "cultivation of an ideal disposition of the soul (διάθεσις τῆς ψυχῆς), a disposition that may be called excellence (ἀρετή) or wisdom (σοθία)," [264] that character transformation occurs. This disposition could be compared to that of Aristotle, in which the disposition leads to particular actions and through the course of repetition, or habituation, a person's character is developed or transformed. Within Stoic philosophical understanding, "this transformed disposition will, insofar as it constitutes an internal cause, necessarily impact upon an individual's behavior and express itself in their actions."[265] It is "the disposition of one's soul (διάθεσις τῆς ψθχῆς) – one's character (ἦθος)" that is the foundation and "source of one's habitual way of behaving (ἔθος) and thus one's actions (ἔργα)."[266] As one progresses toward a teleological congruence with one's soul; relative to a consummate level of "thinking" the thoughts of the creator god and living in accordance with the natural order, subsequent excellence of character and related virtuous actions are the anticipated outcomes expressed in the goal of "happiness" or a contented, well-lived life.[267] The τέλος then becomes that flourishing life of εὐδαιμονιά; lived in cognitive and behavioral characterological congruence between ψυχή, the natural order, and the divine.

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[263] Marcia Homiak, "Moral Character, np."

[264] John Sellars, *The Art of Living: The Stoics on the Nature and Function of Philosophy*, 2nd ed. (London: Bloomsbury, 2009), 168.

[265] Ibid.

[266] Ibid., n2.

[267] As noted earlier, there is a sense in which the characterological development process has a circuitous element to it. As Sellars,169, notes, Stoic living "is *ethical* in the sense that it is concerned with one's character (ἠθος) which, in turn, determines one's habits (ἒθος)." Character generates actions and behavior and those habituated behaviors subsequently affect one's character. Transformation of character and behavior are inextricably linked. In Galen's *De Moribus*, he notes that "an individual's character (ἦθος) generates actions without further reflection and thus any substantial transformation of behavior will involve transforming one's character." Sellars, 122, n68. In other words, ἦθος both flows *from* ἒθος and leads *to* ἒθος that transform ἦθος. The ἒθος expressed in actions is not dependent upon circumstance since the ἦθος gives rise to the ἒθος, which is itself transformed through the transformation of ἠθος. It could be suggested that without a fundamental shift in ἠθος, the ἒθος observed merely reflects the true nature of the ψυχή. This suggestion would be held without argument by the apostle Paul (Rom. 1.18-32).

The potential Stoic influence on the theology of Paul presents itself through several possible streams. While all of them are plausible, none are definitive. Paul's exhortation to an outward life that is congruent with an inner, spiritual reality is in agreement with the Stoic call to an inner reality of ἦθος that leads to ἔθος, both of which are influenced by the cognitive realm. Paul "uses cognition language to link his theological propositions to his ethical admonitions. Moreover, the apostle's ethical exhortations were directly based on the message and known character of Christ which Paul proclaimed."[268]

For Paul, the disposition of one's ψυχή is fundamentally transformed as a follower of Christ (2 Cor. 5.17). This disposition is rightly oriented as the believer gives the attention and energy of the νοῦς to those things reflective of the ἦθος of God (Col. 3.1-4). Paul commands the Philippian believers that "ὅσα ἐστὶν ἀληθῆ, ὅσα σεμνά, ὅσα δίκαια, ὅσα ἁγνά, ὅσα προσφιλῆ, ὅσα εὔφημα, εἴ τις ἀρετὴ καὶ εἴ τις ἔπαινος, ταῦτα λογίζεσθε" [269] (Phil. 4.8). The cognitive realm, transformed and renewed through a conforming process to Christlikeness, leads to attitudes and actions in alignment with God and God's desires.

The characterological milieu in which the right ordering of νοῦς, ἦθος, and ἔθος occur for Paul is not the arena of philosophy as it is for the Stoic. Paul rejects the Stoic emphasis on the transformative influence of philosophy that brings one in congruence with the natural order and god (1 Cor. 1.20, 21; Col. 2.8). Paul finds the core transformative event of conversion as a follower of Christ to be the launching point for a conforming process that occurs through the events of life (Rom. 8.28-29).

The τέλος of life for Paul, as it is with the Stoics, is indeed a 'flourishing.' However, according to the apostle Paul, that εὐδαιμονιά is a life in which the εἰκών of Christ is 'μορφωθῇ' (Gal. 4.19) within the believer. The result of this transformation is the embodiment of "'πᾶν ὅ τι ἐὰν ποιῆτε ἐν λόγῳ ἢ ἐν ἔργῳ, πάντα ἐν ὀνόματι κυρίου Ἰησοῦ" (Col. 3.17). That transformed life, lived in that manner, is the essence of Paul's τέλος and understanding of εὐδαιμονιά, though it is of a fundamentally different orientation when

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[268] Lee S. Bond, "The Role of Cognitive Language in Pauline Theology and Ethics," *Tyndale Bulletin* 58 no. 2 (2007): 317.

[269] Within Stoic philosophy there is the concept of the λόγος and its cognate, used here by the apostle Paul translated as "to reason." The complex concept as it relates to Stoic philosophy is beyond the scope of this research. However, the potential impact of the Stoic λόγος upon the theology of the apostle Paul is noted here. According to Edelstein, this λόγος, or reason, is the "principle of growth." Ludwig Edelstein, *The Meaning of Stoicism* (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1966), 32. As a principle of growth for the believers, such reasoning, in conjunction with the internalization of the ἦθος of God, leads to the resultant ἔθος and ἔργα of Christ himself in their lives (Eph. 5.1-2).

compared to that of the Stoics.

4.4.2.2 Aristotelian influence upon Paul[270]

For Aristotle, a person's character is the summation of action.[271] These actions "have to do with a person's enduring traits; that is, with the attitudes, sensibilities, and beliefs that somehow affect how a person sees, acts, and indeed lives."[272] Within Aristotle's framework of ἦθος development, the teleological goal of a person's life and ἦθος is the concept of εὐδαιμονιά, understood as that fulfillment of the intended ideal purpose for the life of the human, lived with excellence or virtue.[273] This ἦθος "produces plans that express an overall unity of ends in a life."[274] For Aristotle, this "unity of ends" that comprises the τέλος of εὐδαιμονιά involves a coherence and congruence of ἦθος, action, and existence.

It is precisely at the point of the Aristotelian concept of virtue,[275] or ἀρετή, that rational, reasoned choices (προαίρεσις)[276] are enacted upon and impact a person's

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[270] As noted earlier, the philosophical teachings of Hellenism pervaded culture, and while there is no textual evidence to which one can turn with precision, there is every plausible potential for Paul to be at least familiar with Aristotelian thoughts regarding character and co-opt those teachings to his advantage. That argument will not be recapitulated here. Rather, Aristotle's understanding of character, transformation, and the goal of such are examined with an application to Paul's understanding as evidenced in the focal Colossian pericope.

[271] See Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1114b1ff.

[272] Nancy Sherman, *The Fabric of Character: Aristotle's Theory of Virtue* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), 1.

[273] Aristotle's understanding of virtue extends beyond morality alone though it is inclusive of such. It is a coalescence of both the rational aspect of consideration of life and the actualization of that rational activity in an excellent, or virtuous manner in alignment with the highest fulfillment of created purpose. For the follower of Christ, it could be equated to living in such a way that the expression of the "thoughts and intentions of the heart" are in alignment with the rational activity that leads toward every word and deed being done as though the person of Jesus does them. For it is Jesus who is the believer's model for virtue, both rational and behavioral.

[274] Sherman, *The Fabric of Character*, 58.

[275] See Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* VII 1106b36-1107a3 for a fuller explanation of the virtuous character. For Aristotle, virtue is essential for the fulfillment of the τέλος. In this case, it is not the same as the opposite character trait of vice since virtue, taken to the extreme, can become vice. For this research, as it relates to character transformation, the discussion of virtue is limited to that which is morally desirable for the biblical understanding of the τέλος of a person's life, as the apostle Paul expresses it in the focal pericope of Colossians 3.1-17. Similarly, the discussion of vice is limited to that which is the morally deficient aspect of virtue and is characterologically negative in development towards a desired τέλος.

[276] The term προαίρεσις is used by Aristotle to explain the idea of "choice" as it relates to moral virtue and ethical living. It is, according to Aristotle, "τῆς ἀρετῆς γὰρ καὶ τοῦ ἤθοθς ἐν τῇ προαιρέσει τὸ κύριον," Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, VIII.13 (1163a22-23) and translated as the "decisive factor in virtue and character." Charles Chamberlain, "The Meaning of *Prohairesis* in Aristotle's Ethics," *Transactions of*

character as the repetition of those virtuous choices leads to ἔθος.[277] "A person becomes virtuous by training, by forming good habits. 'Habit (ἔθος) makes character (ἦθος)' became a cliché in Greek moral philosophy."[278]

For Aristotle, habit is not merely a settled conditioned response to repetition of actions or choices but a ἕξις – best understood as a state of equilibrium of the soul.[279] For the soul, this state of being in equilibrium is not some resting state of homeostasis. The soul that expresses ἕξις is always engaged in both having and holding this equilibrium through the continued development of the ἕξις of moral virtue.[280] Thus, ἕξις is not a passive condition, but one that actively involves the integration of the rational and affective elements of life into an ἀρετὴν ἐνέργεια.[281] Aristotle describes ἀρετὴν ἐνέργεια as "a technical term denoting the actualization" and the "fulfillment of a being's total potential and not merely to its actions."[282] Thus, the ἀρετὴν ἐνέργεια lead to a state of equilibrium that is both active and passive.

The complex concept of ἕξις, as it is realized through ἀρετὴν ἐνέργεια, also speaks to the agency of character transformation and its apparent circular nature of acquisition. Transformation of character is both actively acquired and passively infused. It is actively acquired through the concomitant active pursuit of virtue in congruence with reason (with integration and actualization via ἀρετὴν ἐνέργεια). At the same time, it is passively "received" through the equilibrium of the soul in ἕξις. The equilibrium of the soul in ἕξις is achieved through appropriate habituation. Thus, the transformation of character comprises an ongoing formative process that involves holding the tension

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the American Philological Association, 114 (1984): 147.

[277] As noted earlier, the converse is also applicable. The repetitive choice for either virtuous (virtue) or vicious (vice) actions produce character in keeping with the choices.

[278] Meeks, *The Origins of Christian Morality*, 7.

[279] The bi-fold nature of Aristotle's understanding of soul: passions, faculties, and states of character, is noted here. A fuller discussion of the topic is beyond the scope of this research. See *Nicomachean Ethics* II.5. See also Richard Stalley, "Education and the State," *A Companion to Aristotle*, ed. Georgios Anagnostopoulos (West Sussex, UK: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), 570, where he states, "The human soul, in Aristotle's view, contains two parts. One of these has reason in itself, while the other, although not intrinsically rational, is capable of listening to reason. To be a good human being requires the virtues of both parts."

[280] Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics,* II.4.

[281] See *Nicomachean Ethics,* X.6 (1177a12).

[282] Devettere, *Introduction to Virtue Ethics*, 45-6.

between acquired and infused virtues and comes about developmentally through habituation.[283] As Sherman notes, "…character states are acquired through practice of corresponding actions."[284]

For the apostle Paul, the process of character development and transformation finds its true nexus at the point of conversion. The Pauline understanding of the process of sanctification is grounded in the fact that the spiritual nature of a person undergoes radical transformation upon conversion (2 Cor. 5.17). Perhaps one of the most explicit examples of Paul's attitude toward habituation can be seen in his hortatory admonition to "put off" and "put on" (Eph. 4. 17-32; Col. 3.5-16) as it relates to vices and virtues, respectively. [285] This transformation is a Pauline "re-habituating" of the soul based on a new model of character. The contrast for Paul is well-defined. The habituated activities of life prior to conversion are "the things in which you once walked" (Col. 3.7). These habituated activities stand in opposition to the character traits in 3.12-16 which have been put on with conversion. While that essential spiritual nature is new, there still exists the "attachment" to the habituated passions and faculties of the pre-converted life. In order to move towards that Christ-modeled ἕξις and equilibrium of soul, those pre-converted habituated passions

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[283] Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* II.1 (1103a24-25). See also *Nicomachean Ethics,* I.7 (1097b24-1098a4). The process of habituation, as discussed by Sherman in "The Habituation of Character," *Aristotle's Ethics: Critical Essays* is both a potentially mechanical theory of rote practice and the non-rational training of desires, whereby the cognitive and rational capacities are not required. However, according to Chamberlain, it is not a completely rote process. "The term translated as 'habituation' or 'accustoming' (ἐθισμός) derives from the verb 'to accustom' (ἐθιζω), which in turn derives from 'custom' or 'habit' (ἔθος). This ἔθος is related to 'character' or 'disposition' (ἦθος), as Aristotle notes in Eth. Nic. 1103a17-18. It is important to note that in this context ἐθιζω should be understood not as an unthinking habit but rather as a conscious learning process" (Chamberlain, "The Meaning of *Prohairesis* in Aristotle's Ethics,"151). While the desire is at the heart of the motivational disposition toward εὐδαιμονιά, προαίρεσις is "the process by which the orders of reason are brought upon desire so as to change it." (Ibid.). It could be suggested that it is in this προαίρεσις, with the τέλος of εὐδαιμονιά, that ἐθισμός brings about ἕξις reflective in its ἀρετὴν ἐνέργεια, which finds realization in ἔθικὴ ἀρετὴν and the transformation of character.

[284] Nancy Sherman, "The Habituation of Character," in *Aristotle's Ethics: Critical Essays*, ed. Nancy Sherman (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 1999), 231.

[285] Paul adopts the use of virtue and vice lists (1 Cor. 5.9-11; 6.9-10; Rom. 1.29-31; 13.13; Gal. 5.19-23; Phil. 4.8; Eph. 4.17-19; 5.3-5, and Col. 3. 5-8) and while there are debatable elements of similarities to Stoic and other such lists, it is Paul's Old Testament grounding that provides the most reliable source for Paul's use. See Eduard Schweizer, "Traditional Ethical Patterns in the Pauline and post-Pauline Letters and Their Development (lists of vices and house-tables)," in *Text and Interpretation: Studies in the New Testament Presented to Matthew Black*, eds. Ernest Best and R. McL. Wilson (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1979) and George Eldon Ladd, *A Theology of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993. Ladd, 556, presents Paul's reliance upon the Old Testament and the primary source of his strongest influence as an issue "beyond question," as well as noting "clear evidences of Hellenistic influence," 557. See also Victor Furnish, *Theology and Ethics in Paul* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2009), J. B. Lightfoot, *Saint Paul's Epistle to the Philippians*, 270ff, and Rudolf Schnackenberg, *The Moral Teaching of the New Testament* (London: Burns and Oates, 1965), 303ff where they opt for a more Stoic based dependence for Paul's use of virtue and vice lists.

become the object of "putting off" (Col. 3.8) as one pursues the active/passive ἀρετὴν ἐνέργεια of rightly oriented virtue through the "putting on" (Col. 3.10) of the Christ-modeled virtues integral to the renewal process.

One could posit that within Pauline theology there are shadows of Aristotle's bi-fold nature of the soul in evidentiary passages such as Rom. 7.4-5, 15-21. However, this Aristotelian bifurcated view of the soul is negated by Paul's Judaic understanding of the "soul" as "the whole person."[286] Paul discards the idea that the simple "rehabilitation" of the person through habituation that comes from training and self-discipline (1 Cor. 9.24-25) yields a genuine transformation of character. Rather, Paul sees such habituation and training as a radical "realignment" between the *manner* of life expected for one who is a follower of Christ and the *reality* of their new life in Christ.[287] This congruence of alignment finds agreement in the realm of habituation of virtue outside of the *corpus Paulinum* as well (2 Pet. 1.5-8) where the writer encourages the formation of a life of ever-increasing virtue, built upon the foundation of the transformative salvation experience in Christ.

While the apostle Paul departs from Aristotle's bifurcated view of the soul, there is an apparent Aristotelian influence in the Pauline exhortation in the focal pericope of Colossians 3 where Paul expresses the unified lived expression of a teleological goal that involves both the *physical* and *cognitive* realms.[288] Both Aristotle and the apostle Paul view the affective and rational elements as essential for the transformation of character and the actualization of the teleological goal though they differ on the source and agency of that transformation.

The apostle Paul and Aristotle share a fundamental predisposition towards character transformation yet diverge in a way that is significant and speaks to the issue of

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[286] Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle*, 76. See also נֶפֶשׁ (4) in Brown, Francis, Samuel Rolles Driver, and Charles Augustus Briggs, *Enhanced Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977), 660.

[287] The literary construct of many of the Pauline epistles is such that the indicative, doctrinal teaching precedes the imperatival expected and resultant behavioral implications. See e.g. Rom. 1-11; 12-16; Eph. 1-3, 4-6; Col. 1-2; 3-4. While there are exceptions where theology and ethical expectations are interwoven, as in the letter to the Philippians, one can find an indicative/imperative pattern in much of the Pauline material.

[288] Paul introduces the hortatory material of the pericope to the Colossian believers with an exhortation that is a resultant expectation that Εἰ οὖν συνηγέρθητε τῷ Χριστῷ, they are to respond with behavioral and dispositional changes that are in keeping with their new lived experience of spiritual reality. These two imperatival commands are to τὰ ἄνω ζητεῖτε and τὰ ἄνω φρονεῖτε, respectively. Paul further expounds upon these two foundational expressions of lived reality in the remainder of the focal pericope.

human/divine agency in the life of the follower of Christ. In the focal pericope of Colossians 3.1-17, Paul writes to believers whose locus of spiritual existence is now in the realm of "συνηγέρθητε τῷ Χριστῷ" (Col. 3.1-4). Their theological reality is one of identity with Christ, and their positional posture reflects a new virtuous sphere of existence made possible because of their new life in Christ. There is a "divine enabling" that comes about because they "συνηγέρθητε τῷ Χριστῷ" (Col. 3.1), and that act of raising is one in which the Colossian believers were passive participants, brought about "ἀφ' ἧς ἡμέρας ἠκούσατε καὶ ἐπέγνωτε τὴν χάριν τοῦ θεοῦ ἐν ἀληθείᾳ" (Col. 1.6). Paul writes to people who, prior to their conversion experience, were not virtuous. The Colossians' virtue comes as a result of their embedded relationship with Christ and not from prior experience. They possess an imparted virtue because of that relationship with Christ. The reality of that imparted virtue has a resultant expectation of corresponding behavior. The Colossian believers are *participants* in the development and transformation of their character, but in Pauline theology, they are not the *source* of that transformation. Aristotle's predisposition in his *Nicomachean Ethics* was to write "to people who were already virtuous, intending to help them to reflect on the common moral experience they shared with their peers . . . to develop a self-conscious and coherent ethical outlook: to reinforce reflectively the lives they were already inclined to lead." [289]

While there is a commonality of communal interdependence with both Paul and Aristotle, the similarity between the two unravels here at the point of hortatory intent. Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* "did not take the form of exhortations to behave properly."[290] Aristotle's view is that virtue was already present in the lives of his audience and they did not need exhortation to bring it to lived reality. Paul recognizes that virtuous potential now exists as unrealized reality within the community of Christ-followers because of the divine agency of source and their unity with Christ. While Paul recognizes the 'already'[291] nature of the theological reality inherent in an ethical predisposition of those "συνηγέρθητε τῷ Χριστῷ" (Col. 3.1), he is also keenly aware of that 'not yet' aspect that is tied to the issue of divine/human agency and responsibility. The Christ-followers are provided a 'passively received' spiritual reality as a result of divine agency (Col. 3.1). It is

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[289] Meeks, *The Origins of Christian Morality*, 7.

[290] Ibid.

[291] As noted previously, see Andrew T. Lincoln's discussion of the already/not yet concept is his excellent work, *Paradise Now and Not Yet*.

a reality rooted in the resurrection of Christ from the dead and is now the basis of a responsibility to live in congruence with this new spiritual reality in Christ. However, the onus of actively living out the ethical reality still resides with the Christ-followers.[292] Hence, Paul can state the reality of lives "κέκρυπται σὺν τῷ Χριστῷ ἐν τῷ θεῷ" (Col. 3.3) yet counsel believers to "Νεκρώσατε οὖν τὰ μέλη τὰ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς" (Col. 3.5). Paul's ethical lists do "not contain a merely radicalized moral admonition."[293] The spiritual reality of transformed lives allows the possibility of moral life in keeping with that spiritual reality.

As noted earlier, a central tenet for Aristotle's understanding of the formation and transformation of a moral individual is that "individuals do not become moral agents except in the relationships, the transactions, the habits and reinforcements, the special use of language and gestures that together constitute life in community."[294] While Aristotle views the locus of transformation as the *polis*, the apostle Paul views that locus as the newly created community of Christ-followers.

This idea of the commonality of communal interdependence exists within both Paul and Aristotle, and it is possible Aristotle's understanding influenced the apostle in his development of contextual responsibility for transformation.

> Aristotle was among the first to analyze the educative function of communal practice in the formation of virtue. To develop character that was virtuous, then, a child had to grow up within a moral and educative community. Aristotle, accordingly, focuses his attention in the *Nichomachean Ethics* on the kinds of relationships that are common both to the household and to the city-state as a whole. The various shapes that friendships could take occupy a large part of the discussion.[295]

Additionally, the Mediterranean worldview previously discussed places primary emphasis on the 'group' and responsibility of an individual within and to the 'group good.' As a product of such a worldview, it is plausible for Paul to see aspects of the

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[292] A theological argument could be made that even the *motivation* and the *ability* to live out the ethical reality required of one who has been raised with Christ has God as the source for that motivation and ability. The theological tension between the sovereignty of God and the responsibility of humankind is likely to remain unresolved as humanity can at best, "βλέπομεν γὰρ ἄρτι δι' ἐσόπτρου ἐν αἰνίγματι" (1 Cor. 13.12). It is the perspective of this research that the tension is slightly relieved, though not eliminated in its entirety, by an understanding of the stewardship of responsibility that arises through mutual divine/human relationship by those who are ἐν Χριστῷ that in no way diminishes either the sovereignty or the foreknowledge of God.

[293] Eduard Schweizer, "Traditional Ethical Patterns in Pauline and post Pauline Letters and Their Development," in *Text and Interpretation: Studies in the New Testament Presented to Matthew Black*. Edited by Ernest Best and R. McL. Wilson (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1979), 200.

[294] Meeks, *The Origins of Christian Morality*, 8.

[295] Ibid., 7-8.

transformation of character as the interdependent responsibility of the new formed Colossian church. Within the Colossian context, the apostle Paul encourages not just individual responsibility but also includes the role of the greater Colossian community in the development and transformation of character.[296]

This group inclusion in the exhortations toward character transformation is noted especially in Colossians 3.11-16 as Paul redefines the source of group cohesion that transcends gender, societal, and racial barriers and brings together a newly formed group reality. With a spiritual demarcation that shatters previously held "us-them" relationships of a physical realm Paul writes "ὅπου οὐκ ἔνι Ἕλλην καὶ Ἰουδαῖος, περιτομὴ καὶ ἀκροβυστία, βάρβαρος, Σκύθης, δοῦλος, ἐλεύθερος, ἀλλὰ [τὰ] πάντα καὶ ἐν πᾶσιν Χριστός." (Col. 3.11). This new group inclusion is a reality centered on Christ with group responsibility (Col. 3.12-16) to facilitate the transformation of character on a level not seen in Aristotle.

The pervasive worldview influence of Stoic and Aristotelian teachings is undeniable for the Hellenistic context in which we locate the apostle Paul within his historical and cultural milieu. The extent to which Hellenism and specific teachings directly influence Paul has a much less undisputable conclusion. Plausible parallels can be made between Paul, the Stoics, and Aristotle. "Paul could well be speaking to his audience in a way that the promulgation of Aristotelian and Stoic ethics, even at popular and non-specialist levels, had made familiar."[297] This possibility does not diminish the divine inspiration of the exhortation. A case for the opposite can be made. The ability of the apostle to co-opt popular thought and philosophy in such a way that facilitates the receptivity of a new theological and ethical reality demonstrates a spiritual capability that surpasses any level of human ability.

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[296] In Colossians 3.9 there is the command, "μὴ ψεύδεσθε εἰς ἀλλήλους," with the rationale for such a change in behavior in Colossians 3.10 and the new self with which they have been clothed. The communal language continues throughout, especially as Paul begins his list of virtues that are part of that new self's clothing. In Colossians 3.15-16 there is the thematic imagery of the singularity of the one body of believers (ἐν ἑνὶ σώματι) and the communal responsibility to "ἐν πάσῃ σοφίᾳ διδάσκοντες καὶ νουθετοῦντες ἑαυτούς," concluding with the community aspect of worship, practiced "ψαλμοῖς ὕμνοις ᾠδαῖς πνευματικαῖς ἐν [τῇ] χάριτι ᾄδοντες ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις ὑμῶν τῷ θεῷ."

[297] Philip F. Esler, "Paul and Stoicism: Romans 12 as a Test Case," *New Testament Studies* 50 (2004): 118.

4.4.3 The conversion of Paul and his interaction with the church at Colossae

The biblical account of the pre-conversion life of Saul of Tarsus is sparse, with an introductory reference to his presence at the stoning of Stephen in Acts 8 being the only example, other than Paul's recollection of his pre-conversion life and behavior. "Paul was destined to become the prototypical convert in the imagination of western Christianity, but his own comments about the radical change in his life are few, and each is embedded in a highly rhetorical passage."[298] From that brief introduction regarding Paul's presence in Acts 8, there is only the statement regarding Paul's intense persecution of the Jews who converted to Christianity; related later by the apostle in Phil. 3. It is on such an excursion of persecution for the sake of תּוֹרָה and Israel's covenant relationship with God that Paul experiences a dramatic conversion through an encounter with the risen Christ (Acts 9.1-9; Gal. 1.15-16). The result of that unparalleled experience becomes the driving focus of Paul's interactions with both Jew and Gentile for the rest of his recorded life.

The historical and evidentiary reality that his encounter with Christ transformed Paul's life is a matter of biblical documentation. However, as that change relates to character and transformation of character, the question exists; did Paul's conversion from Judaism to Christ-follower mean a requisite change in his system of moral praxis and beliefs? According to Meeks, it is not an easy question to answer.[299] Paul's value systems change such that he devalued what was held as previously essential to his relationship with God; trading it for what he considers from a post-conversion understanding to be superior to anything prior to that transformational experience.[300] Paul's understanding of righteousness changes from one measured "primarily in terms of covenant distinctiveness, and from a competitive practice within Judaism which sought to outdo other Jews in the degree and quality of its Torah-keeping."[301] His "zeal" for the תּוֹרָה becomes superseded by a zeal for Christ. The focal point of character transformation for Paul becomes the person of Christ rather than the covenantal pillar of תּוֹרָה. His essential morality does not change; rather, upon conversion, it becomes infused with a spiritual reality previously unknown to Paul. It becomes an internal Christ-Spirit empowered righteousness and morality rather

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[298] Meeks, *The Origins of Christian Morality*, 19.

[299] Ibid., 20.

[300] Phil. 3.4-9.

[301] Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle*, 350.

than external morality based on conforming to תּוֹרָה. It is *from* such "zeal" for Torah-based covenantal righteousness and that form of ". . . Judaism, as it called forth this zeal, that Paul was converted on the Damascus Road."[302]

The point at which the life of the apostle Paul and the nascent Christian church in Colossae converge is unlike the majority of the other epistles. The prevailing opinion of New Testament scholars is that Paul neither started the church at Colossae nor did he ever visit the church on one of his missionary journeys nor does he allude to such a visit in the epistles themselves. Paul's connection to the church at Colossae arises from interaction with the slave Onesimus, Paul's relationship with Philemon, and the information about the church provided to him by Epaphras.[303] The Colossians, in turn, are to receive news about Paul via Tychicus and Onesimus (Col. 4.7-9) whom Paul is sending to them for this express purpose. However, Reicke makes a compelling argument from deduction that while the apostle did not start the church at Colossae, there are references to "personal relationships to Paul found in Philemon and Colossians" and that such references are indicative of the fact that people within the church "knew the apostle from an earlier stay among them."[304]

The dramatic conversion of the apostle Paul brought about an understanding of imputed righteousness that Paul readily confessed was not his own (Phil. 3.9) This view of imputed righteousness (2 Cor. 5.21) radically transformed Paul's perception of the motivating power behind ethical behavior as well as the teleological goal to which that behavior moves a person in life and character. The multicultural exposure Paul experienced

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[302] Ibid., 353.

[303] Onesimus is mentioned only in Philemon 10, as someone "whose father I have become" during Paul's imprisonment. The general scholarly consensus is that Paul is referring to a spiritual conversion of Onesimus and Paul takes the essential responsibility of being Onesimus' spiritual father. Philemon is mentioned in the letter that is addressed to him and Paul references the church that meets in his house (Philemon 2). Several of the same names are mentioned in both Colossians and Philemon (Epaphras, Demas, Archippus) within the geographical context that would suggest the ebb and flow of relationships between the churches within the area and common knowledge of leadership. Paul's knowledge of the Colossian church as it is recorded in the epistle comes second hand from the witness of Epaphras.

[304] Bo Reicke, "The Historical Setting of Colossians," 433. Reicke makes a case for the visitation of the apostle to the church during the apostle's third missionary journey. If Paul wrote the epistle from Rome (the most likely scenario given the detailed interlocution and deductive reasoning by the majority of New Testament scholars), then the dating of such imprisonment and the specific itinerary of the third missionary journey make Reicke's conclusion at the very least plausible. The devastating earthquake in the area around Colossae in 61 A.D. and the lack of any mention in the letter to that cataclysmic event leads to unsatisfactory answers to the questions surrounding the date of writing unless somehow the apostle wrote the epistle prior to that earthquake and early on in his captivity. The statement by Paul in Colossians 2.1 linking the Colossian believers to the Laodiceans with ὅσοι οὐχ ἑόρακαν τὸ πρόσωπόν μου ἐν σαρκί seems to lead to the conclusion that Paul had not visited the church in Laodicea nor at Colossae but does not discount his knowledge of the events and struggles of the church from the witness of Epaphras (Col. 1.7-9; 4.12-13).

in his life allows several points of crossover connection with the Colossian church. It is precisely at this point of imputed righteousness that Paul addresses the Colossian converts. The Colossian believers who received the Pauline epistle were likely exposed to integral elements of the Jewish faith from the Phrygian Jews of the area. It is entirely possible that some of those Jews were themselves part of the makeup of the early Colossian church. "In Colossians Paul expects a fair degree of familiarity with Judaism and its practices, as well as a thirst for knowledge and understanding of the mystery of salvation unveiled and enacted in Christ."[305] As Paul addresses the Colossian believers, the richness of his Jewish heritage finds expression in the exhortation to "περιπατῆσαι ἀξίως τοῦ κυρίου" (Col. 1.10).

While "the Torah is not in focus in this letter,"[306] the internalized elements of תּוֹרָה are seen as one considers the moral commands given to the Colossians in Paul's lists of vices and virtues.[307] It is Paul's premise that the new life "ἐν Χριστῷ" possessed by the Colossians predicates a change of heart and mind towards behaviors that typified their pre-conversion lifestyle. Paul's Jewish foundation of a moral life finds direct application for the Colossian believers who would have heard such commands with at least some degree of familiarity. The lives of the Colossian believers are inextricably linked and identified with Christ, "ἡ ζωὴ ὑμῶν" (Col. 3.4). With Paul's introductory statement in the focal pericope, "Εἰ οὖν συνηγέρθητε τῷ Χριστῷ" (Col. 3.1), there is the expectation that their lives are to be lived in a manner that reflects such change.

> Nothing is more characteristic of that part of their ethics which early Christians absorbed from their Jewish roots than the notion that God, imaged as a person, wants people to behave in a certain way and takes measures to enable and encourage them to do so.[308]

It is that imaged person of God that the Colossians are both to emulate and into whose image they are experiencing ongoing renewal (Col. 3.10). Having been rescued from the power of darkness, they have been transferred into the kingdom of Christ (Col. 1.13).

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[305] Witherington III, *The Letters to Philemon, the Colossians, and the Ephesians*, 35.

[306] Heikki Räisänen, *Paul and the Law*, Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 29 (Tübingen: Mohr, 1987), 205.

[307] Paul continues an internalized תּוֹרָה in much the same manner as Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount. In Colossians 3.5-9, one can find referential internalization of several of the commands in the Decalogue. The Decalogue commands regarding idolatry (Ex. 20.3), adultery (Ex. 20.13), murder (20.15), and lying (20.16) find both effective and affective parallel in Paul's list of vices that should be "put to death" and "put off."

[308] Meeks, *The Origins of Christian Morality,* 151.

It is Christ who is the "εἰκὼν τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ ἀοράτου" (Col. 1.15), and it is "θεὸς ἐν Χριστῷ" whose virtues are to be lived out through them and after whom they are now to pattern their lives in behavior, morality, and character.[309]

The Colossian believers would have heard Paul's epistle from their particular dominant worldviews as he addresses the theoretical issue of a syncretized "blend of Jewish and Hellenistic teachings" that appeared to be taking root within the church and which led to the writing of the epistle.[310] Essential elements of each worldview are noted; such as the emphasis within Judaism to the keeping of תּוֹרָה (Col. 2.13-17); the mystery cults and their "special knowledge" that allowed access to the divine life (Col. 2.2-3), as well as particular distinctives of Greek philosophy itself, expressed in ascetic behavior (Col. 2.18, 21-23).[311] All three of these groups are likely represented within the congregation that received the epistle from Paul, and they wrestled with issues carried forward from their pre-conversion life into their new life "ἐν Χριστῷ."

Within the focal pericope of Colossians 3.1-17, Paul redefines humanity from the embedded, locative perspective of "ἐν Χριστῷ." The imagery presented to the Colossian believers in this redefined humanity is one of a "νέον ἄνθρωπον" (Col. 3.9-10). Paul's fundamental message to the Colossians is that "you must let that redefined humanity determine your path to holiness, rather than hoping to attain that goal by taking upon yourselves the regulations of Torah."[312] From the Hellenistic perspective, this ongoing renewal process is no longer tied to any mystery cult or religion based on special knowledge or ascetic practices that reflected a transformed character. Instead, the

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[309] Ibid., 159.

[310] D.A. Carson and Doug Moo, *An Introduction to the New Testament*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005), 524. The exact nature of the "Colossian heresy" is the subject of much debate. According to J.J. Gunther in "St. Paul's Opponents and Their Background: A Study of Apocalyptic and Jewish Sectarian Teachings," *Novum Testamentum Supplement* (Leiden: Brill, 1973), 3-4, in the 20th C alone there were over forty-four viewpoints on the identity of the doctrinal deviants. Reference is made to further reading on the topic, especially of note is Clinton Arnold's thorough work, *The Colossian Syncretism: the interface between Christianity and folk belief at Colossae* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1996). For a counter argument as to the questionable existence of any heretical group in Colossae, see Morna Hooker, "Were There False Teachers in Colossae," *Christ and Spirit in the New Testament*, eds. B. Lindars and S.S. Smalley (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1973), 315-31. The essence of Hooker's argument is that no formalized heretical group existed in Colossae. Paul wrote to encourage the nascent Christians in the church to resist the cultural influence upon those within the church and from those within the church that would still have recent ties to such a lifestyle. Her argument is not without merit and consideration given the state of Gnostic development in the proposed timeframe of Pauline authorship (in light of missing references to environmental issues like the earthquake which would have been expected given the gravity of the resultant damage).

[311] House, "Heresies in the Colossian Church," 54.

[312] Wright, *Paul: In Fresh Perspective*, 117.

Colossian believers hear that "ἐν Χριστῷ" they experience a new embedded relationship of life "τὸν ἀνακαινούμενον εἰς ἐπίγνωσιν κατ᾽ εἰκόνα τοῦ κτίσαντος αὐτόν" (Col. 3.10).

Paul deconstructs the Mediterranean worldview that defined relationships based on race and gender (Col. 3.11). The "us-them" barrier that defines and defends one's collective identity transcends human familial/cultural distinctives and becomes a reconstructed culture grounded in the pneumatologically-based familial embedded relationship with Christ alone because "τὰ πάντα καὶ ἐν πᾶσιν Χριστός" (Col. 3.11). The "us-them" distinction becomes drawn between those who are within the spiritual family of "God the father and Christ the son" and those who are outside of that family. The weight of the impact of this transformation of worldview is difficult to overstate. Those who were formally "outsiders" and potentially hostile to each other are now, by virtue of the embedded relationship "ἐν Χριστῷ," to be treated as Christ has treated them (Col. 3.12-16). Characterological behavior that was once tolerated or even expected is now viewed from the perspective of the character of Christ. The delineation between pure and impure, sacred and profane is redefined based on the dyadic identity "ἐν Χριστῷ."[313]

In the face of such a radical shift of worldview, not everything is opposed to their former way of living. As within the Mediterranean, Hellenistic, and Aristotelian culture, the Colossian church hears that there is a collective, shared responsibility for the transformation of character and it is shaped within the community (Col. 3.11-16). The common goal toward which they are all moving and to which they are to help one another move is that τέλος of life which is now defined as a radical transformation of character such that "πᾶν ὅ τι ἐὰν ποιῆτε ἐν λόγῳ ἢ ἐν ἔργῳ, πάντα ἐν ὀνόματι κυρίου Ἰησοῦ, εὐχαριστοῦντες τῷ θεῷ πατρὶ δι᾽ αὐτοῦ" (Col. 3.17).

4.5 Conclusion

The rich cultural and religious socio-historical context *into* which the apostle Paul wrote to the church at Colossae is only matched by the rich cultural and religious socio-historical context *from* which he lived and wrote. The individual aspects of each of the various contexts come together to form the right backdrop and preparation for the Colossian church to receive the epistle from the apostle Paul and to hear his words as he intended them to be heard. The confluence of Jewish, Hellenistic, and Mediterranean

[313] See Malina, *The New Testament World*, 36-7.

worldviews provide understanding into the rationale for Paul's epistle to the Colossians; especially as one considers his exhortation to a life that reflects a character both transformed and being transformed.

For Paul, the ethical commands of תּוֹרָה are not the motivation and means to receive righteousness nor are they reflective of a covenant identity (Col. 2.11-14), but such motivation and means come through the Colossians' new identity with Christ and Paul is committed to communicating this to the Colossian believers. The commitment, ". . . which emerges again and again in Paul's writings, is that he wants to teach his churches not just how to behave but why to behave like that."[314]

The Colossian believers have new lives "ἐν Χριστῷ" and their lives are to reflect that spiritual reality; especially as they come from such pervasive cultural and religious influences. The Colossian believers are now recipients of knowledge in Christ that is on a level that transcends and nullifies the "secret knowledge" of mystery cults and pagan religions of their Hellenistic world (Col. 2.1-4).

The commands to "put off" a character saturated with vice and to "put on" a character permeated with virtue find their mooring not in Aristotelian philosophy of ἀρετή and a τέλος of εὐδαιμονιά as Hellenistic philosophy would define it. Paul completely reframes the issue of ἀρετή within the context of identity in Christ that allows for a different wellspring of motivation. There are ἀρετὴν ἐνέργεια that reflect a προαίρεσις that stem from a motivation towards a redefined τέλος of εὐδαιμονιά expressed in attitude and behavior that reflect the character and nature of Christ (Col. 3.17). Paul radically changes the teleological target: instead of the τέλος of εὐδαιμονία being the good and flourishing life, Paul gave a Christological τέλος in the character of Jesus as the highest "good" and chief aim of all behavior. That is how the Colossians would have heard and understood him. They are rooted in their identity "ἐν Χριστῷ" and that identity is the framework for the new worldview which they have been given, and that is how Paul speaks to them. "Becoming a Christian meant assuming a new order of human existence that capacitated the virtuous life. Thus, Paul can speak to the readers of their 'stripping off the old human being' and 'putting to death/ the 'members' of one's body that are 'on the earth,' that is, the vices that corrupted their former selves."[315] For Paul, such a goal is actualized through

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[314] Wright, *Paul: In Fresh Perspective*, 160.

[315] Wilson, *The Hope of Glory*, 44.

that ongoing, circular process of ἐθισμός that brings about ἕξις from which the internal and external fruit of ἔθική ἀρετήν and resultant transformation of character are allowed to develop.

The question of Jewish and Hellenistic influence upon Paul is only debatable to the degree to which that influence is observed. Paul is a product *of* but not confined *to* his worldview context of origin. Paul's contextualization of multiple forms of influence transforms common cultural norms and redefines them in a relevant form for a people Paul believes "παρελάβετε τὸν Χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν τὸν κύριον" (Col. 2.6). Paul uses whatever means possible to communicate the message of a life transformed by Christ that is concomitantly in the process of being transformed into the image of its creator (Col. 3.10). His desire is that they "ἐν αὐτῷ περιπατεῖτε, ἐρριζωμένοι καὶ ἐποικοδομούμενοι ἐν αὐτῷ καὶ βεβαιούμενοι τῇ πίστει καθὼς ἐδιδάχθητε, περισσεύοντες ἐν εὐχαριστίᾳ" (Col. 2.7). The measure of such a life and transformed character is in comparison to the pneumatologically empowered teleological goal of "πᾶν ὅ τι ἐὰν ποιῆτε ἐν λόγῳ ἢ ἐν ἔργῳ, πάντα ἐν ὀνόματι κυρίου Ἰησοῦ, εὐχαριστοῦντες τῷ θεῷ πατρὶ δι' αὐτοῦ" (Col. 3.17).

It is only with such a socio-historical understanding undertaken here that one may now approach a textual and exegetical analysis of the focal pericope in order to grasp the meaning as it was intended for the original recipients. With that understanding, one may begin to bridge the gap of historical context and find application that transcends chronological limitations.

CHAPTER 5

INNER AND INTERTEXTURE AND EXEGETICAL ANALYSIS OF COLOSSIANS 3.1-17

The investigation undertaken into the socio-historical milieu of the apostle Paul and the recipients of the Colossian epistle allows the development of a reliable hermeneutic of the focal pericope. The message of the pericope involves many different layers of communication; including word choice by the sender and subsequent interpretive reception by the message receiver.[1] An accurate hermeneutic of a text requires decoding the sender's message in order to interpret that message and the underlying intent of the sender. Additionally, an examination of how the message would be decoded and interpreted by the receiver in light of the multi-layered texture of the socio-historical environment strengthens the textual hermeneutic. This research utilizes discourse analysis to analyze and "decode" the rhetoric of Paul embedded within the focal pericope. Discourse analysis "is a framework with which the analyst approaches a text and explicates what it says and how it has been said in addition to what has been understood and how it has been understood."[2] In order to more fully comprehend the intended message by the apostle Paul and the resultant experiences created within the recipients through reading and hearing the message, both linguistic and semantic relations within the focal pericope are examined through the application of appropriate elements of discourse analysis.[3] Louw explains that "discourse analysis aims at unfolding an arrangement or schematization of thought in order to promote a better understanding of the text."[4] Discourse analysis allows for the

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[1] See Ronald B. Adler and Russell F. Proctor II, *Looking Out/Looking In,* 13th ed. (Boston: Wadsworth, 2011), 9ff, for a fuller explanation of communications theory.

[2] Jeffrey T. Reed, "Discourse Analysis as New Testament Hermeneutic: A Retrospective and Prospective Appraisal," *Journal of The Evangelical Theological Society* 39 no. 2 (June 1996): 224, accessed September 25, 2017, *ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials*, EBSCO*host*.

[3] See Johannes P. Louw, *Semantics of New Testament Greek* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1982), 91ff for an explanation of the process of discourse analysis and the rationale supporting the use of the tool in order to better understand the linguistic and semantic relations; both of which are essential for a comprehensive analysis of the text in order to more fully uncover intended meaning.

[4] Louw, *Semantics of New Testament Greek*, 127. There are many different approaches to discourse analysis. This analytic research reflects and expands upon work done by Louw; Christopher, "A Discourse Analysis of Colossians 2:16-3:11;" van der Watt, *Christus is Julie Hoop*, Porter and Reed, eds.,

comprehension of the intended and actual communication of the author with the resultant impact upon the readers and hearers. Stanley Porter states, "Discourse is not simply a set of propositions (logical, literal, conceptual, or cognitive) with a certain factual content, but rather social, communicative interaction between humans." [5] This communicative interaction creates certain experiences within the lives of the recipients and generates specific effects upon the readers and hearers of the discourse as they consider the author's message. These experiential effects and the spiritualities[6] they create within the readers and hearers of the Colossian epistle are examined in the following chapter.

The rationale for selecting Colossians 3.1-17 for analysis as a syntactic unit is due to the internal structural composition and grammatical elements that identify the pericope as a cohesive unit. "Every paragraph deals with ethical Christian behavior, whether good deeds to be done or evil deeds to be shunned. This implies that there is a change of topic from the previous section,"[7] which is precisely the case as the verses preceding the pericope address issues of false teaching. Paul's use of both an adverbial conditional conjunction, (*Eἰ*), and a logical inferential conjunction, (*οὖν*), to open the discourse in Colossians 3.1 acts as a break from the preceding argument and leads the thematic flow of the epistle in a different direction.[8] Further, the linguistic section beginning in 3.18 consists of the pericope often classified as the household code or *Haustafel* and extends from 3.18-4.1. This section, while plausibly elaborating on the implications of Colossians 3.1-17, functions syntactically as an integral unit and the removal of the Colossians 3.18-4.1 pericope would not substantively alter the flow of thought by the writer. Thus, the 3.1-17 pericope is not literarily dependent upon the subsequent section for meaning and application.[9] "Further, 3.18 starts with a vocative, the

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"Discourse Analysis and the New Testament;" and Callow, *A Semantic and Structural Analysis of Colossians*.

[5] Stanley E. Porter, *Handbook to Exegesis of the New Testament*, ed. Stanley E. Porter (Boston: Brill Academic Publishers, 2002), 192.

[6] This research defines spirituality as a "lived experience" within the realm of the "divine-human relational process. See Sandra M. Schneiders, "Spirituality in the Academy," *Theological Studies* 50 (1989): 678 and Waaijman, *Spirituality*, 312.

[7] Callow, *A Semantic and Structural Analysis of Colossians,* 113.

[8] Louw and Nida, "Ei" and "οὖν," *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, 89.65 and 89.50, respectively.

[9] See James E. Crouch, *The Origin and Intention of the Colossian Haustafel*, (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1972), 9ff, where he supports his argument for an integral unit based on the framework of the section as well as the internal structure of relational identifications. Crouch would suggest that the household codes were likely pre-existent to the writing of Colossians. He arrives at that hypothesis

first in this epistle, and is the beginning of a series of exhortations addressed to different subgroups in the congregation; so in that sense, there is a shift of addressee beginning at 3.18.[10] Following the *Haustafel*, the epistle moves to a logical, cohesive conclusion comprised of final instructions and a standard Pauline epistolary closing with greetings and a benediction.

The application of discourse analysis to the specific pericope displays distinct linguistic relations that facilitate an examination of the semantic relations, or networks, within the text of the pericope. These networks are further analyzed according to the inner and inter-textual dynamics of the text.

5.1 The Inner and Intertextual Analysis of Colossians 3.1-17[11]

The inner textual analysis focuses on issues related to the language chosen within the selected pericope to communicate the writer's intended message. The inner textual composition of the passage is critically analyzed based on linguistic and semantic relations with resultant networks as well as an examination of any intertextual correlation to other related texts within the *corpus Paulinum* and pertinent biblical texts. A thorough investigation of the rhetoric utilized in the passage, including the various stylistic features expressed, facilitates a more reliable hermeneutic of the pericope.[12] The inner textual analysis of the pericope includes any related textual variants within extant Greek manuscripts. These variants are evaluated and included based on the significance of interpretive meaning and historical reliability.

The intertextual analysis examines the language and message of the pericope within the broader context of related biblical literature. According to Waaijman, a text does not stand alone in isolation but is "an intersection of fragments, allusions and resonances

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from to a number of substantiating arguments, not the least of which is the structural cohesion of thought that remains even with the removal of the 3.18–4.1 pericope.

[10] Callow, *A Semantic and Structural Analysis of Colossians*, 113.

[11] This research methodology utilizes specific terminology from Vernon K. Robbins and his socio-rhetorical methodology of interpretation. While much of the terminology is appropriately descriptive and applicable, the overall methodology was not considered the most productive for the specific research goals. Appreciation is expressed to Dr. Robbins for his contribution to the clarity of explanation in this thesis afforded by the use of his terminology.

[12] Egger, *How to Read the New Testament: An Introduction to Linguistic and Historical-Critical Methodology*, 72.

of other texts."[13] The intertextual analysis contributes to an understanding of the pericope and the overall intent of the author regarding the issue of character transformation. In this research, the intertextual analysis, while limited to biblical texts due to scope, includes the critical examination of other applicable Pauline writings for issues of linguistic congruency and thematic coherence to ascertain their impact upon the interpretation and meaning given to the pericope. Further, the investigation is expanded to include other relevant biblical texts in both the New Testament and the Old Testament. Any apocryphal and pseudepigraphal texts that address the pertinent issues in the pericope or utilize similar wording or structure, such as the use of virtue and vice lists, or involve similar imagery of putting off and putting on are considered as well.

The applicable networks in the pericope are examined with an integrated analysis of both inner and intertextual aspects for each network as appropriate. This integrated approach allows for a greater cohesive, logical flow to the research and assists with a more comprehensive texture that facilitates an understanding of the rhetoric embedded within the focal text.

5.1.1 The Discourse Analysis

The application of discourse analysis to the focal pericope reveals ten semantic networks based on five distinct linguistic relations as noted in Figure 3. These ten semantic networks fit within a broader framework of two chiastic structures; one in Colossians 3.3-4 and the other comprising the whole of the pericope in Colossians 3.1-17.[14] Each semantic network is defined based on the inner textual relatedness to corresponding lexis or cognate identification within the pericope. Additionally, each chiasmus is examined for its rationale and contribution to an overarching thematic emphasis on the transformation of character.

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[13] Waaijman, *Spirituality*, 1.

[14] Due to the vast number of networks in the pericope and the visual complexity of their identification, only the chiastic structure of the passage in its entirety is noted in the figure. The chiastic structure of Colossians 3.1-4 is discussed in a subsequent figure in an applicable section.

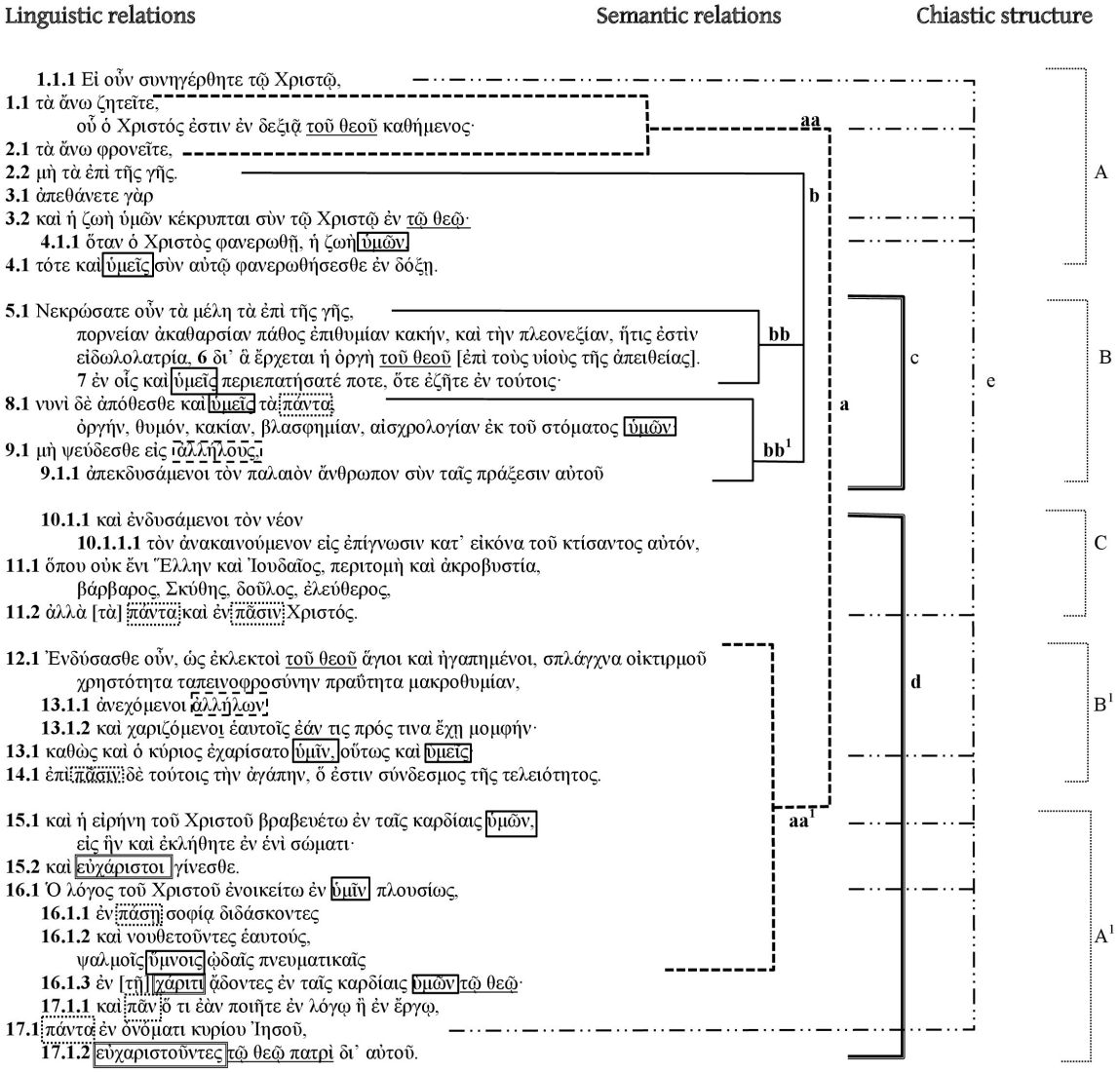

Figure 3. Discourse analysis of Colossians 3.1-7 with linguistic and semantic relations

5.1.2 Network definitions

Each of the ten networks displayed in the discourse analysis has a distinct definition based on semantic relations. While the networks are defined here, they are thoroughly discussed after further justification of the pericope components and the embedded spiritualities.

5.1.2.1 Definition of the semantic networks

Network a: Paul's exhortation to focus on "τὰ ἄνω."

aa: The recipients are commanded to seek and think upon "τὰ ἄνω."

aa[1]: The lived expression of seeking and thinking on "τὰ ἄνω" as they reflect the habits of the "τὰ ἄνω" character.

Network b: Paul's contrast of "τὰ ἄνω" with "τὰ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς."

bb: The outward behavioral expression of earthly things that reflects "τὰ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς" character.

bb[1]: The inner attitudinal expression of earthly things that reflects "τὰ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς" character.

Network c: Paul's commands the believers to "νεκρώσατε" and "ἀπόθεσθε" the habits of "τὰ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς" character because ἀπεκδυσάμενοι τὸν παλαιὸν ἄνθρωπον σὺν ταῖς πράξεσιν αὐτοῦ.

Network d: Paul exhorts the believers to "ενδύσασθε" a "τὰ ἄνω" character because ἐνδυσάμενοι τὸν νέον and that involves an ongoing renewal, a new identity, and a new community.

Network e: Paul's use of the descriptive terms for the person of Jesus.

Network f: Paul's descriptive terms for God.[15]

Network g: Paul's references to giving thanks

Network h: Paul's use of plural pronouns

Network i: Paul's incorporation of inclusive pronouns

Network j: Paul's use of inclusive adjectives

5.1.3 The justification of sectional divisions and the introduction of a proposed structure

The discourse analysis identifies colons and sub-colons within the hortatory discourse of the pericope. The colons and sub-colons of Colossians 3.1-17 display internal

[15] Due to the complex structure and the multiple networks observed, the last five networks introduced in this section are designated in the discourse analysis by visual demarcation rather than alphanumeric symbols. These designations are noted via the corresponding demarcation used in the discourse analysis represented in the headings for the discussion of each of these networks but are also assigned an alphabetic reference in their section head to facilitate consistency.

connection in five distinct sections based upon integral linguistic and semantic cohesion. The grammatical elements expressed in the discourse analysis display the mainline and supportive material within each section of the pericope based on relative position to the left margin.[16]

Each of the five sections of the pericope establishes a progressive movement of thought and the corresponding response that leads to a culmination of attitude and action in Colossians 3.15-17. The section of 3.10-11 is considered as a separate section, though it is linked grammatically with 3.5-9 due to the verbal element for 3.10 and 3.11 residing in 3.9.[17] The justification for separate consideration is strengthened by the shift in thematic direction in Colossians 3.10-11 when compared to that of the preceding and subsequent sections. Further, the section of 3.10-11 stands apart as a division between the vice and virtue lists in 3.5-8 and 3.12-14, respectively. The section is not grammatically distinct though it functions as a focal "hinge point" for the passage, setting the sections apart with a clear break semantically albeit not grammatically. With this framework for a breakdown of the pericope, Colossians 3.10-11 is removed from its grammatical mooring to stand alone due to its substantive meaning for the interpretation of the pericope as a whole. Based on the discourse analysis, the internal elements, and the chiastic construction, the following structure for pericope analysis is proposed in Figure 4 and is of significance to both the rhetoric and the spiritualities embedded within the pericope as they relate to the transformation of character.

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[16] See Robert E. Longacre, *The Grammar of Discourse* (New York: Plenum Press, 1996), 21, for a more thorough discussion of the essential determination of genre and type used to determine mainline and supportive elements within discourse. Appreciation is expressed here for the use of his terminology in the description of mainline and supportive aspects of the pericope.

[17] Colossians 3.10 is grammatically linked to 3.9 through the verbal element present in 3.9 (μὴ ψεύδεσθε εἰς ἀλλήλους) with causal participials involving antecedent action pointing back to the command to "stop lying to one another." While the grammatical link is evident, the shift in the direction of thought is even more so. Paul moves from that aorist predominate argument with perfective aspects to the presentation of a present imperfective aspect of reality noted in a shift of tense within the discourse.

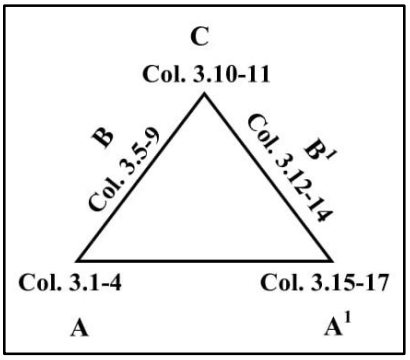

Fig. 4 The pericope of Colossians 3.1-17 with subsection and chiastic denotation

5.2 The rhetorical strategies and the spiritualities fostered within the pericope

Writers choose words with an intended goal. When the apostle Paul wrote the epistle to the Christ-followers at Colossae, he had a specific purpose in mind and a message that he desired to impart to the believers. The structure and content of Paul's text in Colossians 3.1-17 reflects a rhetoric that is intended to lead the readers and hearers to a definite conclusion. Runge states,

> All of us make choices as we communicate: what to include, how to prioritize and order events, how to represent what we want to say. The choices we make are directed by our goals and objectives of the communication. The implication is that if a choice is made, then there is meaning associated with the choice.[18]

A literary text is written with an intentionality of message and a specificity of wording so that it can also evoke different kinds of spiritualities within the life of the reader or hearer of that text. As van der Merwe states,

> Firstly, the reader can have a 'lived experience' of the content of the text – being drawn into the text or drawing the text into himself or herself. Secondly, through such a lived experience, another 'lived experience', that of the divine, can emerge, depending on the content of the document as well as on who the reader is" (note 9).[19]

The spiritualities created from the interaction of the recipients with the pericope text are introduced here within their context and further discussed in the following chapter.

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[18] Steven E. Runge, *Discourse Grammar of the Greek New Testament* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2010), 3.

[19] Dirk van der Merwe, "1 John: 'Effects' in biblical texts that constitute 'lived experiences' in the contemplative reading of those texts," *In die Skriflig* 49 (2), Art. #1930, 2015, 2. http://dx.doi.org/10.4102/ids.v49i2.1930

The rhetoric of the apostle Paul affects the readers and hearers in such a way that it awakens "certain spiritualities (lived experiences) in readers in order to motivate them to acts according to the recommendations given in the text."[20] Each of the networks contributes to three particular effects upon the recipients of the epistle as described by Waaijman.[21] The first of these effects is the dynamic interaction between the text and the recipients. When the recipients encounter the text, whether that encounter is through reading or hearing the text read aloud, there is a dynamic interaction between the recipient and the text that is more than just the mental assimilation of a collection of words within a grammatically coherent structure. "The reader has been pulled into the text and the text into the reader."[22] Grammatical and linguistic features inherent within the text assist in the creation of this dynamic interaction between the text and the recipient.[23] Within this first

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[20] Ibid., 1.

[21] Waaijman, *Spirituality*, 742-44. While Waaijman lists four effects, including the effect of Entanglement, this research examines the three effects noted above as well a fourth effect of embodiment. The first effect of the four is examined in detail here as it is most pertinent to the discourse analysis and the semantic networks embedded within the text. The second and third effects are briefly introduced here and discussed in the following chapter.

[22] Ibid., 742.

[23] There are a number of significant grammatical features that create the dynamic interaction between the reader and the text. These features warrant note but scope of research limits discussion to the notice of the following nine features: (1) Participles (ἀπεκδυσάμενοι and ἐνδυσάμενοι (3.9, 10); διδάσκοντες, νουθετοῦντες, ᾄδοντες (3.16); ἀνεχόμενοι, χαριζόμενοι. The use of the participles expounds on the reason or condition behind the main verb and in these cases noted creates a spirituality of expectation. Specific events transpired in the life of the readers and the participles reflect the expected results of the event. (2) Personal pronouns serve to entangle the reader into the unfolding rhetoric of the text. Within the pericope of Colossians 3.1-17 there are ten occurrences of personal pronouns not including four reflexive pronouns: ὑμῶν (3.3, 4) where Christ is their life; ὑμῶν, ὑμῖν, ὑμεῖς (3.8, 13, 15, 16) where the pronouns are used to pull the readers into the act of putting off vices, cease lying, and express forgiveness; ἀλλήλους/ἀλλήλων; ἑαυτοῖς (3.9, 13, 16). The use of the personal pronouns creates a spirituality of community and unity. (3) Parallelisms and comparisons serve as "point/counterpoint" to either build upon an idea, as with τὰ ἄνω ζητεῖτε, τὰ ἄνω φρονεῖτε; or serve to set two things apart in contrast or comparison as with Νεκρώσατε οὖν, Ἐνδύσασθε οὖν (3.8, 12); τὰ ἄνω and τὰ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς (3.1, 2); or comparison as with ἡ εἰρήνη τοῦ Χριστοῦ, Ὁ λόγος τοῦ Χριστοῦ, (3.15, 16), and ἐν λόγῳ ἢ ἐν ἔργ (3.17). (4) Prepositions serve to express the relationship to their corresponding noun and take an adverbial position as with δι' (3.6) which points to the vice as the reason for the coming wrath of God. In the case of εἰς, κατ' (3.10), the prepositions serve to define the goal and the model of the renewal process. These create the spirituality of detachment and anticipation respectively. (5) Conjunctions can connect two thoughts or disconnect from a preceding one and move the reader towards a different direction of thought as with οὖν (3.1, 5, 12), translated as "therefore" and γὰρ (3.3) that connects the οὖν συνηγέρθητε and the ἀπεθάνετε γὰρ as the rationale for the two imperatives related to τὰ ἄνω. The conjunction δὲ (3.8) connects the cessation of a former way of living with the justification for stripping of behaviors that were a part of that life. (6) Cyclical and spiral reasoning: The pericope as a whole is displays spiral reasoning. The initial rationale, "Εἰ οὖν συνηγέρθητε τῷ Χριστῷ" is the basis for the paraenetic material to follow. The initial rationale informs the instructions for the negative commands of 3.5, 8, and 3.9. The spiral continues and develops in the positive commands of 3.10,12, 15, 16. The τελός in 3.17 forms the part of the spiral that then informs the subsequent reading of 3.1-4. This spiral reasoning creates a spirituality of progression and attainment. (7) Dialectic language creates tension in the reader. It is language that forces the reader to compare their current state of living with the image generated in the text. Paul does this with 3.7, 9, 12, and 17. The readers have spiritually disconnected from a former way of life, but Paul commands them to align their physical life with their spiritual reality. This dialectic creates the spiritualities of obedience

effect, there is an examination of Paul's formal strategy for participation, detachment, and transformation. Paul also utilizes informal rhetorical strategies. Three of these are exploited to generate the spiritualities embedded within the text of the pericope.[24] The second effect upon the recipient is the imaginative composition of images. The semantic networks within the pericope "entangle" the recipient within the arena of the imagination, "so that he cannot escape from it."[25] As van der Merwe states, "readers are drawn into the world of the texts, and the texts are drawn into the world of the readers."[26] Images are created in an encounter with the text and these images facilitate the response of the recipient concerning the transformation of character. The third effect examined is the dialectic of retention and protension that comes through repetition. Through repetition of reading/hearing, the repetition of words and images, the recipient is confronted with the "tension" between what has already happened prior to textual encounter and what should or will subsequently happen as a result of the encounter with the text.

> Retention preserves the past in the memory which, though filled with it, is at the same time divested of presentness and therefore empty; a state which makes possible a constant resumption. Protension brings what is to come – which is still unoccupied – to fruition.[27]

All three effects and the related spiritualities created are examined as they contribute to a process of character transformation.[28] "These effects help us to make sense

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and anticipation. (8) A few prominent themes feature throughout pericope. There is the unfolding theme of congruence between spiritual and physical realities: "Εἰ οὖν συνηγέρθητε τῷ Χριστῷ," therefore, "Νεκρώσατε," "Ἐνδύσασθε οὖν" (3.8, 12) behaviors that are commensurate with reality. The pericope carries the theme of the sufficiency of Christ, initiated by Paul back in Colossians 1.15. The three sections bordered by the two sets of vice/virtue lists all have Christ as the main topic. He is the one who is seated at the right hand of glory and is the substance of the believers' lives (3.1-4), he is the image into which the believers are being renewed (3.10), and the model of the new identity (3.11). He is the substance of their peace (3.15), central to their worship (3.16), and the model by which they measure all of their mind-body activity (3.17). (9) There are four instances of intimate forms of address: ἐκλεκτοὶ τοῦ θεοῦ, ἠγαπημένοι (3.12); κυρίου Ἰησοῦ, τῷ θεῷ πατρὶ (3.17). The first two describe the believer from the perspective of God. The second two describe Jesus (the Lord, or the one who possesses them), and God (the father) from the perspective of the believers. These create the spirituality of intimacy with the divine.

[24] The three informal strategies examined are the semantic networks within the pericope, and the linguistic features of tense and chiastic structure.

[25] Wolfgang Iser, *The Act of Reading: A Theory of Aesthetic Response* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1978), 131.

[26] van der Merwe, "1 John," 4.

[27] Waaijman, *Spirituality*, 744.

[28] The fourth effect of embodiment is noted here but explored in the theological and spirituality texture chapter. As the reader encounters the text and becomes entangled in the text, the anticipated impact is that the text would become an integral part of the lives of the readers such that they become the embodiment

of the texts and to determine some of the lived experiences evoked when the early Christians read these texts."[29]

5.2.1 The first effect: The dynamic interaction between the text and the reader

When the reader or hearer encounters the text, the first effect that occurs is the dynamic interaction between the text and the reader. Paul utilizes both formal and informal strategies that exist within the first effect. These strategies are embedded within the rhetoric of the text. This dynamic interaction between the text and the reader generates specific spiritualities and "lived experiences" within the lives of the readers. Three formal intertextual strategies are examined here: Participation, Detachment, and Transformation.

5.2.1.1 Participation

Participation occurs when a reader encounters the text either through reading or hearing the text read aloud. This encounter involves the person by drawing them into the unfolding discourse and the embedded messages within the text. The person begins to participate in the creation of an individual sub-narrative that exists on both a conscious and subconscious level and that may differ from that of the main narrative.

> Readers shape the depiction of sacred texts in their imagination. They do this in order to participate effectively in the texts. "The ability to perceive oneself during the process of participation is an essential quality…."[30]

The reader becomes involved in the text on a conscious and subconscious level. "This involvement, or entanglement, is what places us in the 'presentness of the text and what makes the text into a presence for us."[31] Participation is created through the repetition of words and ideas in the text. The repetition of ideas and words continues to reinforce the creation of participation as the reader engages the created images and dialectic embedded in the rhetoric.

Paul exploits this formal strategy through the use of the logical inferential

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of the text itself.

[29] van der Merwe, "1 John," 2.

[30] Iser, *The Act of Reading*, 134.

[31] Ibid., 131.

conjunction οὖν and the created image of the union with Christ in "συνηγέρθητε τῷ Χριστῷ" (3.1). He carries this image further and brings a deeper level of participation in the connection in 3.4; "ὅταν ὁ Χριστὸς φανερωθῇ, ἡ ζωὴ ὑμῶν, τότε καὶ ὑμεῖς σὺν αὐτῷ φανερωθήσεσθε ἐν δόξῃ."

Through participation and the encounter with the text, the rhetoric of the writer creates within the reader a desire for detachment. Detachment occurs when one seeks "to transcend previous adverse practices and behaviour" realized in the textual encounter.[32] Paul utilizes this formal intertextual strategy when he instructs the readers to "Νεκρώσατε οὖν τὰ μέλη τὰ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς." The consideration of this command creates a dialectic within the readers. There is tension within them that comes from the imperatival nature and the created image that comes as they hear the words "put to death and to strip off" those characterological behaviors that are indicative of their habituated nature prior to their union with Christ (3.5-6, 8). Paul further generates this desire for detachment by further making the distinction between their previous way of living and their present spiritual reality. In 3.7 he tells them, "ἐν οἷς καὶ ὑμεῖς περιεπατήσατέ ποτε, ὅτε ἐζῆτε ἐν τούτοις." In 3.9 he gives them a present imperative, "μὴ ψεύδεσθε εἰς ἀλλήλους." Through the use of these negative references, Paul seeks to establish the dichotomy between the former way of living and the present expectation, given their union with Christ. "Interiorized values and norms are confirmed or undermined; motives are furthered or frowned upon."[33] All of this contributes to the desire on the part of the readers to detach themselves from any connection with that former way of life that is incongruous with their present spiritual reality.

5.2.1.2 Detachment

The progression in the formal strategy moves from participation with the text, detachment from negative characterological qualities and then a desire for transformation. "A change in conduct through participation in new works and the simultaneous detachment from adverse practices necessarily leads to the transformation of the identity and character of the reader."[34]

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[32] van der Merwe, "1 John," 4.

[33] Waaijman, *Spirituality*, 745.

[34] van der Merwe, "1 John," 4.

5.2.1.3 Transformation

Transformation "refers to the most significant transitions in the divine-human relational process."[35] Transformation is the final part of a progressive movement in a lived experience of the divine and the divine-human relationship.[36] These movements are introduced here but elaborated upon as a fourth effect in the following chapter. The five parts of the movement are: formed (3.1-4), unformed (3.5-9), reformed (3.10-11), conformed (3.12-14), and finally transformed (3.15-17).

As the reader encounters the text of Colossians 3.1-17, all five of these movements are embedded within the rhetoric of the apostle Paul. Through the encounter with the text, the reader is drawn into participation with the unfolding discourse. The desire for detachment is established, and the possibility for the process of transformation is presented. "A change in conduct through participation in new works and the simultaneous detachment from adverse practices necessarily leads to the transformation of the identity and character of the reader."[37] This transformation leads to "τὰ ἄνω ζητεῖτε, τὰ ἄνω φρονεῖτε, καὶ πᾶν ὅ τι ἐὰν ποιῆτε ἐν λόγῳ ἢ ἐν ἔργῳ, πάντα ἐν ὀνόματι κυρίου Ἰησοῦ, εὐχαριστοῦντες τῷ θεῷ πατρὶ δι' αὐτοῦ." Paul utilizes the repeated use of metaphors that address the body-mind activities of the believers as part of their new identity and new community. The intimate divine-human relationships with "κυρίου Ἰησοῦ" and "θεῷ πατρὶ" "bring about a continuous transformation and the 'lived experience' of the texts in the reader."[38]

5.3 Informal Strategies

The rhetoric of the apostle Paul includes a number of informal strategies that further generate spiritualities in the lives of those that encounter the text. The first of the mechanisms exploited here is the use of the discourse analysis and the semantically related networks within the pericope.

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[35] Waaijman, "Conformity in Christ," 41.

[36] Ibid. Sincere gratitude is expressed to Waaijman for the insights provided by his model and their application to the process of character transformation in Colossians 3.1-17.

[37] van der Merwe, "1 John," 4.

[38] Ibid.

5.3.1 Semantic Networks

The application of discourse analysis to the pericope of Colossians 3.1-17 uncovers ten distinct semantic networks that facilitate a greater understanding of the "dynamic interaction between the text and reader."[39] The semantic networks "refer to the repetitions and semantic relationships of the various words or concepts or themes and to the rhetoric" of the apostle Paul.[40] Each of these ten networks is examined here with the additional framework of both inner textual and pertinent inter-textual factors[41] as they yield thickness to the texture and understanding of the author's message.[42] Furthermore, any textual variants that substantively affect exegesis are discussed here as well.

5.3.1.1 Network a: Paul's exhortation to focus on "τὰ ἄνω."[43]

The first network (designated 'a') involves a locative sphere of focus, "τὰ ἄνω"[44] in 3.1 and 3.2, with two corresponding active commands for recipients to both "τὰ ἄνω

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[39] Ibid., 5.

[40] Ibid., 6.

[41] The scope of this research limits the use of inter-textual elements to those that are of particular relevance to character transformation. As inter-textual components are identified, they are discussed where applicable.

[42] Discourse analysis on a pericope can very easily lend itself to making the text fit what one desires the text to say. Given enough creative license, one can force fit any preconceived and predetermined outcome on a passage. It is of the utmost academic importance to locate the pericope within the context of the broader discourse and justify the application of the discourse analysis on a particular pericope. While the selection of the specific pericope has been previously noted and justified, there is an attempt at this point to bring in other aspects of the epistle as a whole to further justify and strengthen the overall argument for Paul's emphasis on the transformation of character and the process by which it occurs.

[43] The discussion of network "a" also includes the subnetworks of "aa" and "aa[1]."

[44] The phrase, τὰ ἄνω, occurs only twice in the New Testament; in 3.1 and 3.2. However, see McL. Wilson, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Colossians and Philemon*, 238, where he states that "τὰ ἄνω" occurs three times in the NT. The occurrence other than here in Colossians is in Jn. 8.23. The NA27 has the phrase "τῶν ἄνω" for the three occurrences and though it is similar in meaning, contextually it not the same. According to Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament, Second Edition a Companion Volume to the United Bible Societies' Greek New Testament (4th Rev. Ed.)* (London: United Bible Societies, 1994), there is no textual variant associated with the article preceding ἄνω in John 8.23. However, in spite of the slight difference in the use of the article, the fact that Jesus states in the Johannine passage that "ἐγὼ ἐκ τῶν ἄνω εἰμί," in speaking of himself, can be seen as strengthening the statement of Paul in Colossians 3.1, 2. The word ἄνω appears elsewhere and even in other Pauline material, as in Colossians 1.5 where it is the repository of hope for the believer, or in Galatians 4.26. However, in the case of Galatians it is used in specific reference to the "ἄνω Ἰερουσαλὴμ." Paul also uses the word in Phil. 3.14 where he refers to "τῆς ἄνω κλήσεως." In light of the material leading up to Colossians 3, it is plausible that Paul's use of the phrase is a concomitant use of terminology employed by the false teachers, allegedly addressed in the epistle to the Colossians. It is also a possible redirection of focus toward "οὗ ὁ Χριστός ἐστιν ἐν δεξιᾷ τοῦ θεοῦ καθήμενος," in juxtaposition with any "θρησκείᾳ τῶν ἀγγέλων, ἃ ἑόρακεν ἐμβατεύων" (Col. 2.18).

ζητεῖτε" and "τὰ ἄνω φρονεῖτε" (subnetwork aa). Paul clarifies the locative sphere of the focus by identifying it as a specific place; that being "οὗ ὁ Χριστός ἐστιν ἐν δεξιᾷ τοῦ θεοῦ καθήμενος."[45] There is a semantic link between the command to seek and think upon "τὰ ἄνω" and the description of behaviors (subnetwork aa[1]) that would characterize the lived experience of one who has that locative sphere of focus. These behaviors are further explored in network "d" where Paul's exhorts the recipients to "ενδύσασθε" a "τὰ ἄνω" character. That character involves a transforming and ongoing renewal, a new identity, and a new community (3.10-11).

Paul begins the pericope with "Ei οὖν" which, as previously noted, are two grammatically structured conjunctions of an adverbial conditional conjunction, (*Ei*), and a logical inferential conjunction, (*οὖν*), respectively. Moo states that "the protasis (or "if" clause) provides the basis for the exhortation of the apodosis (the "then" clause)."[46] The optional translation of "since" is disregarded for Paul's rhetorical strategy. The translation reading "if" creates within the readers and hearers the tension of affirming Paul's proposition and draws the recipients into a dynamic interaction with the text that is to come. The apodosis leads the reader to the protasis and the inferential redemptive work of God alone to bring them into union with Christ.[47] Paul's rhetorical strategy prepares the reader for the imperatival commands that follow. The logical argument is: If the conditional protasis (A) is true, (and you agree that it is), then apodotic "B" must be a resultant action. In this case, Paul tells the recipients that "if" their spiritual reality is a position of being raised with Christ (A), "then" the imperative action that results from that spiritual reality

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[45] It could be pointed out here that in Paul's trinitarian understanding of the locus of Christ in the presence of God, the Spirit is also present though not specifically mentioned here. The inseparable nature of the trinitarian view would naturally support that. In Romans 8.5 Paul states, "οἱ γὰρ κατὰ σάρκα ὄντες τὰ τῆς σαρκὸς φρονοῦσιν, οἱ δὲ κατὰ πνεῦμα τὰ τοῦ πνεύματος," with the verbal element being of the same root as we find in Colossians 3.2. Romans 8.6 is also of significance to this research as Paul states, "τὸ γὰρ φρόνημα τῆς σαρκὸς θάνατος, τὸ δὲ φρόνημα τοῦ πνεύματος ζωὴ καὶ εἰρήνη." These "two minds" and their different foci have implications for the results of the command φρονεῖτε (Col. 3.2).

[46] Moo, *The Letters to the Colossians and to Philemon*, 245.

[47] The passive mood of "συνηγέρθητε τῷ Χριστῷ" reflects the sovereign, operative work of God in the reader's life in redemption and identifies the raising as a participatory event τῷ Χριστῷ. It is primarily a continuation of the picture of baptism initiated by Paul in Colossians 2.12-13. He introduces the baptismal imagery of being buried with Christ with the apodosis, "συνταφέντες αὐτῷ ἐν τῷ βαπτισμῷ," and being raised with him by God, "ἐν ᾧ καὶ συνηγέρθητε διὰ τῆς πίστεως τῆς ἐνεργείας τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ ἐγείραντος αὐτὸν ἐκ νεκρῶν." In the protasis of Colossians 2.20 he states "Ei ἀπεθάνετε σὺν Χριστῷ." If the Christ-followers have died and been buried with Christ, then the argument follows that they also would be raised with him. It is not unlikely that the baptismal picture is carried through here in 3.1. If this is so, the act of baptism itself carried a significant sense of separation from the old, and a new identity and new union into which one is baptized.

is (B) to "τὰ ἄνω ζητεῖτε" and to "τὰ ἄνω φρονεῖτε."

The structural presentation of "τὰ ἄνω" suggests that it is not just the person of Christ that is the focus of the verbal imperative, but instead, there is something about the *nature* of "τὰ ἄνω" that is the object of "the seeking." There are qualities about "τὰ ἄνω" that set it apart from any other realm and make it worthy of focus. Paul refines the description of "τὰ ἄνω" by stating that it is "οὗ ὁ Χριστός ἐστιν ἐν δεξιᾷ τοῦ θεοῦ καθήμενος."[48] Paul could have simply commanded the recipients to seek the person of Christ, or to seek Christ in the heavenly realm. He did neither, and his rationale is of possible significance for the consideration of character transformation as Paul presents it in Colossians 3. There is a "quality of state" with "τὰ ἄνω" that stands in opposition to the quality of state of "τὰ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς." In that this is Paul's only use of the term it is difficult to ascertain with precision, but the corresponding structure and focus of the pericope suggests that Paul is identifying a realm of existence where the person of Christ reigns and rules and has his being. Lincoln describes this "heavenly realm" as that which

> centres around the one with whom they have been raised and since he is in the position of authority at God's right hand, nothing can prevent access to this realm and to God's presence and there can be no basic insecurity about the salvation they have in him and its final outcome.[49]

The characterological virtues identified with God and the person of Christ in Colossians 3.12-16 are congruent with who they are within this realm of "τὰ ἄνω." They are fully God and fully Christ within "τὰ ἄνω," and as such, their nature and characteristics permeate that sphere. In his discussion of the nature of "τὰ ἄνω," Barth suggests that "within the context," the focus is on the virtues listed in 3.12-14.[50] Indeed, the list of "virtues" beginning in 3.12 are qualities of those whose character is being transformed through the process of ongoing renewal (3.10) and whose lived experience is reflected in

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[48] It is important to clarify the meaning Paul intends with the phrase οὗ ὁ Χριστός ἐστιν ἐν δεξιᾷ τοῦ θεοῦ καθήμενος. While the phrase in its entirety is not part of the semantic networks, it does yield clarification on Paul's use of the term "τὰ ἄνω." The significant aspect of the phrase is the centrality of Christ and his presence in the "τὰ ἄνω;" the sphere in which Christ is. The verb ἐστιν is taken to be an independent verb and not part of a periphrastic construction. See Moo, *The Letters to the Colossians and to Philemon*, 247 for further clarification of the verbal construction. The realm of Christ is to be the focus of the Christ-follower. The remainder of the phrase is descriptive of the activity of Christ, being that he is in "τὰ ἄνω" with a place of authority and power, seated at the right hand of God. See Psalm 110 for the Old Testament referent. The grammatical construction is not an insignificant point of the mere insertion of a comma but keeps the focus on the person rather than his activity.

[49] Lincoln, *Paradise Now and Not Yet*, 125.

[50] Barth and Blanke, trans. Beck, *Colossians*, 394.

virtues that would be in keeping with a life focused upon "τὰ ἄνω."[51] The Christ-follower who identifies with Christ and for whom Christ is "ἡ ζωὴ" (3.4) would naturally want to give the full focus of all of his or her faculties of life to such a realm.

From an inter-textual perspective, in the LXX there are thirty-one references to ἄνω and an additional eleven in the Apocrypha.[52] Talbert draws on the apocalyptic literature of 2 Baruch 51.101-2 for a description of "τὰ ἄνω."

> For they will live in the heights of that world and they will be like the angels and be equal to the stars. And they will be changed into any shape they wish, from beauty to loveliness, and from light to the splendor of glory. For the extents of Paradise will be spread out for them, and to them will be shown the beauty of the majesty of the living beings under the throne.… And the excellence of the righteous will be greater than that of angels"[53]

Within the network "a" Paul uses the word ἄνω twice in his rhetorical strategy. Runge states that such duplication is indicative of a "forward pointing reference and target."[54] When referring to "τὰ ἄνω" Paul utilizes a repetition of the target, but the mode of reference is ζητεῖτε (3.1) and φρονεῖτε (3.2). Paul is intentionally "attracting extra attention to the target using redundant reference."[55] Paul utilizes this rhetorical device to emphasize the importance of the target. It is set in opposition to the alternative, presented in the negative, in "μὴ τὰ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς." The use of this negative alternative heightens the importance of the target.

While the target is "τὰ ἄνω," the mode of reference by which Paul instructs the Colossian believers to lay hold of "τὰ ἄνω" is the two imperatival commands, ζητεῖτε, and φρονεῖτε. Both verbal elements are present active imperatives. The present tense implies that the command has an imperfective aspect. There is an ongoing, verbal imperfective dimension to the commands that point forward in time, in contrast to the aorist "perfective"

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[51] The semantic link will be more evident upon examination of the contrasting network that semantically links τὰ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς in Colossians 3.2 with the τὰ μέλη τὰ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς that describes the first of two lists of vices that begin in 3.5.

[52] These are as follows: Exodus 20.4; Deuteronomy 4.39; 5.8; 28.43; 29.17; 30.12; Joshua 2.11; 15.19; 16.5; 21.22; 1 Chronicles 7.24; 22.5; 2 Chronicles 4.4; 8.5; 26.8; 32.30; Psalms 49.4; 133.11; Proverbs 8.28; Ecclesiastes 3.21; Isaiah 7.3; 8.21; 34.10; 36.2; and 37.31. The Apocryphal references are found in 1 Esdras 9.47; Judith 1.8; 2.21; and 2 Maccabees 9.23. While the preponderant use of the word points to the heavens or the heavenly realm, none are used as Paul does in Colossians 3.1, 2.

[53] Talbert, *Ephesians and Colossians*, 226.

[54] Runge, *Discourse Grammar of the Greek New Testament*, 311.

[55] Ibid.

passive verbal aspect of συνηγέρθητε which looks back to the justification event with Paul's argument of implication in 3.1ff.

The two verbal implications of being raised together with Christ is Paul's expectation that the believers would "τὰ ἄνω ζητεῖτε" and "τὰ ἄνω φρονεῖτε." The clear focus of both verbal commands is "τὰ ἄνω." Paul makes use of a point/counterpoint set for the purposes of, "explicitly linking two things together that otherwise might not have been connected," and "drawing more attention to the 'point' that it would not otherwise have received."[56] In this case, Paul connects the focal point of "τὰ ἄνω" with a specific counterpoint. Paul's rhetorical intent is to make the "point" of "τὰ ἄνω" a place of prominence and the locus of attention for the Christ-followers. He accomplishes his intent by juxtaposing the "counterpoint" of "μὴ τὰ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς" so that there is no room for confusion on the part of the recipients.

The present active imperative form of ζητέω makes the action clear. What is less obvious, at least due in part to the nuances of the Greek language, is of what does the actual activity of ζητέω consist. Paul's use of the verb in this instance, based on similar contexts,[57] is intended to communicate the idea of seeking with a strong "desire to possess," or "try to obtain" something in order to have it as one's own.[58] The concrete nature of the focus of the desire leads credence to the translation of "τὰ ἄνω" as "the above things" since the article τά has the accusative form with the direct object of ἄνω. It is not a geographical or atmospheric "realm" to which Paul points the believers,[59] as "above" in "the heavenlies," and as opposed to lowly material things on the earth,[60] but to "the above things,"[61] found

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[56] Ibid.

[57] Paul uses this verbal cognate some seventeen times (Rom. 2.7; 10.3; 11.3; 1 Cor. 1.22; 4.2; 7.27a; (and 7.27b with a difference in meaning); 10.24; 10.33; 13.5; 14.12; 2 Cor. 12.14; 13.3; Gal. 1.10; 2.17; Phil. 2.21; Col. 3.1). The similar contexts, according to Arndt, William, Frederick Danker, Walter Bauer, eds., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, are found in Rom. 2.7; 1 Cor. 7.27b; and 2 Cor. 12.14.

[58] William Arndt, Frederick Danker, Walter Bauer, eds., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 339, though as it states it is "somewhat removed from the basic meaning."

[59] As noted by Eduard Schweizer as well, *The Letter to the Colossians*, 174.

[60] Barth and Blancke, *Colossians*, 393, points out that Colossians, "hardly represents such a 'dual world doctrine.'"

[61] The phrase τὰ ἄνω could rightly be translated either as "the things above" or "the above things." In this research, the latter is preferred due to the clarity of the focus and the mitigation of confusion; so that attention does not shift to the location rather than the *target* within the location.

in the character of Christ himself, who is resident and reigning at the right hand of God. It is Christ and his character that they are to seek; not just so that he may "be found," but that they may keep as the focus of their life "that which is of Christ or from heaven in the situations of daily living."[62] Moo interprets the intent of the seeking in a different direction than the lexicon can express. He states that "Paul is not saying so much that believers should seek to *possess* "the things above" as that they are to seek to orient themselves totally to these heavenly realities."[63] A close corollary to this idea would be that which Jesus communicates in Matthew 6.33, "ζητεῖτε δὲ πρῶτον τὴν βασιλείαν [τοῦ θεοῦ] καὶ τὴν δικαιοσύνην αὐτοῦ, καὶ ταῦτα πάντα προστεθήσεται ὑμῖν." The LXX text of Deuteronomy 4.29 conveys the idea exceptionally well. "καὶ ζητήσετε ἐκεῖ κύριον τὸν θεὸν ὑμῶν καὶ εὑρήσετε, ὅταν ἐκζητήσητε αὐτὸν ἐξ ὅλης τῆς καρδίας σου καὶ ἐξ ὅλης τῆς ψυχῆς σου ἐν τῇ θλίψει σου." The Israelites are not commanded to "seek to possess" the Lord, but rather to direct all of their energy to the orientation of their life toward God. The verbal aspects are the same as with Colossians 3.1.

The context of Matthew 6.33 is the physical concern over the provision of necessities for life and Jesus assures his followers that "οἶδεν γὰρ ὁ πατὴρ ὑμῶν ὁ οὐράνιος ὅτι χρῄζετε τούτων ἁπάντων." Instead of devoting their physical efforts to seeking and striving for things that meet their physical needs, they are to expend their energy on a different orientation of seeking and striving; expressed as orienting the full effort of their lives toward the kingdom of God and his righteousness as their highest priority. The intent of the seeking in Matthew 6.33 and Deuteronomy 4.29 is in keeping with the command in Colossians 3.1. The believer is to thoroughly devote all of one's bodily effort to pursue and to orient one's thought life to the point that it is saturated with the righteousness of God and those characteristics commensurate with a resident of the kingdom of God. The virtues espoused in Colossians 3.12-14, which, as noted, are used in Scripture to describe the character of both God and Christ, would naturally fit as the orientation points for those who have died to their former way of life "καὶ ἡ ζωὴ ὑμῶν κέκρυπται σὺν τῷ Χριστῷ ἐν τῷ θεῷ" (Col. 3.4).[64]

The present active imperative plural form of φρονέω is the second of the two

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[62] Dunn, *The Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon*, 205.

[63] Moo, *The Letters to the Colossians and to Philemon*, 246.

[64] These activities and virtues also stand in contrast to the various activities of those holding to the alleged "Colossian heresy" in 2.20-23.

commands within the network.[65] As with ζητεῖτε, the focus of the verb "φρονεῖτε is τὰ ἄνω"[66] and it means "to give careful attention to something, set one's mind on, be intent on."[67] It is much more than just the mental activity of thinking. According to Barth,

> A translation which gives the impression that *phroneō* means a formal intellectual activity ("to think, to mean, to plan, to ponder, to judge"), an intellectual facility ("to comprehend"), or an inner orientation ("to be of the opinion") neglects the practical relationship that stands here in the foreground at the beginning of the paraenetic part of Col. It is well accounted for if we translate *phroneō* with "orient yourselves toward . . .."[68]

Paul chooses to use both ζητέω and φρονέω to describe the complete focus of all that is within the orientation of their corporeal, physical activity as well as that of encapsulating "the thought and the aspirations which determine actions."[69] The progression of intention is observed in the shift from ζητεῖτε to φρονεῖτε, and the latter is more "comprehensive than ζητεῖτε, expressing not only the striving but also the whole bent of thought and disposition."[70] All of the body-mind[71] capacities are to be focused on "τὰ

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[65] The verb occurs twenty-six times in the New Testament. Paul uses twenty-three of those occurrences; however, this is the only occurrence in Colossians.

[66] The cognate of the word φρονεῖτε similarly appears in the pseudepigraphal Testament of Job 48:2. The similarity is more striking when the negative contrast of Paul is considered here as well. Testament of Job 48:2 reads, "καὶ ἀνέλαβεν ἄλλην καρδίαν, μηκέτι τὰ τῆς γῆς φρονεῖν." The variant readings are found in P Brock, "τὰ τῆς γῆς φρονεῖν," to which this text holds, and the S V Kraft variant reading of "φρονεῖν τὰ τῆς γῆς."

[67] William Arndt, Frederick Danker, Walter Bauer, eds., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 1065.

[68] Barth and Blanke, trans. Beck, *Colossians*, 395. Barth does not make the connection to the mental capacity, but stands in the minority against Pao, "This involves the transformation of one's mind in the obedient submission to God's will as manifested in both thoughts and actions," *Colossians and Philemon*, 212; Moo, "a fundamental orientation of the will," *The Letters to the Colossians and to Philemon*, 248; Dunn, "a sustained devotion to and enactment of a life cause," *The Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon*, 205; Schweizer states, "In other words, it is the way one thinks or is oriented that is to blame. Hence, it is that Colossians 3.2 calls them to return to where they should be, to direct their minds wholly toward God, and not to separate off the spiritual life from the corporeal. It is in their corporeal body that the community should be oriented toward God's will," *The Letter to the Colossians*, 175. McL. Wilson asserts that "what is called for is a complete reorientation of existence," 238. Lohse translates it as connoting "the thought and the aspirations which determine actions," and links the activity to the "renewal of the mind" in Rom. 12.2 which "is determined by that which is above," *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Colossians and Philemon*, 133.

[69] Lohse, *Colossians and Philemon*, 133.

[70] O'Brien, *Colossians, Philemon*, 164.

[71] The term body-mind is used here to describe the connection Paul makes between that which is done with the corporeal aspect of the person as well as the mental or "thought" aspect which incorporates the mind, will, and emotions. It is not limited to refer to the physical dimensions of the substance of the body and mind. The term body-mind is inclusive of all that is involved in potential with the body and mind capacities. While the limitations of both terms are recognized and noted here and though while unfortunate,

ἄνω." This reorientation of body-mind involves the totality of existence for the Christ-followers in their disposition towards an orientation on "τὰ ἄνω" and is fundamental to their transformation of character into Christlikeness. For it is Christ who embodies the "τὰ ἄνω," and he is the teleological goal of all reorientation of being, renewal, and transformation.

The outward expression of the command to "τὰ ἄνω ζητεῖτε" and "τὰ ἄνω φρονεῖτε" is found in network aa[1] and encompasses 3.12-14. The Christ-followers are to reorient the disposition of their body-mind toward the character that is embodied in God or Christ."[72] The virtues in 3.12 comprise a list[73] of character traits that are followed in 3.13 with two actions; are also descriptive of the character of God and Christ. The capstone virtue, which "binds together" all of the other virtues, is ἀγάπην (3.14). This reference connects the reader back to the verbal aspect of the command to Ἐνδύσασθε in 3.12 and the description of the believers as "ὡς ἐκλεκτοὶ τοῦ θεοῦ ἅγιοι καὶ ἠγαπημένοι." In 3.14 Paul commands the recipients to practice the virtues and behaviors characteristic of Christ and God with the same kind of love (τὴν ἀγάπην) with which they are presently being loved by God (ἠγαπημένοι).

There is a semantic network created between the command of Paul to "τὰ ἄνω ζητεῖτε" and "τὰ ἄνω φρονεῖτε" in 3.1, 2 with the command "Ἐνδύσασθε οὖν, ὡς ἐκλεκτοὶ τοῦ θεοῦ ἅγιοι καὶ ἠγαπημένοι" the virtues of 3.12 and the active verbal elements of 3.13-14. The semantic relations arise from the connection Paul makes between the body-mind activity centered on "τὰ ἄνω" and the contrast that this activity is "μὴ τὰ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς." The semantic network that begins with 3.5 elaborates further on "τὰ μέλη τὰ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς," identifying them as the vices presented 3.5-8 with a concomitant connection to the imperatival command to "μὴ ψεύδεσθε εἰς ἀλλήλους" in 3.9.

In cluster B[1] Paul presents the list of virtues that stands in contrast to the lists of vices in cluster B. These virtues formulate the body-mind activity for the Christ-followers

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the clarity is also provided here such as to mitigate confusion moving forward. The body-mind connection features significantly in Paul's concept and proposal for transformation of character as well as various spiritualities that are created in the transformation process.

[72] O'Brien, *Colossians, Philemon*, 197. He further directs the reader to the treatments By E. Larsson, *Christus*, 210-20, and J. Jervell, *Imago*, 251, 252.

[73] The list of five virtues stands as a counter to the two lists of five vices each. While the virtues may not be *directly* related to the vices, they do serve as a converse to the *body-mind* activity of the vices and the *mind-body* activities of the virtues.

and are semantically linked with the focus upon "τὰ ἄνω" as they constitute the embodiment of the character traits of Christ and God.[74] These semantic relations are more thoroughly examined in network "b" where Paul contrasts the positive body-mind focus on "τὰ ἄνω" over against the protasis of "μὴ τὰ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς."

5.3.1.2 Network b: Paul's contrast of "τὰ ἄνω" with "τὰ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς"

Network b (and the corresponding subnetworks bb and bb[1]) denotes the semantic relationship expressed in the contrast Paul makes between "τὰ ἄνω" with "τὰ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς." As "τὰ ἄνω" does not refer to a geographical location neither does "τὰ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς" refer to a geographical location on earth. Lohse states that the realm of "τὰ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς" is that sphere "where man is held prisoner in his disobedient thoughts and activities."[75] Paul makes use of the phrase "τὰ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς" twice (Col. 3.2, 5). In 3.5 he clarifies the accusative object of the imperatival verb Νεκρώσατε as "τὰ μέλη" with the locative genitive in 3.5 "τὰ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς." Moule prefers to "treat the phrase as meaning 'your limbs as put to earthly purposes'."[76] This stands in natural contrast to "τὰ ἄνω," and the activities embodied by one whose focus is reoriented towards the character and person of Christ.

It should be noted that the contrast does not connotate any kind of dualism "between heavenly and earthly, as though to set one's mind on "the things that are above" implies a spirituality uninterested in the world created in and for Christ."[77] Paul's use of the specific wording "τῆς γῆς" as referential to "the seat of all earthly weaknesses and inferiority."[78] The locus is the antithetical realm in which the character of Christ is not evident, the rule and reign of Christ is not normative, and those who orient their focus toward that realm are subject to the implications of the body-mind activities reflected in the absence of those qualities. Paul's rhetoric is specific in his use of the term "τῆς γῆς" over against "τὰ ἄνω" to describe the realm in which "the contrast between heaven and

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[74] The theological implications of the particular character traits and actions outlined by Paul are presented with detail in the following chapter but introduced here for their semantic connection with the networks uncovered in the discourse analysis. The lists of vices are more fully explored in the next network as they are the objects of the action of "mortification" and "putting off."

[75] Lohse, *Colossians and Philemon*, 133.

[76] Moule, *The Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon*, 115.

[77] Thompson, *Colossians and Ephesians*, 71.

[78] William Arndt, Frederick Danker, Walter Bauer, eds., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 157.

earth is ethically orientated with the earth being viewed as the special theatre of sin."[79]

Paul makes a body-mind connection between the vices presented in 3.5-8 and the realm in which those vices reside. In Colossians 3.5 he admonishes the recipients to "Νεκρώσατε οὖν τὰ μέλη τὰ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς." The phrase "τὰ μέλη τὰ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς," to which Paul points as that which must be put to death, can be paraphrased as, "whatever in your nature belongs to the earth."[80] This "nature" is the same sphere of existence to which Paul refers in Rom. 7.23, where he contrasts the body-mind war going on and the "ἁμαρτίας τῷ ὄντι ἐν τοῖς μέλεσίν μου." Again, there is the absence of any dualism within Paul's exhortation to the Colossian believers. Paul is not saying that vices are of the earth and virtues are of heaven. The virtues are to be lived out in this life, not character traits that are only resident "τὰ ἄνω." Jesus embodies these virtues as the model for those who would be Christ-followers. The heart of Paul's rhetoric of contrasting spheres of existence is a message that draws clear delineations between two distinctly different orientations of life and energy. Paul's unstated assumption is that the recipients are already in the process of ζητέω and φρονέω. Paul is intentional in his rhetoric. He intends to redirect the body-mind energy of the Colossian believers as they consider the implications of their union with Christ (3.1). He utilizes the contrast of the two realms "τὰ ἄνω" and "τὰ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς" to bring those implications into focus. In the next semantic network, Paul expresses the actions that are to be taken concerning "τὰ μέλη" within the realm of "τὰ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς."

5.3.1.3 Network c: Paul commands the believers to "νεκρώσατε" and "ἀπόθεσθε" the habits of "τὰ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς" character because ἀπεκδυσάμενοι τὸν παλαιὸν ἄνθρωπον σὺν ταῖς πράξεσιν αὐτοῦ.

Network "c" correlates to the chiastic cluster B and is noted for its two lists of vices (3.5; 8) with three imperatival verbal elements: "Νεκρώσατε" (3.5); "ἀπόθεσθε" (3.8); and "μὴ ψεύδεσθε" (3.9). The first two references create images within the mind of the readers and hearers, but the third appears to be more of a practical command regarding a specific action. The image is picked up again in 3.9 following the imperative to stop lying to one another with the rationale for such ethical behavior in the fact that the believers "ἀπεκδυσάμενοι τὸν παλαιὸν ἄνθρωπον σὺν ταῖς πράξεσιν αὐτοῦ." Paul's rhetoric takes

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[79] Lincoln, *Paradise Now and Not Yet*, 126.

[80] William Arndt, Frederick Danker, Walter Bauer, eds., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 501.

the images created by three verbs; νεκρόω, ἀποτίθημι, and ἐκδύω,[81] and connects them with body-mind activities that were descriptive of the Colossians' former way of living. Paul uses the inferential conjunction in 3.5, "οὖν," which creates the dialectic of retention and protension within the readers and hearers. He points them back to the spiritual and eschatological reality of 3.1-4 as the rationale for the first of the three commands, "Νεκρώσατε."[82]

Paul chooses the aorist imperative of the verb νεκρόω as a likely rhetorical strategy to make the distinction that a radical change occurred in the recipients ("ἀπεθάνετε γὰρ," 3.3) and that such change necessitates a radical response. The aorist verbal element of the imperative "points to a decisive initial act which introduces a settled attitude."[83] There is a perfective idea present in the verbal element of the aorist specific command that makes the decisive action even more final.[84] The lingering effects of the imperative are to be demonstrated in resultant behavioral changes and most certainly not in the necessity to repeat the action that initiated those behavioral changes. The image Paul creates is that in the command "Νεκρώσατε" there is to be a "once for all time" decision that must be made. Paul's rhetorical strategy and the image he creates is specific. Thompson states,

> "the imperative 'put to death' is a violent image - as violent as the act of execution by which Jesus himself died. Here the violence in view is not physical, but it is no less counterintuitive to human instinct . . .. Paul's appeal to the Colossians that they "put to death" their earthly members thus expresses the counterintuitive character of the gospel that proclaims a crucified Lord and is embodied . . ."[85] [in those who are his followers].

The direct act of "putting to death," is focused upon the object of the verb, "τὰ

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[81] ἐκδύω is the verb root of the plural participle ἀπεκδυσάμενοι. The image created by the inclusion of the participle is not diminished by the verbal tie to the negative μὴ ψεύδεσθε. A case could be made that the creation of the image is made stronger by Paul's use of two aorist imperatives with a transition to the imperfective present tense of μὴ ψεύδεσθε. Lest the readers remain fixed in the temporal aspect of what they "were," Paul abruptly brings to the recipients to the unacceptable reality of their present activity. His rationale for such is then picked up in the resumption of the aorist with the plural participle ἀπεκδυσάμενοι.

[82] According to McL. Wilson, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Colossians and Philemon*, 243, the verb only occurs two other times in the New Testament: Rom. 4.19 and Heb. 11.12 "both with reference to Abraham's aged body."

[83] O'Brien, *Colossians, Philemon*, 176.

[84] See Constantine R. Campbell, *Colossians and Philemon: A Handbook on the Greek Text* (Waco, TX: Baylor Univ. Press, 2013), xxiv, for his discussion of the verbal aspect and *Aktionsart*.

[85] Thompson, *Colossians and Ephesians*, 75.

μέλη τὰ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς." The use of "τὰ μέλη" could refer to actual physical members,[86] as in the local church body taking action regarding the various vices in the list that follows. Another possible interpretation of the phrase could be to "cut off" actual physical members, or limbs of the human body. This interpretation would lend plausibility to the idea that Paul is drawing his readers to remember the kind of life from which they have come and to take action regarding an aspect of their culture and religious environment. If that interpretation is followed, it could be a "cultural or religious amputation" to which he is referring, supported by his statement in 3.7, "ἐν οἷς καὶ ὑμεῖς περιεπατήσατέ ποτε, ὅτε ἐζῆτε ἐν τούτοις." Eduard Schweizer sees a possible link to the Attis cult noted in the previous chapter.

> "One could adduce the parallel from the Naaassene document, where Attis is "taken off," that is separated from the earthly parts or members below, and raised up to the eternal essence above, where there is neither male nor female but a new creation, a new person, which is male and female together (Hipp. *Ref*. V. 7, 15).[87]

While the connection is only conjecture, in light of the discussion of "τὰ μέλη"[88] in the previous network, the predominant interpretation is that Paul is commanding a mortification[89] of "the flesh." This mortification "has to do with a transformation of the will, a new attitude of the mind (cf. Rom. 6.11)."[90] Moule describes it as "a radical shifting of the very centre of the personality from self to Christ,"[91] which would be in keeping with the reorientation of body-mind activity Paul expresses in 3.1-4. There is no place for "τὰ μέλη τὰ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς" when one has a body-mind orientation toward "τὰ ἄνω." Any connection with activity otherwise oriented must be "put to death" and considered so such

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[86] By which some interpret the term meaning those members of the local church who are instructed to take action regarding activity that is being done in an "earthly" or evil, non-spiritual manner, such that the actions are interpreted as being of "τῆς γῆς." This interpretation is an extreme minority interpretation. See the reference in MacDonald, *Colossians and Ephesians*, 134. MacDonald does not support the view but merely references the minority interpretation.

[87] Schweizer, *The Letter to the Colossians*, 183.

[88] Callow, *A Semantic and Structural Analysis of Colossians*, states that "the phrase τὰ μέλη . . . is regarded as a metonymy, the parts of the body being put for what is done with them . . .." and it has the sense of that which is "morally and ethically evil," 119. He directs the reader to Mk. 9.33-37 for a similar metonymy.

[89] Mortification in this sense is not the mistreatment of the physical body as the source of evil. Paul has just denounced that sort of idea in Colossians 2.20-23. As Wright notes, that kind of mortification "avoids dealing directly with the sin itself," Wright, *Colossians and Philemon*, 135.

[90] O'Brien, *Colossians, Philemon*, 178.

[91] Moule, *The Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon*, 115.

that it no longer affects "ἡ ζωὴ ὑμῶν κέκρυπται σὺν τῷ Χριστῷ ἐν τῷ θεῷ" (Col. 3.4).

In Colossians 3.5 Paul gives the first of two lists, each consisting of five vices.[92] The first list is related to sexual activity, the expression of which refers to inappropriate sexual relations. The first three nouns, πορνείαν, ἀκαθαρσίαν, and πάθος are grouped by some to be an amalgam of sexual impropriety rather than a list of specific activities. According to Callow, "Arndt and Gingrich do not treat these three nouns as synonymous with overlapping glosses"[93] but rather view them as distinct and separate. While πορνείαν can denote a specific sexual sin, it "can refer to all forms of illicit sexual intercourse."[94] It has distinct overtures to an accepted cultural lifestyle and is identified with the idolatry of the Gentiles. The Wisdom of Solomon, 14.12 affirms of the Gentiles, "ἀρχὴ γὰρ πορνείας ἐπίνοια εἰδώλων εὕρεσις δὲ αὐτῶν φθορὰ ζωῆς." As Bevere states, "to commit πορνεία is to live as the Gentiles."[95]

The commission of the vice ἀκαθαρσίαν is expressed as, "immorality, viciousness, especially of sexual sins"[96] and is associated with the sin of idolatry in Rom. 1.24-25. The word is often translated as "impurity" likely stemming from the negative "ἀ" attached to the root καθαρόσ meaning "clean," or "pure"[97] That translation "highlights the contamination of character effected by immoral behaviour."[98] It is included along with πορνεία in the list of vices considered to be works of the flesh, identified by Paul in Gal. 5.19, and is indicative of "the behavior of the man whose actions are determined by his commitment to his natural lusts."[99] The inclusion of the vice ἀκαθαρσίαν in Paul's list of habituated character traits in Colossians 3.5 that are to be once and for all "put to death" by the Christ-followers indicates that "it was all too easy for the Gentile converts to slip

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[92] Lohse, *Colossians and Philemon*, 138, n.8, provides a helpful list of references where a catalog of such vice lists can be found.

[93] Callow, *A Semantic and Structural Analysis of Colossians*, 119.

[94] Ibid.

[95] Allan R. Bevere, *Sharing in the Inheritance: Identity and the Moral Life in Colossians*, Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series 226 (London: Sheffield Academic Press, Ltd., 2003), 200.

[96] William Arndt, Frederick Danker, Walter Bauer, eds., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 28.

[97] Ibid., 388.

[98] Wright, *Colossians and Philemon*, 134.

[99] O'Brien, *Colossians, Philemon*, 182.

back into"[100] their way of living prior to their union with Christ.

The third vice in Paul's list is πάθος and occurs two other times in the New Testament, both of those instances used by Paul.[101] It is associated with lust or "the powerful desires"[102] that give rise to the commission of ἀκαθαρσίαν and can be described as "letting oneself be controlled by one's emotions."[103]

In the fourth position is the word ἐπιθυμίαν translated as "desire." Since the word can have a positive connotation (Lk. 22.15; 1 Thess. 2.17; and Phil. 1.23), it is qualified with the adjective κακήν, translated as evil. Paul uses the descriptive ἐπιθυμίαν κακήν to create the behavioral image that of a person that is subject to "all evil longings, and so is wider than πάθος"[104] and unchecked, leads to πάθος. Wright states that,

> It is important to note, as is clearly implied by Hebrews 4:15, that experiencing sexual temptation is not itself sinful. Sin begins when the idea of illicit gratification, presented to the mind in temptation, is not at once put to death, but is instead fondled and cherished.

Paul commands to the Colossian believers to "Νεκρώσατε," "to reckon, or count as dead" the vices of character and body-mind activities that reflect a life they no longer live in union with Christ. As Paul moves through the list of vices, he addresses those most visible, most "body" oriented in activity, and progressively moves to the attitudinal source behind such behavior.

The last vice of the first list is πλεονεξίαν, translated as covetousness. It is not limited to material possessions but instead carries the idea of an insatiable desire to have more of whatever is the object of that desire.[105] The grammatical construction sets πλεονεξίαν apart by a conjunction and an article. The inclusion of the article does not

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[100] Ibid.

[101] Romans 1.26 and 1 Thessalonians 4.5

[102] Callow, *A Semantic and Structural Analysis of Colossians*, 119.

[103] Talbert, *Ephesians and Colossians*, 227.

[104] Thomas K. Abbott, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistles to the Ephesians and to the Colossians*, International Critical Commentary (New York: C. Scribner's Sons, 1909), 281.

[105] Barth and Blanke, trans. Beck, *Colossians*, 404. Barth cites Aristotle, Eth Nic IX, 8, 1168b, 16–19 as substantiating his interpretation noting that "honor and corporal desires are also mentioned here, in addition to money." See also the cognate in 1 Thess. 4.4-6. See also Dunn, *The Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon*, 225 as well as Plato, *Symposium* 182D where he describes the idea of covetousness as unrestricted sexual appetite.

indicate that Paul is starting a new list with a different focus. Instead, the inclusion of the article is grammatically necessary with the relative clause that follows[106] and is used to identify the vice of πλεονεξίαν as "the source of the previously cited evils."[107] The vice of πλεονεξίαν is a sin of a particularly egregious nature. Caird states that "πλεονεξίαν is more than covetousness; it is the arrogant and ruthless assumption that all the other persons and things exist for one's own benefit."[108] Thus the πλεονέκτης orients the body-mind activities towards gratification of self. "The root sin of all sins is ultimately self-centeredness and selfishness, and greed is one of the more obvious forms of this orientation in life."[109] This body-mind orientation leads the apostle Paul to equate the πλεονέκτης to an εἰδωλολάτρης (Eph. 5.5).

The relative clause that follows the vice of πλεονεξίαν further defines the implication of the insatiable desire: "ἥτις ἐστὶν εἰδωλολατρία." "To absolutize one's covetousness or greed so that it knows no bounds is to make one's desires one's functional deity."[110] Paul is not stating that all of the vices listed are idolatry; in this case, he is highlighting the sin of πλεονεξίαν. "The grammatical construction, including the use of the definite article, makes it clear that only greed here is described as idolatry."[111] However, Pao views the connection differently. While he agrees that idolatry is grammatically rooted to covetousness, he believes the principal reference of idolatry is to the entire list of vices in 3.5. Covetousness

> reflects the motive behind all of the preceding vices. Paul instructs believers to avoid the various sexual vices because they are manifestations of covetousness, a general and comprehensive vice that points to the refusal to submit to the lordship of Christ.[112]

It is the sin of idolatry that brings the wrath of God.[113] This wrath is the righteous

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[106] Callow, *A Semantic and Structural Analysis of Colossians*, 120.

[107] Barth and Blanke, trans. Beck, *Colossians*, 404.

[108] George B. Caird, *Paul's letters from prison: Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, Philemon, in the Revised Standard Version*, The New Clarendon Bible (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1977), 84.

[109] Witherington III, *The Letters to Philemon, the Colossians, and the Ephesians*, 177.

[110] Talbert, *Ephesians and Colossians*, 227.

[111] MacDonald, *Colossians and Ephesians*, 135.

[112] Pao, *Colossians and Philemon*, 221. His point is well taken, and his interpretation is preferred in this research. This preference is based on the inward (behavior to attitude) progression Paul makes with the expression of the vices in the first list.

[113] Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament,* 557, adds the following regarding the textual variant, "ἐπὶ τοὺς υἱοὺς τῆς ἀπειθείας: It is exceedingly difficult to decide whether the

response of God toward sin and evil. The sin of idolatry serves to debase and devalue the human being, created in the image of God, to a place never intended by God.[114] Whether the wrath of God is already unleashed and moving progressively toward a specific end, as in Romans 1.18, or reflects the universal reality of a future response to idolatry is debatable and of no substantive difference to the issue facing the Colossian believers. The coming wrath is a theological reality but should have no place as a part of their lived experience of God. The Christ-followers are commanded to "νεκρώσατε" once and for all the unrestrained issues of the heart that lead to idolatry. The flow of Paul's rhetoric and his intentional word choice in 3.5 reflects "a movement from the outward manifestations of sin to the inward cravings of the heart, the acts of immorality and uncleanness to their inner springs."[115] These inner springs of the body-mind activities are the framework for Paul's second list of vices.

The first list of vices in the semantic network "c" warns against a body-mind orientation of "τὰ μέλη τὰ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς" and not "ἐπὶ τὰ ἄνω." The network begins with the imperatival "Νεκρώσατε οὖν." In 3.7 Paul points the readers to their former way of living (ποτε, ὅτε) and orientation of body-mind activity. In 3.8 he brings the readers back to the present with the temporal adverb and contrasting conjunctive "νυνὶ δὲ." Paul repeatedly utilizes the rhetorical strategy of creating the dialectic of retention and protension. He

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words ἐπὶ … ἀπειθείας were added in most witnesses by copyists who recollected Eph 5:6 (where no manuscript omits the words), or whether they are absent from P^{46} B cop^{sa} eth^{ro} and several Fathers (Clement Cyprian Macrobius Ambrosiaster Ephraem Jerome) because of an accident in transmission. In view of (*a*) the very widespread testimony supporting the longer reading (א A C D^{vid} F G H K L P almost all minuscules it vg $syr^{p, h}$ cop^{bo} goth arm eth^{pp} Clement Chrysostom *al*) and (*b*) the inconcinnity produced by the shorter reading with the following ἐν οἷς, as well as (*c*) the impression that καὶ ὑμεῖς in ver. 7 assumes a previous mention of unbelieving Gentiles, a majority of the Committee decided to retain the words in the text but to enclose them within square brackets in order to indicate a measure of doubt as to their genuineness in Colossians." The presence of the textual variant, though helpful in understanding the origin of the phrase "ἐπὶ τοὺς υἱοὺς τῆς ἀπειθείας," is not substantive for the interpretation of the pericope with regard to the transformation of character.

[114] The subject of the idolatry can be that which the εἰδωλολάτρης pursues or, it could be taken such that it is the εἰδωλολάτρης that is being idolized. Since the created realm exists to meet the wants and desires of the εἰδωλολάτρης, such a sin would be effectively *self*-worship. There is no higher authority than the εἰδωλολάτρης. The first two commandments in the Decalogue, as recorded in Ex. 20.3, 4, specifically address the issue of idolatry and cover either of those two potential interpretations of the object of εἰδωλολατρία: "οὐκ ἔσονταί σοι θεοὶ ἕτεροι πλὴν ἐμοῦ. — οὐ ποιήσεις σεαυτῷ εἴδωλον οὐδὲ παντὸς ὁμοίωμα, ὅσα ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ ἄνω καὶ ὅσα ἐν τῇ γῇ κάτω καὶ ὅσα ἐν τοῖς ὕδασιν ὑποκάτω τῆς γῆς" (Ex. 20.3-4). It is noteworthy to mention that the last commandment in the Decalogue is against covetousness; the last vice in Paul's first list. Pao, *Colossians and Philemon*, 220, provides additional references for the use of the Ten Commandments in Colossians 3. "For a further discussion of allusions to the Ten Commandments in Colossians 3, see also Lars Hartman, "Code and Context: A Few Reflections on the Parenesis of Colossians 3:6–4:1," in *Tradition and Interpretation in the New Testament: Essays in Honor of E. Earle Ellis for His 60th Birthday*, eds. Gerald F. Hawthorne and Otto Betz (Grand Rapid: Eerdmans, 1988), 240–41."

[115] O'Brien, *Colossians, Philemon*, 178.

creates images, and he reminds the readers of the way they used to live. With the "νυνὶ δὲ" opening 3.8 Paul brings the reader back to the present and creates the tension regarding what is about to follow. He commands the Christ-followers to "ἀπόθεσθε καὶ ὑμεῖς τὰ πάντα" where the "τὰ πάντα" refers to the vices expressed in the second list found in 3.8.

Paul's use of the imperatival "ἀποτίθημι," translated as "put off" or "lay aside" creates an image for his readers and hearers and it is at least plausible that the image is one of a clothing metaphor.[116] It is "semantically equivalent to 'put to death' in 3.5."[117] For the Colossian believers, "the past is replaced by the present which from now on has sole validity."[118] Dunn notes the "divine initiative and human response" that Paul expresses in 3.1-4 shifts now in this semantic network to "the responsibility of the Colossian Christians"' to "νεκρώσατε" and "ἀποτίθημι" the vices so prevalent in their lives prior to their union with Christ.[119] The work of character transformation begins with the initiative of God, but it is not devoid of human responsibility.

There is a natural progression from the activity of the mind to the expression with the body in Paul's vice list in Colossians 3.8. This progression stands in contrast to the previous list of vices that begins with the body and progresses to the thoughts and mind, the latter being more attitudinal in their expression. Paul moves from inner feelings to outward verbalization.[120] The sinful mind-body activities in this vice list begin with ὀργήν, translated wrath. It is the same form of the word used to describe the wrath of God in 3.6, but here ὀργήν is the expression of a human emotion.

When used of God, ὀργήν refers to "God's divine reaction to evil."[121] Such a

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[116] See Galatians 3.27 where Paul uses the positive baptismal image, "ὅσοι γὰρ εἰς Χριστὸν ἐβαπτίσθητε, Χριστὸν ἐνεδύσασθε." For similar use see Acts 7.58; 2 Macc. 8.35; Josephus, *Antiquities*, 8, 266; Rom. 13.12; Eph. 4.22, 25; Heb. 12.1; James 1.21; 1 Peter 2.1; Job 29.14; Ps. 35.26; 109.29; 132.9; Isa. 11.5; 59.17; 61.10; 1 Thess. 5.8. Moo, *The Letters to the Colossians and to Philemon*, 262, provides additional references to support this idea. "Gnilka, 184; O'Brien, 186. Note that ἀποτίθημι is contrasted with ἐνδύω ("put on [clothes]") in Rom. 13:12 (14) and Eph. 4:22 (24)," though his position is that he doubts that there is any deliberate allusion, 263.

[117] Callow, *A Semantic and Structural Analysis of Colossians*, 121.

[118] Lohse, *Colossians and Philemon*, 140.

[119] Dunn, *The Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon*, 218.

[120] Hay, *Colossians*, 125.

[121] McL. Wilson, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Colossians and Philemon*, 247. Interestingly, as Charles H. Dodd notes, Paul never uses the term "to describe the attitude of God to man, but to describe the inevitable process of cause and effect in a moral universe." See Charles H. Dodd, *The Epistle of Paul to the Romans* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1932), 24.

righteous expression is not the same idea Paul has in mind when he points in the lives of the Colossian believers. The vice of ὀργήν is often paired with the vice of θυμόν. Paul commands the Christ-followers to "put off" ὀργήν and θυμόν. The former refers to a feeling of a seething, "settled feeling of hatred, the other a tumultuous outburst of anger."[122] The ὀργήν precedes the expression of the rage of θυμόν. "Ὁ δὲ θυμός ἐστιν ὀργὴ ἀρχομένη."[123] It is interesting to note that after the commission of the first sin, recorded in Scripture in Genesis 3, with the resultant fall of humanity, the next sin that is observed in Scripture is that of anger (Gen. 4.5). Anger is followed shortly after that by murder (Gen. 4.8). The seething, inner attitude of wrath led to a physical outburst of anger that resulted in the first murder recorded in Scripture. With that backdrop, it is not surprising to see how Jesus handles the issue of the relationship between genuine righteousness and anger that leads to murder. In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus addresses the inner attitude of anger[124] equating it with the outward behavior of murder (Matt. 5.21-22). "Putting off" the attitude of ὀργήν prevents the cascade of emotions that expresses itself in θυμόν and leads to the ultimate end of violent expressed behavior. "To cut the root of anger is to wither the tree of human evil."[125]

The third vice in the list takes the seething, settled anger of ὀργήν with its outburst of destructive θυμόν to a more intentional level. The Colossian believers are told to "put off" κακίαν, translated as malice and "anger can readily lead to it."[126] It can be interpreted as verbal abuse and "depicts the havoc to human society wrought by evil speaking."[127] It is better interpreted as "wicked intent,"[128] that reflects "the vicious nature

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[122] Lightfoot, *St. Paul's Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon*, 214.

[123] Diogenes Laërtius. *The Lives of the Eminent Philosophers*. Book VII. Translated by Robert D. Hicks. Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 2014.

[124] Jesus uses the verbalized participial form of the noun ὀργήν when dealing with the issue of anger. "Ηκούσατε ὅτι ἐρρέθη τοῖς ἀρχαίοις· *οὐ φονεύσεις*· ὃς δ' ἂν φονεύσῃ, ἔνοχος ἔσται τῇ κρίσει. ἐγὼ δὲ λέγω ὑμῖν ὅτι πᾶς ὁ ὀργιζόμενος τῷ ἀδελφῷ αὐτοῦ ἔνοχος ἔσται τῇ κρίσει," (Matt. 5.21, 22). He accurately deals with the root issue of that seething inner hatred and inner attitude that finds expression in the outward expression. Only as the inner characterological transformation occurs does the outward expression of that change reflect true righteousness. See also James 1.20 for a relationship between ὀργὴ γὰρ ἀνδρὸς and δικαιοσύνην θεοῦ.

[125] Dallas Willard, *The Divine Conspiracy* (New York: HarperOne, 1997), 150.

[126] Callow, *A Semantic and Structural Analysis of Colossians*, 122.

[127] Martin, *Ephesians, Colossians, and Philemon*, 105.

[128] MacDonald, *Colossians and Ephesians*, 137.

which is bent on doing harm to others."[129] Malice is rooted in the attitude with its origin in ὀργήν and θυμόν, and instead of an outburst of anger, it is bent of finding ways to do intentional harm and destruction to those that are the focus of the wrath and anger. Paul tells the Christ-followers that they must "put off" all such behavior. It has no place in the lives of those whose mind-body focus is upon a lived experience of "τὰ ἄνω" and whose desire is to reflect the kingdom of God, οὗ ὁ Χριστός ἐστιν ἐν δεξιᾷ τοῦ θεοῦ καθήμενος. "It (κακίαν) combines all that is evil in anger as well as in contempt. It is not possible for people with such attitudes toward others to live in the movements of God's kingdom, for they are totally out of harmony with it."[130]

Paul moves further in the mind-body expression of the vices in his second list to address the vice of βλασφημίαν, generally transliterated as blasphemy "which in this context refers more to a defamation of human character than to a curse directed to God."[131] It is "speech which dishonors God himself – in this instance, by reviling a human being made in his image."[132] Blasphemy builds on malice by enacting the plans of intentional harm and destruction through the ruination of another in the eyes and opinions of others through "the conscious telling of falsehood."[133] It is used in the description of the activity of those at the crucifixion of Jesus in Matthew 27.39 and Luke 22.65; 23.39. Blasphemy moves past merely despising another person; it takes the mind-body activity further and gives action to the thoughts and plans of malice.

The last vice in Paul's list of five is "αἰσχρολογίαν ἐκ τοῦ στόματος ὑμῶν." The vice is interpreted as abusive, foul-mouthed speech[134] and occurs only here in the New Testament. It is not merely a matter of condemning the use of language that is culturally unacceptable and offensive. Paul's intent goes beyond just the words chosen in speech and addresses the attitude from which they arise. If blasphemy seeks to destroy character and

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[129] Lightfoot, *St. Paul's Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon*, 214.

[130] Willard, *The Divine Conspiracy*, 154.

[131] Martin, *Ephesians, Colossians, and Philemon*, 105.

[132] Wright, *Colossians and Philemon*, 137.

[133] Lohse, *Colossians and Philemon*, 140.

[134] Lightfoot, *St. Paul's Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon*, 214. Lightfoot is correct in his interpretation. The inclusion of the vice in this list is more than just referential to a manner of speaking. The underlying intent of the command to put off the vices included here is the idea that they are harmful and hurtful to other human beings, created in the image of God.

ruin a person in the minds of others, "αἰσχρολογίαν ἐκ τοῦ στόματος ὑμῶν" is speech directed to the person one wishes to destroy. Paul commands the believers to "put off" this behavior and in so doing, disrupt the destructive path. "One cannot always prevent angry or hurtful thoughts from springing into one's head, but they should be dealt with firmly before they turn into words."[135]

The action involved in βλασφημίαν and "αἰσχρολογίαν ἐκ τοῦ στόματος ὑμῶν" takes the seething wrath and explosive anger that breeds malicious acts to intentionally harm another to the fruition of human destruction: ruination of character through (1) the spreading of falsehoods and lies to others and (2) direct abusive speech to the person who is the object of the wrath with the intent to affect the deepest level of harm and hurt possible. This vice is far more than simple course speech. "Αἰσχρολογίαν ἐκ τοῦ στόματος ὑμῶν" "does not simply refer to curse words. It has in mind the abusive language we use to hurts others."[136]

Paul's use of two vice lists in Colossians 3.5 and 3.8 accomplishes more than merely addressing issues of sexual sin and the use of language. There is an underlying thematic flow to the construction of the lists and the manner in which Paul presents them. Both lists are rooted in the behavioral expression (body) of inner attitudes (mind). The first list moves from the external expression of sin (πορνείαν) to the internal issue of sinful attitude (πλεονεξίαν). The second list inverts that flow to begin with the inner, settled attitude of ὀργήν that finds full outward behavioral expression in the willful and malicious destruction of another human being through βλασφημίαν and "αἰσχρολογίαν ἐκ τοῦ στόματος ὑμῶν." Both sets of vices consist of behaviors and attitudes that are resident in "τὰ μέλη τὰ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς." Paul compels his readers and hearers to νεκρώσατε and ἀπόθεσθε these attitudes and behaviors. These things have no place in the lives of those whose singular focus through all of their body-mind activities and attitudes is "τὰ ἄνω." The believers are commanded "τὰ ἄνω ζητεῖτε" and to "τὰ ἄνω φρονεῖτε" with much the same attitude and singularity of focus that Jesus describes of the pearl merchant in Matt. 13.45. who "ζητοῦντι καλοὺς μαργαρίτας." The believers are to have that same level of intensity when they consider the patterns of behavior and attitude that typified their lives prior to their union with Christ as the "put them to death once and for all" and "put them off" with

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[135] Wright, *Colossians and Philemon*, 137.

[136] Garland, *Colossians and Philemon*, 205.

all finality.

The semantic network "c" incorporates 3.5-9 due to the relationship between the negative commands to νεκρώσατε and ἀπόθεσθε 3.5 and 3.8 with the corresponding negative vice lists and the negative command in 3.9, "μὴ ψεύδεσθε εἰς ἀλλήλους." As noted, the verbal element of 3.9 is linked grammatically to 3.10 but the semantic relationship that begins in 3.5 ends at the end of 3.9.

The command in 3.9, "μὴ ψεύδεσθε εἰς ἀλλήλους" stands outside of either of the two vice lists but is nonetheless sinful behavior that must stop. Paul communicates this with the imperatival form of ψεύδομαι and preceded by the negative adverb μὴ.[137] Both of the imperatives of 3.5 and 3.8 are in the aorist tense with the corresponding verbal aspect of a decisive event that happens with perfective implications. The imperative "μὴ ψεύδεσθε" in 3.9 is in the present tense which carries the imperfective aspect inherent in that construction. The verb can "mean either 'stop lying (assuming they were in the habit of lying) or 'do not tell lies' (no assumptions)."[138] It is generally accepted that Paul is not singling out the issue of lying among all the others because he is aware of the occurrence within the fellowship. Some see the inclusion here as forming a summation of the two lists of vices and is related to "the preceding themes of "slander" and "abusive language."[139]

Lying is a plausible aspect of the life of the Colossians prior to their union with Christ. In the Mediterranean worldview, previously discussed in this research, the issue of lying was not always viewed as a negative character trait.[140] However, now the Colossian believers have identified with Christ and formed a new dyadic relationship in union with him. Their behavior is now to be commensurate with that new community. Lying poses a serious threat to the new dyadic relationship and newly created community that is integral to Paul's understanding of character transformation.[141] Lying "is understood as a social

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[137] As with idolatry, the issue of lying is found in the Decalogue, "οὐ ψευδομαρτυρήσεις κατὰ τοῦ πλησίον σου μαρτυρίαν ψευδῆ" (Ex. 20.16). Some take the inclusion here to be a "cap" to the second list of vices, as the identification of idolatry is with the first list. There is no definitive, but the evidence does not thoroughly support such a view.

[138] Callow, *A Semantic and Structural Analysis of Colossians*, 122.

[139] O'Brien, *Colossians, Philemon*, 175.

[140] See Malina, *The New Testament World*, 41 and his excellent treatment of the worldview issue of lying and the possibility of acceptance of lying within the honor/shame system and dyadic relationships.

[141] In John 8.44 Jesus makes a statement during his discussion of the familial relationship the Jews claimed to have with God and Jesus' rebuttal that if they were genuinely children of God, they would love him rather than be presently trying to kill him. Jesus takes the argument a step further when he identifies them not as children with God as their father but rather, "ὑμεῖς ἐκ τοῦ πατρὸς τοῦ διαβόλου ἐστὲ καὶ τὰς

transgression, and its manifestation signifies a denial of the unity created by the Messiah of Jew and gentile, circumcised and uncircumcised, etc."[142] The issue of lying "εἰς ἀλλήλους" is not just about a failure to communicate truth. The breach of relationship goes deeper than that. Lohmeyer states that "lying is not purely a transgression against the concept of truth, but is rather branded as transgression against a certain community."[143] The transgression against the community destroys the atmosphere of trust that is essential to community.

> The connection between greed, the original sin (Rom 7:7), and idolatry is axiomatic in Judaism (cf. T. Judah, 19:1). Pagans are simply 'those who covet' (Pal. Tg. on Ex 20:17; b. Šabb. 146a). The second five vices (5:8) all involve intemperate speech that makes genuine communication impossible. The social consequences of lying (5:9a) are even more disastrous. Without trust there can be no community.[144]

In Colossians 3.9b and 3.10, Paul presents two participial phrases that serve as the rationale for the command to "μὴ ψεύδεσθε εἰς ἀλλήλους." They are semantically related to the two previous commands as well and serve as justification for Paul's rhetoric to this point. The second of the participial phrases is discussed within its frame of semantic relationships in network "d." The participial phrase included within this semantic network that provides Paul's rationale for the commands to "νεκρώσατε" (3.5), "ἀπόθεσθε" (3.8) and to "μὴ ψεύδεσθε εἰς ἀλλήλους" (3.9) is "ἀπεκδυσάμενοι τὸν παλαιὸν ἄνθρωπον" (3.9b). The phrase forms the apodosis of 3.9 and brings the reader back to the chiastic hinge of, "ποτε, ὅτε" in 3.7 which stands at the center of the two lists of vices. Paul's rhetoric repeatedly creates the tension in the lives of the readers as he reminds the recipients of their former sphere of existence and the body-mind practices that were part of the life they laid aside before their union with Christ.

Paul uses the aorist participle ἀπεκδυσάμενοι which comes from the root ἐκδύω,

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ἐπιθυμίας τοῦ πατρὸς ὑμῶν θέλετε ποιεῖν. ἐκεῖνος ἀνθρωποκτόνος ἦν ἀπ' ἀρχῆς καὶ ἐν τῇ ἀληθείᾳ οὐκ ἔστηκεν, ὅτι οὐκ ἔστιν ἀλήθεια ἐν αὐτῷ. ὅταν λαλῇ τὸ ψεῦδος, ἐκ τῶν ἰδίων λαλεῖ, ὅτι ψεύστης ἐστὶν καὶ ὁ πατὴρ αὐτοῦ." The point here is that sin originally came to humans through the lies of the deceiver. The implications of those lies have shaped the course of the history of humankind. Paul knows the destruction that lying causes and the disruption to community that arises when it is part of the lives of those within the community.

[142] Barth and Blanke, trans. Beck, *Colossians*, 408.

[143] Ernst Lohmeyer, *Der Brief an die Kolosser*, KEK 9, 9th ed. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1953).

[144] Jerome Murphy-O'Connor, "Colossians," *The Pauline Epistles*, eds. John Muddiman and John Barton, in The Oxford Bible Commentary (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2001), 212.

meaning to "put off" or to "strip off"[145] and is best interpreted as a causal participle with perfective aspect and a timing that precedes the action of the related verb.[146] Paul creates the image of putting off a garment, often "widespread in the ancient world and was employed in the mystery religions with reference to the action of initiation."[147] The term is semantically related to Paul's previous commands to νεκρώσατε and ἀπόθεσθε. Paul communicates that there has been, is now, and will continue to be a complete break with the former way of living. "The emphatic double prefix ἀπεκ denotes a complete putting off and laying aside as the whole body is cast aside in death."[148] The object of that which has been put off is "τὸν παλαιὸν ἄνθρωπον." The reference is not limited to the putting off of the "τὸν παλαιὸν ἄνθρωπον." The old is "put off," and the putting off involves the inclusion, "σὺν ταῖς πράξεσιν αὐτοῦ." There is a correlation between "ταῖς πράξεσιν αὐτοῦ" and the vices listed in 3.5-9 and reflects the totality of "τὰ μέλη τὰ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς." Callow states, "It seems to be used to signify 'what you were in your entirety.' It does not refer just to certain bad habits or a way of life, but what they were in their unregenerate state, as pagans."[149]

Paul could have simply instructed the Colossian believers as to what their new lives lived in union with Christ with the corresponding focus of their entire body-mind activities should look like. Instead, he instructs them on the expressions of character that have no place in their lives prior to explaining those character qualities that are to be evident. This rhetorical device, embedded within the text, is another example of how dynamic interaction with the text can lead to a dialectic of retention and protension arising

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[145] William Arndt, Frederick Danker, Walter Bauer, eds., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 239.

[146] Campbell, *Colossians and Philemon*, 54. Though O'Brien, *Colossians, Philemon*, 188, points out that "many exegetes consider the two aorist participles . . . in an imperatival sense, so that in effect Paul is continuing his appeal begun with the injunction, 'Don't lie.' Accordingly, the readers are urged to give up the old nature with its habits and to replace it by putting on the new man" of 3.10. According to O'Brien, this interpretation is grammatically possible, "and the use of the participle for the imperative was a genuine Hellenistic development. However, the participial nature is the preferred reading with a more accurate interpretation of intent of the author.

[147] O'Brien, *Colossians, Philemon*, 189. He notes, however, that in spite of literary similarities across different genres and religions, there is an absence of an "exact literal parallel" with Paul's inclusion of the "old man" in the idea of the "putting off." It involves a "whole new order of existence," 189.

[148] Smith, *Heavenly Perspective*, 96. Though see, Barth and Blanke, trans. Beck, *Colossians*, 220, for the view that it is grammatically insignificant.

[149] Callow, *A Semantic and Structural Analysis of Colossians*, 122. Callow identifies ταῖς πράξεσιν αὐτοῦ as best represented by the idea of character.

within the believer. The Colossian believers have multiple points of retention for the kinds of behavior he lists. These behaviors were part of their lives prior to their union with Christ and Paul creates a descriptive image of their lives prior to conversion. He uses the lists of vices and the imagery created with the metaphors of "putting to death," and "putting off" to describe both "τὸν παλαιὸν ἄνθρωπον" and "ταῖς πράξεσιν αὐτοῦ." The dialectic of protension is realized in the progression from the "τὸν παλαιὸν ἄνθρωπον" to the "καὶ ἐνδυσάμενοι τὸν νέον" in 3.10. He creates an image with his description of the characteristics of "the new" person through the use of a contrasting list of virtues that are representative of new community and new life in union with Christ (3.12-14).

As noted previously, Paul is intentional with his use of rhetorical devices but is not unique to Paul. The use of vice lists contrasted with virtue lists is a common strategy within the literature of the era.[150] The cultural context of the Colossians included the use of vice/virtue lists such that the Christ-followers would not be unfamiliar with the vice/virtue lists when they encounter them. This familiarity extends to the tradition of the Stoic teaching in which virtues and vices are listed and sometimes placed in juxtaposition to each other.[151]

> Ἀγαθὰ μὲν οὖν τάς τ' ἀρετάς, φρόνησιν, δικαιοσύνην, ἀνδρείαν, σωφροσύνην καὶ τὰ λοιπά· κακὰ δὲ τὰ ἐναντία, ἀφροσύνην, ἀδικίαν καὶ τὰ λοιπά. Οὐδέτερα δὲ ὅσα μήτ' ὠφελεῖ μήτε βλάπτει, οἷον ζωή, ὑγίεια, ἡδονή, κάλλος, ἰσχύς, πλοῦτος, εὐδοξία, εὐγένεια· καὶ τὰ τούτοις ἐναντία, θάνατος, νόσος, πόνος, αἶσχος, ἀσθένεια, πενία, ἀδοξία, δυσγένεια καὶ τὰ παραπλήσια, καθά φησιν.[152]

However, when one examines the way the lists are used and their intended goal, there is a significant divergence between the Stoics and the apostle Paul. The primary difference between the way the Stoics use the lists and the way Paul uses them is that Paul roots the virtues in the dependence upon the grace of God.[153] In the case of the Colossian pericope of 3.1-17, Paul begins with a reminder of the spiritual and eschatological reality

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[150] Moo, *The Letters to the Colossians and to Philemon*, 254, states that "The most famous pair of lists is the contrasting "works of the flesh" vs. "fruit of the Spirit" in Gal. 5:19–23. Lists of vices also occur in, e.g., Rom. 1:29–31; 1 Cor. 5:9–11; 6:9–10; Gal. 5:19–21; Eph. 4:31; 5:3–5; 1 Tim. 1:9–10; 6:4–5; 2 Tim. 3:2–4; Titus 1:7; 1 Pet. 4:3; Rev. 21:8; 22:15, with lists of virtues in Eph. 6:14–17; Phil. 4:8; 1 Tim. 3:2–3; 6:11; Titus 1:7–8; Jas. 3:17; 2 Pet. 1:5–8." See O'Brien, *Colossians, Philemon,* 179, for his excellent discussion of ethical lists in the New Testament.

[151] Pokorný, *Colossians*, 162.

[152] Laërtius, *The Lives of the Eminent Philosophers*, 102.

[153] Ibid. See Pokorný and his excellent discussion of the differences between the uses of the lists. See also Pao, *Colossians and Philemon*, 216, for his equally insightful discussion.

based on God's work of grace in their lives of the Colossian believers (3.1-4). He moves from that point of realized grace to the kind of participation that the believers share in the outworking of their new reality (3.5-9, 12-14). This participation on the part of the believers is reflected in both behavioral and attitudinal (body-mind) transformation and creates an ongoing dispositional shift (3.15-17) that brings them back again to the disposition of realized grace (3.1-4).

Paul's use of the semantically related vice lists within this network is similar in form to the corresponding virtue list in semantic network "d." The characteristics that reflect parallelism between the two lists are seen in Figure 5.

Colossians 3.5		
Νεκρώσατε οὖν τὰ	τὰ μέλη τὰ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς	πορνείαν ἀκαθαρσίαν πάθος ἐπιθυμίαν κακήν, καὶ τὴν πλεονεξίαν, ἥτις ἐστὶν ἰδωλολατρία,
Colossians 3.8		
νυνὶ δὲ ἀπόθεσθε (καὶ ὑμεῖς)	τὰ πάντα	ὀργήν θυμόν κακίαν βλασφημίαν αἰσχρολογίαν ἐκ τοῦ στόματος ὑμῶν
Colossians 3.12		
Ἐνδύσασθε οὖν ...		σπλάγχνα οἰκτιρμοῦ χρηστότητα ταπεινοφροσύνην πραΰτητα μακροθυμίαν

Figure 5. Parallelism between vice and virtue lists in Colossians 3[154]

Much of the parallelism between the three lists is noted previously; such as the presence of 5 vices for each vice list and a corresponding list of five virtues. "Each list contains a second person plural aorist imperative. The first and last lists are introduced with οὖν and the middle list with νυνὶ δέ, thereby tying the lists to their context."[155] The first vice list in 3.5 and the virtue list in 3.12 stand in most direct parallel with the grammatical similarities of the verbal elements and inferential conjunctions. It is worth noting again that

[154] Smith, *Heavenly Perspective,* 196.

[155] Ibid.

the list of virtues is not intended to be a "counter" list to corresponding vices. Paul's strategy is much more specific than simply offering alternative "good deeds" to replace their contrasted "bad deeds" that reflect a former way of living. Paul is advocating a radical transformation of character and any virtues identified with that will reflect a life that cannot be duplicated simply through behavioral modification.

As noted above, the transformation necessary for union with Christ is initiated through the grace of God. That same grace that begins with initiating the union with Christ carries through in the process of transformation and ongoing renewal; coupled with active participation on the part of the follower of Jesus. The mystery of that renewal process is explored in the following semantic network.

5.3.1.4 Network d: Paul exhorts the believers to "ενδύσασθε" a "τὰ ἄνω" character because ἐνδυσάμενοι τὸν νέον and that involves an ongoing renewal, a new identity, and a new community.

Semantic network "d" encompasses Colossians 3.10-17. As semantic network "c" reflected the lived characterological expression of "τὰ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς" and the corresponding exhortations to "νεκρώσατε οὖν τὰ μέλη τὰ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς" and to "ἀπεκδυσάμενοι τὸν παλαιὸν ἄνθρωπον," semantic network "d" reflects the lived characterological expression of the two commands to "τὰ ἄνω ζητεῖτε" and to "τὰ ἄνω φρονεῖτε." These two body-mind activities are focused on the person of Christ and God and the things that are characteristic of the sphere in which he reigns. Additionally, there is a temporal justification of an event with a present activity implied because the Christ-followers have "ἐνδυσάμενοι τὸν νέον" (3.10) and the implicative command to Ἐνδύσασθε the body-mind activities of Colossians 3.12-17. The new spiritual reality of the Christ-followers is understood as not just the avoidance of old behaviors and the acceptance new ones "but rather as a change of dominion over the entire human being or self."[156] For the apostle Paul, union with Christ is "not simply a turning from an old way of life; [it is] also a positive embracing of a new way of life. [157]

Paul instructs the believers that the rationale for "putting off" the characterological body-mind activities and their previous ways of living (3.5-9) is their

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[156] Barth and Blanke, trans. Beck, *Colossians*, 411.

[157] Dunn, *The Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon*, 220–21.

new reality: they have "put on," or "acquired"[158] (ἐνδυσάμενοι) a different self.[159] The aorist tense of ἐνδυσάμενοι, like ἀπεκδυσάμενοι, reflects a decisive action in the past and that decision has imperfective elements with requisite ongoing implications. Once again Paul employs the use of the dialectic of retention and protension. He points the Christ-followers back to the time of their decision to enter into union with Christ. This union has implications which create the tension in the believers regarding what Paul is about to communicate to them regarding expectations within the spiritual reality of their new self. This new self has different body-mind activities and a different characterological orientation embedded in its union with Christ. Paul calls this self "τὸν νέον"[160] and it stands in contrast to "τὸν παλαιὸν ἄνθρωπον"[161] which has been "put off." As Dunn notes, "The thought is equivalent to 'putting on Christ' in Romans 13:14, as Colossians 3:3–4 also implies."[162] The "τὸν νέον" is focused upon the body-mind activities of "τὰ ἄνω ζητεῖτε" and to "τὰ ἄνω φρονεῖτε" where the person of Christ is seated at the right hand of God.

There is both a temporal and qualitative idea in Paul's description of "τὸν νέον."

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[158] Callow, *A Semantic and Structural Analysis of Colossians*, 122. Callow notes that he prefers and follows the translation of Beekman with the "you have acquired." See John Beekman, *An analysis of the semantic structure of the Epistle to the Colossians*. Prepublication draft prepared in consultation with international translation consults of Wycliffe Bible Translators. Dallas: SIL, 1974.

[159] The identification of the "new self" in contrast to the "old self" has a number of attempted explanations in an attempt to ascertain the concept Paul is communicating. One of those explanations is that Paul is talking about a new "nature" within the person who is in union with Christ. Moo disagrees with this sense of identification stating, "that these competing schemes of the Christian life have introduced a key, but unfounded, assumption: that "old self" and "new self" refer to natures, or "parts" of the human being," *The Letters to the Colossians and to Philemon*, 267. Taken in the context of other Pauline references (Eph. 4.13 and Rom. 5.12-21 especially) it is clear that Paul has in mind the purpose of God to "κτίσῃ ἐν αὐτῷ εἰς ἕνα καινὸν ἄνθρωπον ποιῶν εἰρήνην," (Eph. 2.15). This concept is apparent in the description of Colossians 3.11. The new humanity that God desires will be of a different kind than that which has been in the sense that the body-mind activities will be reflective of the image in which that new humanity is created. This "new humanity" applies to the individual as well as the corporate of regenerated humanity. See Schweizer, *The Letter to the Colossians*, 197 for his view that the reference is indeed to the individual person. Hay, *Colossians*, 126 states that "'being' perhaps suggests the personal and corporate implications of the term better than the alternatives."

[160] Grammatically, the adjective νέον contrasts the adjective παλαιὸν and carries the unrepeated noun ἄνθρωπον as part of its position as the direct object of the verb ἐνδυσάμενοι. The parallel passage in Eph. 4.24 presents the same verb as Colossians 3.12 and the cognate of 3.10 but has the addition of the noun, since there is no previous reference: "καὶ ἐνδύσασθαι τὸν καινὸν ἄνθρωπον τὸν κατὰ θεὸν κτισθέντα ἐν δικαιοσύνῃ καὶ ὁσιότητι τῆς ἀληθείας" (Eph. 4.24).

[161] See O'Brien, *Colossians, Philemon*, for the clarification on "τὸν παλαιὸν ἄνθρωπον." He identifies the phrase with Paul's use in Rom. 6.6 and Eph. 4.22 where it is descriptive of "the whole personality of man," as ruled by sin, as well as "belonging to the old humanity in Adam." This latter identification of "τὸν παλαιὸν ἄνθρωπον" assists with a theological understanding of "τὸν νέον" as Paul uses the phrase in 3.10 with the subsequent activities in which it is involved.

[162] Dunn, *The Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon*, 221.

There is a sense in which "τὸν νέον" is "new" from the temporal aspect (νέον) since it has not been present prior to their union with Christ. It is also "new" from a qualitative aspect (καινός). The "old" is identified with the negative characterological qualities that Paul commands the Colossian believers to νεκρώσατε or "reckon as dead" because of their union with Christ. They are to "ἀπόθεσθε" since they have no part of their present spiritual reality. The use of the two aorist participles, ἀπεκδυσάμενοι and ἐνδυσάμενοι, to describe the "having stripped off" and the "having putting on" is a call to "a continual 'mortification' of what is, in fact, already dead, a continual actualization of an already existing new creation."[163] Their "kind of living and being" is different now. The quality (καινός) of their life is different; both in spiritual reality and physically expressive expectation. It must be noted that τὸν νέον does not imply a dualistic existence; that within the Christ-follower there is both "τὸν παλαιὸν ἄνθρωπον," and "τὸν νέον" engaged in a cosmic battle with each other. Nothing is further from the intent of Paul. "The Christian is not viewed as both the old and the new person simultaneously but as solely the new person, though he or she may sometimes act and feel like the old person he or she once was."[164]

This qualitative difference is also discernable in the description of what is happening to "τὸν νέον." Paul states that "τὸν νέον τὸν ἀνακαινούμενον." That which is new in existence (τὸν νέον) is becoming something different in quality (καινός) through renewal (τὸν ἀνακαινούμενον) where τὸν is grammatically linked to refer to νέον at the beginning of 3.10.[165] The word ἀνακαινούμενον, from the root καινόω, meaning to make new is found only twice in the New Testament with both occurrences in the writings of the apostle Paul.[166, 167] The inclusion of the preposition ἀνὰ clarifies the kind of renewal that is happening. "The prep. ἀνὰ appears to mark restoration to a former, not necessarily a

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[163] Moule, *The Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon*, 120.

[164] Witherington III, *The Letters to Philemon, the Colossians, and the Ephesians*, 178.

[165] Though see Callow, *A Semantic and Structural Analysis of Colossians*, 122 where he suggests that the nuances of meaning between the two are more stylistic than specific.

[166] Kubo, *A Reader's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and a Beginner's Guide for Translation of New Testament Greek*, 195. The other occurrence of the word is in 2 Cor. 4.16, "Διὸ οὐκ ἐγκακοῦμεν, ἀλλ' εἰ καὶ ὁ ἔξω ἡμῶν ἄνθρωπος διαφθείρεται, ἀλλ' ὁ ἔσω ἡμῶν ἀνακαινοῦται ἡμέρᾳ καὶ ἡμέρᾳ."

[167] Dunn, *The Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon*, 221, states that "the equivalent noun appears also first in Paul, in Rom. 12:2, to denote the "renewal of mind" which Paul saw as integral to the ongoing transformation of the Christian."

primal, state."[168] The use of the preposition would "underscore the durational aspect of the chosen verb form, the continuing renewal."[169] The duration of this ongoing renewal is not because of the persistent battle with issues like those of Colossians 3.5-9, where Paul commands the believers to "reckon as dead" and "lay aside," nor is it ongoing because the Christ-follower stands "in constant need of repair," though there may be some truth even in that. The transformation of character is a *process*. This transformation is a gradual change "from one degree of glory to another" (2 Cor. 3.18; cf. 4.16).[170]

The identification of "τὸν νέον" and the ongoing work of renewal by God creates within the recipients the spirituality of participation. Their union with Christ and obedience to the commands within Paul's discourse brings them to the place where they understand the work of God in their lives. They are not simply following a set of rules. At the same time that they are in the process of dehabituating their old character, God is in the process of renewing the new person that they are in Christ.

The participle ἀνακαινούμενον is in the passive voice, indicating that the subject is the recipient of the action of the verbal aspect of the participle. "Paul uses the same term in 2 Corinthians 4:16 (the passive form occurs only in Paul and only in these two passages) for the experience of inner renewal."[171] In Colossians 3.10 the "τὸν νέον" is receiving the action of renewal and is a passive participant in that specific action. This grammatical voice is significant in that that the passive elements from Colossians 3.1-4, as they relate to the spiritual and eschatological reality of the union with Christ, are carried forth here in 3.10 in the renewal process as well. As Moule states,

> the renewal is something given by God, not acquired by human effort; the new nature is 'being renewed' in the passive. . .. Thus, the renewal has to been rather as the progressive appropriation of something already given by God in Christ than as something created by human effort: 'what we are' logically precedes 'what we become.'[172]

The goal of the renewal is found in the phrase "εἰς ἐπίγνωσιν." According to

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[168] Ellicott, *St. Paul's Epistles to the Philippians, Colossians, and to Philemon*, 188.

[169] Barth and Blanke, trans. Beck, *Colossians*, 412.

[170] Caird, *Paul's letters from prison*, 206.

[171] Dunn, *The Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon*, 221.

[172] C.F.D. Moule, "'The New Life' in Colossians 3.1-17," *Review and Expositor* 70 no. 4 (1970): 489-90.

Harris, "ἐπίγνωσις here may merely be equivalent to γνῶσις but if it forms a goal or outcome of the constant remolding, it means 'ever-increasing knowledge,' 'true knowledge,' or 'full knowledge."[173] The knowledge Paul refers to is not simply the amassing of information or enlargement of intellect. It could stand as a rebuttal against those mentioned in 2.8-23. Alternatively, there is a possible reference to the knowledge of God's will for the Colossians, as Paul prays for them in 1.9. However, the majority of commentators suggest that the knowledge referred to by Paul is both "the knowledge of God, an understanding of who he is in terms of Christ and what that understanding means for living rightly. It is this knowledge that human beings lost in the fall into sin."[174] There is an apparent connection between the knowledge here in 3.10 and the related concept of knowledge in Genesis 2.17 and 3.5, 7.[175] For the recipients familiar with the story of creation and the fall into sin, this connection would generate spiritualities of fellowship and unity.

For the person in union with Christ, God renews the new being. A vital aspect of that process is the renewal of that which the fall into sin ruined and distorted. The goal of the ongoing renewal process is "εἰς ἐπίγνωσιν;" to fully know God with all that knowing involves and to restore that which is otherwise irreparable due to the fall into sin.

> The preposition εἰς can signal either result or purpose. As is so often the case, either makes good sense in the context, but God's purpose in the renewal process seems collocationally preferable: in order that you might regain the knowledge of God that was lost in the fall.[176]

The model after which the renewal is taking place is "κατ' εἰκόνα τοῦ κτίσαντος αὐτόν" (3.10c). The κατ' with its elision prior to the diphthong resultant from εἰκόνα

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[173] Harris, *Colossians*, 132. But see Callow, *A Semantic and Structural Analysis of Colossians*, 123 where he interprets the compound form "to mean 'know truly'." This understanding is preferred in light of the theological context. The link between this knowledge in the renewal process and the knowledge involved in the transformation process of Rom. 12.2 is explored in the theological examination of the network.

[174] Moo, *The Letters to the Colossians and to Philemon*, 269.

[175] The command given by God to the first humans is recorded in Gen. 2.17 where they are commanded not to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. After an encounter with the serpent in Gen. 3.5, the first human beings choose disobedience over obedience to God and eat from the tree. The Scripture records that among the effects of the act of disobedience is that they immediately have knowledge of good and evil; most notably knowledge of their disobedience to God.

[176] Callow, *A Semantic and Structural Analysis of Colossians*, 123.

transliterated as icon "means "in conformity with" or after the pattern of."[177] The idea is alignment in form or after a template that serves as a definite reference point for comparison. The goal of the renewal is one who is patterned after "εἰκόνα τοῦ κτίσαντος αὐτόν."

The word εἰκόνα is used in Stoic thought by Philo as noted earlier in this research. It is related to that idea of the character of God which is "stamped" into human beings in creation.[178] Most commentators agree that the reference here by Paul is tied to the creation account of Genesis 1.26, 27. Within that concept, the actual identity of the εἰκόνα in Colossians 3.10 is thought to be Christ himself, with the connection between this use of the word and Paul's reference to Christ in Colossians 1.15 that "ὅς ἐστιν εἰκὼν τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ ἀοράτου, πρωτότοκος πάσης κτίσεως."[179] This is related to the description of Christ in Hebrews 1.2-3 where the writer states that "ἐπ' ἐσχάτου τῶν ἡμερῶν τούτων ἐλάλησεν ἡμῖν ἐν υἱῷ, ὃν ἔθηκεν κληρονόμον πάντων, δι' οὗ καὶ ἐποίησεν τοὺς αἰῶνας. ὃς ὢν ἀπαύγασμα τῆς δόξης καὶ χαρακτὴρ τῆς ὑποστάσεως αὐτοῦ," where the word for εἰκὼν carries substantively the same idea as the word χαρακτὴρ. Harris supports the relation of the εἰκόνα with the person of Christ since "Paul is discussing the renewal of the "new person/humanity," not the re-creation of the first person, and in his thought Christ is the paradigm for believers' transformation (Rom. 8.29; 1 Cor. 15;49; 2 Cor. 3.18).[180] Secondly, Harris agrees that "τοῦ κτίσαντος" refers to God, and not to the person of Christ because in the *corpus Paulinum*, "the expressed or implied subj. of κτίζω is always God."[181] The pronoun αὐτόν is the "direct object of κτίσαντος, with τὸν νέον as its antecedent."[182] Murray agrees with Campbell's analysis since "in no sense would Paul say that God 'created' Christ."[183] God is not recreating humanity in the state they are recorded to be created in the Genesis 1.26, 27 account and prior to the fall into sin. Paul is proclaiming that, through the transformation and renewal process, God is creating a new

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[177] Harris, *Colossians*, 133.

[178] See the Introduction to this research, 10.

[179] See also 2 Corinthians 4.4.

[180] Harris, *Colossians*, 133.

[181] Ibid.

[182] Campbell, *Colossians and Philemon*, 55.

[183] Harris, *Colossians*, 133.

humanity according to a new pattern. That pattern is the image of Christ.

> This ongoing process continues until a full knowledge of God is acquired and Christians finally bear 'the image of the heavenly man' (1 Cor. 15.49; cf. Rom. 8.29) as the result of a resurrection transformation.[184]

As Wright aptly explains the goal, "at last, in Christ, human beings can be what God intended them to be."[185]

The transformation through the ongoing renewal process into the image of Christ results in a new person (2 Cor. 5.17) and creates a new identity. In Colossians 3.11 Paul elaborates on the nature of this new humanity with the adverb ὅπου which is "a relative reference to a set of circumstances."[186] These circumstances involve the relative lack of importance that religious (Ἕλλην καὶ Ἰουδαῖος), cultural (βάρβαρος, Σκύθης), ethnic (περιτομὴ καὶ ἀκροβυστία), and social (δοῦλος, ἐλεύθερος) distinctions are eliminated. Lightfoot says of the negative construction "οὐκ ἔνι" indicates that "not only does the distinction not exist, but it *cannot* exist."[187] Paul's rhetoric includes the use of an argument of "reason-result" with 3.10 expressing the reason the distinctions no longer exist and 3.11 reflecting the resultant lived experience of the Colossian believers of the new identity. By using a list of contrasting groups, Paul's rhetoric creates images for the readers/hearers. These are groups with which they would be familiar and could immediately understand the level of conflict that exists between the groups.[188] Their new identity eliminates all of these distinctions and these barriers.

Paul reveals the major distinction with the introductory "ἀλλὰ" in the protasis of 3.11. Paul sets apart that which follows as the focus of what is important, and that is the person in whom the new identity is located. The verse reaches the climactic identification where "πάντα καὶ ἐν πᾶσιν Χριστός." Callow's interpretation is preferred here with the

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[184] Ibid.

[185] Wright, *Colossians and Philemon*, 138.

[186] Louw and Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, 576.

[187] Lightfoot, *St. Paul's Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon*, 216.

[188] The groups Paul identifies and uses to describe the new identity for the Colossian believers are Ἕλλην καὶ Ἰουδαῖος, περιτομὴ καὶ ἀκροβυστία, βάρβαρος, Σκύθης, δοῦλος, ἐλεύθερος. Most likely the Colossians would hear these categories and immediately both identify with them and identify others in their midst who fit these descriptives.

"Christ is all things" rather than "Christ is in all believers."[189] Christ is of supreme importance. "That is, Christ amounts to everything and indwells all – without distinction – who belong to his new people."[190]

Because of the new identity formed in Christ, Paul commands the recipients to "Ἐνδύσασθε οὖν." The new identity forms a new community "ὡς ἐκλεκτοὶ τοῦ θεοῦ ἅγιοι καὶ ἠγαπημένοι" (3.12). Colossians 3.12-14 demarcates the cluster in which Paul presents virtuous behaviors that are the antithesis of the behaviors presented in the vice lists.[191] While the five virtues do not reflect exact positive corollaries to the vices in 3.5-8, all of them are semantically related in that they are indicative of mind-body activities that have corresponding identification with the character and behavior of both God and Christ.

> The five virtues in the list found in 3:12b are all predicated elsewhere of God or of Christ: heartfelt compassion (Romans 12:1; 2 Cor. 1:3), kindness (Rom.2:4; 11:2), humility (Phil. 2:8), gentleness (2 Cor. 10:1), and patience (Rom. 2:4; 9:22). Thus, the virtues are not so much human creations or achievements as they are opportunities to share in the new life opened up by God through Christ."[192]

The Christ-followers are to "put on" "σπλάγχνα οἰκτιρμοῦ." Witherington describes this as "deep feelings of compassion – literally 'entrails of mercy,' the graphic image is meant to stress the idea of deep feelings, something 'heartfelt' as we would say."[193] They are to express this compassion with "χρηστότητα ταπεινοφροσύνην," translated kindness and humility which "describe the Christian *temper of* mind."[194] The next pair of virtues is "πραΰτητα μακροθυμίαν," meaning gentleness and humility. Malina defines humility as "a socially acknowledged claim to neutrality in the competition of life."[195] Again, Lightfoot provides insight into the mind-body aspect of the expression of

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[189] Callow, *A Semantic and Structural Analysis of Colossians*, 124.

[190] Harris, *Colossians*, 134.

[191] While the list of vices and virtues in Colossians 3.5-8, 12-14 is not identical to the list in Galatians 5.19-23, there are distinct similarities "φανερὰ δέ ἐστιν τὰ ἔργα τῆς σαρκός, ἅτινά ἐστιν πορνεία, ἀκαθαρσία, ἀσέλγεια, εἰδωλολατρία, φαρμακεία, ἔχθραι, ἔρις, ζῆλος, θυμοί, ἐριθεῖαι, διχοστασίαι, αἱρέσεις, φθόνοι, μέθαι, κῶμοι, καὶ τὰ ὅμοια τούτοις, ἃ προλέγω ὑμῖν καθὼς προεῖπον ὅτι οἱ τὰ τοιαῦτα πράσσοντες βασιλείαν θεοῦ οὐ κληρονομήσουσιν. Ὁ δὲ καρπὸς τοῦ πνεύματός ἐστιν ἀγάπη, χαρά, εἰρήνη, μακροθυμία, χρηστότης, ἀγαθωσύνη, πίστις, πραΰτης, ἐγκράτεια κατὰ τῶν τοιούτων οὐκ ἔστιν νόμος."

[192] Harrington, *Paul's Prison Letters*, 122-23.

[193] Witherington III, *The Letters to Philemon, the Colossians, and the Ephesians*, 179.

[194] Lightfoot, *St. Paul's Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon*, 221.

[195] Pilch and Malina, eds., *Handbook of Biblical Social Values*, 99.

the virtues. He states that both gentleness and humility "denote the *exercise* of the Christian temper in its outward bearing towards others."[196] Those with the new identity are in union with Christ and with one another. They are to "ἀνεχόμενοι ἀλλήλων" and "χαριζόμενοι ἑαυτοῖς." The rationale and example for this forgiveness is "καθὼς καὶ ὁ κύριος ἐχαρίσατο ὑμῖν, οὕτως καὶ ὑμεῖς." Paul utilizes the dialectic of retention and protension by pointing back to the forgiveness the believers have received from Christ as the rationale for forgiving one another. Paul's rhetoric creates the spirituality of community. "All five virtues refer to life within the Christian community."[197]

Paul ties all of the virtues together with the admonition in 3.14 "ἐπὶ πᾶσιν δὲ τούτοις τὴν ἀγάπην, ὅ ἐστιν σύνδεσμος τῆς τελειότητος." Paul takes the bond to a level beyond the level of human love possible. The love Paul presses the believers to express is ἀγάπην.[198] This is semantically related to the same love expressed by God for the believers in 3.12 (ἠγαπημένοι). The love Paul describes is that "ὅ ἐστιν σύνδεσμος τῆς τελειότητος." "The 'bond' joins together all the virtues and thus moves the person and community toward 'perfection.'"[199] It is in semantic relation to the command to Ἐνδύσασθε (3.12) and is the culmination of what the believers are to "put on." The love is to be "the outer garment, so the ἐπὶ means 'on top of' but with the idea of 'most important' or 'supremely.'"[200]

In Colossians 3.15-17 Paul moves the readers to the further expression of the virtues in community life thereby creating a spirituality of interdependence. The believers are not only in union with Christ; they are in union with each other. It is in this sphere of life that the community facilitates the transformation of character through lives ruled by "ἡ εἰρήνη τοῦ Χριστοῦ," [201] and worship saturated with "Ὁ λόγος τοῦ Χριστοῦ." It is to this

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[196] Lightfoot, *St. Paul's Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon*, 221.

[197] Harrington, *Paul's Prison Letters*, 121. For other lists of virtues see Galatians 5:22-23 and the Qumran *Community Rule* 4:3-6.

[198] William Arndt, Frederick Danker, Walter Bauer, eds., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 5.

[199] Harrington, *Paul's Prison Letters*, 122. "The image of the 'bond' was used by Pythagoreans concerning friendship and by Plato with regard to the true idea of the right, beautiful, and good."

[200] Callow, *A Semantic and Structural Analysis of Colossians*, 128.

[201] Callow notes the textual variant with the genitive of source being either "of Christ" or "of God," depending on the variant. He observes that "of Christ" is better supported in the unicals, "of God" in the later miniscules. In either case, there is no substantive difference in meaning and the parallelism created with the use "of Christ" as it is in Colossians 3.16 (though it is also not without the same variant) and the centrality of Christ in Paul's rhetoric, culminating with the 3.17 reference, the rendering "of Christ" is preferred here.

community that they are called to live and have their being. Paul says that "εἰς ἣν καὶ ἐκλήθητε ἐν ἑνὶ σώματι."

Paul's rhetoric brings the recipients to the climactic *summa orthopraxis* in 3.17. The virtues, applied to life and community are to be done within the sphere of ἀγάπην with hearts ruled by "ἡ εἰρήνη τοῦ Χριστοῦ," a community instructed and indwelt by "Ὁ λόγος τοῦ Χριστοῦ." Such a frame of being and living makes possible the broad scope of the totality of "πᾶν ὅ τι ἐὰν ποιῆτε ἐν λόγῳ ἢ ἐν ἔργῳ" possible. The subjunctive idea behind the verb ποιῆτε is that if the virtues of 3.12 are operative in life and the reality of forgiveness is present; where the peace of Christ rules in hearts and the word of Christ dwells richly, then the reality exists for all things in word or deed to be done "ἐν ὀνόματι κυρίου Ἰησοῦ."

The implication of the phrase "ἐν ὀνόματι κυρίου Ἰησοῦ" is difficult to overstate. The semantic relation runs through the entirety of the network and finds its culmination here. The New Testament has many references to doing things "in the name" of Jesus."[202] "With the use of this expression it becomes evident that the disciples spoke and acted like Jesus, in His place and with His authority."[203] Thus Paul expects the recipients to move towards such a state of mind-body expression progressively. Paul's rhetoric creates the image of behavior that sounds and looks like Jesus is doing it. This image generates the spirituality of growing attainment and possibility because of the reality of Colossians 3.1. This spirituality also creates the semantic relation in the disposition shared with Colossians 3.1-4.

5.3.1.5 Network e: Paul's use of the descriptive terms for the person of Jesus

Paul refers to the person of Christ either directly with the semantically related descriptive terms Χριστῷ, and its cognates Χριστὸς and Χριστοῦ, six times in the pericope. Paul uses the personal name in conjunction with a role, "κυρίου Ἰησοῦ," only once in the pericope (Col. 3.17). There is an inferential reference in 3.10 to the person of Christ, but the name is not mentioned directly; the context is that "τὸν νέον τὸν ἀνακαινούμενον κατ' εἰκόνα," previously noted and identified with Christ in semantic network d. The noun "οῦ

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[202] See Luke. 10.17; Mark 9.39, etc.

[203] Gerald F. Hawthorne, "Name," in *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia,* vol. 3, ed. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1992), 482.

Χριστός," is not a name as much as it is a title; translated as "the Anointed One, the Messiah, the Christ," though there is a sense in which it took on the idea of a personal name.[204] Paul interchanges the cognate in 3.1-4.[205] He alternates between "τῷ Χριστῷ" (3.1, 3), and "ὁ Χριστός" (3.1, 4). Substantively there is no difference in meaning in that the reference to "ὁ Χριστός" is used as the nominative subject of the related verbal element (ἐστιν and φανερωθῇ, respectively). The use of "τῷ Χριστῷ" serves grammatically as "a dative complement of συνηγέρθητε" in 3.1 and as an "accompaniment" in the phrase "σὺν τῷ Χριστῷ ἐν τῷ θεῷ," meaning that the lives of believers are hidden in Christ who is also hidden in God.[206] The word or its cognate does not appear again until 3.15 where it is used as "τοῦ Χριστοῦ" (3.15, 16). In 3.15 it is used as a genitive of source, since Christ is the source of the peace that the believers are to let rule in their hearts. In 3.16, "τοῦ Χριστοῦ" has a descriptive element to it rather than a genitive sense. It is not as much the word *of*, as in "*from*" Christ as it is the word *about* Christ that is to dwell richly among the believers. Technically the word of Christ would also be the word about Christ, and the idea is the same in either case, though the descriptive is preferred.[207]

The phrase "κυρίου Ἰησοῦ" is used once in 3.17. In this case, the personal, more intimate form of address is used in the name Ἰησοῦ though it is used in conjunction with the title "κυρίου."[208] The use of the relational term for the person of Jesus coincides with Paul's instruction to bring the totality of one's mind-body activities in congruence with the person represented by "ὀνόματι κυρίου Ἰησοῦ." The apostle Paul strategically uses this thematic address. By using "κυρίου Ἰησοῦ," Paul is "constraining the reader to update their mental representation of the entity based on the new referring expression used."[209] Paul

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[204] William Arndt, Frederick Danker, Walter Bauer, eds., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 887. See also Josephus, *Antiquities*, 20, 200 for a reference to the personalization of the title Christ as a corresponding name for Jesus.

[205] Paul uses the identification τῷ Χριστῷ as a conquering Messiah. See Ps 110.1 "and Christ's position of power and honor at the right hand of the Father, a role he assumed after his resurrection." Witherington III, *The Letters to Philemon, the Colossians, and the Ephesians: A Socio-Historical Commentary on the Captivity Epistles*, 168.

[206] Campbell, *Colossians and Philemon*, 48.

[207] Campbell, *Colossians and Philemon*, 58, 59.

[208] See William Arndt, Frederick Danker, Walter Bauer, eds., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 459 for the description of κυρίος as one with the rights of ownership. This implication is noted here but is explored further in the theological and spirituality texture chapter.

[209] Runge, *Discourse Grammar of the Greek New Testament*, 314.

embeds the spirituality of identification in his rhetoric, bringing the possibility of action to the remembrance of his readers and the association with someone whose lived experience is their goal and model.

5.3.1.6 Network f: Paul's descriptive terms for <u>God</u>

Paul uses six semantically related cognates to identify God, with an additional inferential reference in Colossians 3.10 (τοῦ κτίσαντος). The phrase most often used is "τοῦ θεοῦ" (Col. 3.1, 6, and 12). The verbal construction alludes to God as the possessor "of something." In Colossians 3.1, "τοῦ θεοῦ" is used as a genitive of possession in the context of the location of where Christ is seated being "at the right hand of God." The implication of the right hand is identified as being a place of authority and power. In 3.6 Paul uses "τοῦ θεοῦ" as a genitive of source; it is the wrath "of God," locating "ἡ ὀργὴ τοῦ θεοῦ" that is coming upon the sons of disobedience as coming "τοῦ θεοῦ." Paul refers to believers in their relationship with God as the "ἐκλεκτοὶ τοῦ θεοῦ." God is the possessor and source of all authority given (1.3), of the wrath that is coming (1.6) on the sons of disobedience (those who are living in the life of the vices), and as the one responsible for the election of those whom he has made holy and is loving (ἐκλεκτοὶ τοῦ θεοῦ ἅγιοι καὶ ἠγαπημένοι).

Paul uses "τῷ θεῷ" twice: once in Colossians 3.3 and 3.16 with the former being the "close association"[210] with Christ and the believers who are both hidden "τῷ θεῷ." In 3.16 "τῷ θεῷ" is the one to whom the believers are directed to sing the songs from their hearts. The inferential reference in 3.10 to "τοῦ κτίσαντος" has been discussed in semantic network d and the reader is directed there for the significance of the identification as God. In 3.17 Paul uses the only occurrence of "τῷ θεῷ πατρὶ." He uses the same construction in 1.3, but in that case, the phrase "τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ" is the referent. There is no comparable referent in 3.17. The result of the lack of a specific referent is that Paul embeds the spirituality of relationship and association with the divine within the phrase "τῷ θεῷ πατρὶ." He further creates the image for the believers that God is their father in a personal, intimate relationship here and supported in 3.12.

5.3.1.7 Network g: Paul's references to **giving thanks**

Paul gives reference to giving thanks three times within the pericope.

[210] Campbell, *Colossians and Philemon*, 50.

Thanksgiving is "an emphasis throughout the letter" and "climaxes this section."[211] Paul embeds a spirituality of joy within his rhetoric. In 3.15, Paul tells the believers that the peace of Christ is to rule in their hearts and that they were called to that in one body. With the consideration of the implications of that for a socio-ethnically diverse group much less for any homogenous group, Paul stops and tells them to be thankful. In 3.16 the word of Christ is indwelling the believers and affecting worship such that they are singing songs in their heart to God with thankfulness. Lastly, in 3.17, as Paul closes the pericope with a climactic declaration that the believers are to allow the entire sphere of their mind-body activities to reflect the person of Christ, he tells them "εὐχαριστοῦντες."

5.3.1.8 Network h: Paul's use of **plural pronouns**

Paul's semantically related use of plural pronouns is to be expected due to the corporate nature of the epistle to the Colossians. He is not singling out any individuals is the paraenetic section of the discourse but rather addressing the entire congregation. Even though the use of the plural nature of the pronouns is expected, that does not diminish the impact upon the readers and hearers. When Paul uses plural pronouns in his rhetoric, he embeds spiritualities within the pericope. The plural nature of the pronouns supports the dyadic relationships and collective identity already nascent in the worldview of his readers. He both strengthens and radically shifts this worldview in that the recipients are no longer identified in collective identities reflected in their former way of living but now they are in a collective identity formed in union with Christ (3.3, 4). The formation of new dyadic relationships is emphasized as the break with the former way of life is highlighted (3.7).

5.3.1.9 Network i: Paul's incorporation of **inclusive pronouns**

There are only two instances of inclusive pronouns in the pericope (3.9, 13). The two activities related to the use of the pronouns are a negative command "μὴ ψεύδεσθε εἰς ἀλλήλους" and a positive participle "ἀνεχόμενοι ἀλλήλων" that is linguistically tied to the verbal command to Ἐνδύσασθε. This linguistic relationship is noted in the position of the main verb with respect to the left margin alignment. Paul exhorts the believers to stop lying to one another and to forgive one another. By bringing the focus of the readers back to their

[211] Garland, *Colossians, Philemon*, 201. Thanksgiving is referenced seven times in Colossians. Garland recognizes six of those (1:3, 12; 2:7; 3:15, 17; 4:2) but does not include the reference in 3.16 where Paul instructs the believers to "with thankfulness sing in your hearts to God." That reference is included in this as it is semantically related to the other two occurrences in the network.

union together in Christ, Paul embeds the spirituality of community within his rhetoric.

5.3.1.10 Network j: Paul's use of inclusive adjectives[212]

Paul uses inclusive adjectives seven times in five verses (3.8, 11, 14, 16, and 17). In Colossians 3.8, Paul refers to the vices which are to be stripped off from the lives of those now in union with Christ ("νυνὶ δὲ ἀπόθεσθε καὶ ὑμεῖς τὰ πάντα"). The same inclusive idea is found in 3.14, where Paul tells the Colossians that "ἐπὶ πᾶσιν δὲ τούτοις τὴν ἀγάπην," describing the manner in which the believers are to practice the virtues of 3.12-13. In Colossians 3.16 Paul uses the inclusive adjective to modify the wisdom with which the believers are to teach ("ἐν πάσῃ σοφίᾳ"). Paul uses the rhetorical strategy of repetition in Colossians 3.11 and 3.17. In Colossians 3.11, Paul's describes this union that has no religious, cultural, or social barriers. It is "πάντα καὶ ἐν πᾶσιν Χριστός." Paul uses a similar strategy of combining the adjectives in 3.17 as he describes the inclusive nature of the mind-body activities of those in union with Christ. He begins the verse with "καὶ πᾶν ὅ τι ἐὰν ποιῆτε ἐν λόγῳ ἢ ἐν ἔργῳ, πάντα ἐν ὀνόματι κυρίου Ἰησοῦ." This rhetorical device, used twice by Paul, helps focus the attention upon that which the adjective describes and serves to accentuate the importance.[213]

Paul uses rhetorical strategy to embed a spirituality of clarity as a lived experience for the readers. The scope of the vices to be put off in Colossians 3.8 is of no doubt. The exercise of the virtues in love in 3.14 is without question. The degree of wisdom in teaching and instructing, rooted in the "λόγος τοῦ Χριστοῦ," in 3.16 is apparent. But it is the centrality of Christ in the new humanity, and the degree to which that new humanity is to live out mind-body activities in 3.17, that Paul desires to make certain is of the utmost clarity.

5.3.2 The First Effect and Linguistic Features

Paul's specific and intentional use of language embeds meaning in the words as

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[212] The last three semantic networks are identified here and their semantic relationship is noted. However, the substance of the grammatical elements is discussed in a content footnote in the introduction to the rhetorical strategies and spiritualities embedded in the pericope.

[213] See Campbell, *Colossians and Philemon*, 60-61 for his excellent discussion of the topical frame and the left-dislocation which serves to highlight the scope of the activity in a way that translation into English cannot accomplish. The repetition of the adjective serves to denote the full extent of the inclusive nature of the adjectival reference.

they are formed into coherent thoughts and ideas. These thoughts and ideas are then recreated in the minds or the recipients such that the ultimate goal is the embodiment of the words as they become the "lived experience" and "experience of the divine." This lived experience of the divine creates specific spiritualities. The rhetoric chosen by Paul in the manner in which he uses language creates the effect of a dynamic interaction between the text and the readers and hearers. There are a number of features Paul utilizes in order to create that dynamic interaction.[214]

The first linguistic feature examined is the aspect of tense. The hortatory nature of Colossians 3.1-17 leads to the expectation of a number of directive and imperatival commands with corresponding grammatical structures that represent such instruction.[215] Within the two sections comprising Colossians 3.1-8, there are six aorist verbs reflecting nuances of completed action.[216] However, beginning with 3.9 Paul shifts to a verbal tense that is predominately present, utilizing eight present tense verbs. This "present" tense action increases further if the seven participles in the present tense are also included. The temporal shift to the present stands in contrast to the perfected aspect the three aorist verbs and two aorist participals in Colossians 3.9-17.[217]

Paul utilizes the temporal shift as well as the shift in mood to present the argument that the Colossian believers are substantively different in character to their spiritual condition "Εἰ οὖν συνηγέρθητε τῷ Χριστῷ." There are past tense markers in the lives of the new believers to which Paul points in order to establish his exhortation to a transformation of character. These markers, many of which are aorist in tense, have

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[214] Of the possible linguistic features that can be examined, eleven are chosen for this research. These features are tense, participials, perfect tense, conjunctions, and prepositions, personal pronouns, parallelisms and comparisons, chiasmatic elements, cyclical and spiral reasoning, dialectic language, prominent themes, and intimate forms of address. These features are introduced here as part of the exegetical analysis of the text, but most are further discussed in the appropriate section of the next chapter as they relate to a theological understanding of Paul's text and to the consideration of spiritualities created in the transformation of character.

[215] Of the twenty-two verbs in Colossians 3.1-17, there are eleven indicative verbs (3.1, 3, 4, 6, 7, 11, 13, 14, 15) and nine imperatival verbs (3.1, 2, 5, 8, 9, 12, 15, 16). There are two subjunctive verbs; 3.4 and 3.17.

[216] See Campbell, *Colossians and Philemon*, xxi-xxvii, for his helpful explanation of verbal aspect and *Aktionsart*. He contends that a proper rendering of verbal meaning involves the recognition of semantics in combination with particular lexemes which when taken in context yield the *Aktionsart* that provides a fuller interpretation of the writer's intent.

[217] This shift is in comparison to the inclusion of only three present tense verbs (with one perfect, future, and imperfect verbs in 3.1-8 as well). Two of the present tense verbs refer to the imperatival commands to seek and think on the above things, and the third refers to the progressive aspect of the coming wrath of God in 3.6.

perfective aspects to their verbal nature. They are compared with the imperfective aspect of the present tense verbal components and are noted in Figure 6.

Aorist (Perfective)	Present (Imperfective)
3.1 Εἰ οὖν συνηγέρθητε τῷ Χριστῷ	**3.1** τὰ ἄνω ζητεῖτε
3.3 ἀπεθάνετε γὰρ	**3.2** τὰ ἄνω φρονεῖτε
3.4 ὅταν ὁ Χριστὸς φανερωθῇ	**3.6** δι' ἃ ἔρχεται ἡ ὀργὴ τοῦ θεοῦ
3.5 Νεκρώσατε οὖν τὰ μέλη τὰ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς	**3.9** μὴ ψεύδεσθε εἰς ἀλλήλους
3.7 ἐν οἷς καὶ ὑμεῖς περιεπατήσατέ ποτε	**3.10** τὸν ἀνακαινούμενον εἰς ἐπίγνωσιν
3.8 νυνὶ δὲ ἀπόθεσθε καὶ ὑμεῖς τὰ πάντα	**3.13** ἀνεχόμενοι ἀλλήλων
3.9 ἀπεκδυσάμενοι τὸν παλαιὸν ἄνθρωπον	**3.13** χαριζόμενοι ἑαυτοῖς
3.10 καὶ ἐνδυσάμενοι τὸν νέον	**3.15** καὶ ἡ εἰρήνη τοῦ Χριστοῦ βραβευέτω
3.12 Ἐνδύσασθε οὖν, ὡς ἐκλεκτοὶ τοῦ θεοῦ	**3.15** καὶ εὐχάριστοι γίνεσθε
3.13 καθὼς καὶ ὁ κύριος ἐχαρίσατο ὑμῖν	**3.16** Ὁ λόγος τοῦ Χριστοῦ ἐνοικείτω
3.15 εἰς ἣν καὶ ἐκλήθητε ἐν ἑνὶ σώματι	**3.16** ἐν πάσῃ σοφίᾳ διδάσκοντες
	3.16 καὶ νουθετοῦντες ἑαυτούς
	3.16 ἐν [τῇ] χάριτι ᾄδοντες ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις ὑμῶν τῷ θεῷ
	3.17 καὶ πᾶν ὅ τι ἐὰν ποιῆτε
	3.17 εὐχαριστοῦντες τῷ θεῷ πατρὶ

Figure 6. Aorist (Perfective) markers compared with Present (Imperfective) markers in Colossians 3.1-17

The aorist markers can reflect action that is *punctiliar*; "once occurring and instantaneous," or *stative*; that is an "entrance into a state or the beginning of new action," based on the verbal lexemes. All of the aorist verbal elements in the pericope express "that something happened, without further specification."[218] Paul uses these markers to draw the attention of the Colossian believers to specific formative events in their lives that are significant for their transformation of character. Likewise, Paul uses the imperfective elements of the present tense to point the believers to both ongoing process or newly

[218] Campbell, *Colossians and Philemon,* xxiv.

established states of being. Paul makes a distinction in his rhetoric that creates the image of two lives for the Colossian believers: one prior to dying and being raised with Christ and one "post-resurrection." He uses both indicative and imperative mood to communicate aspects of their lives that are present conditions and also command their immediate attention through specific actions. The life they now live eschatologically mirrors that of Christ himself, while their present reality reflects an ongoing process that involves the believer in the transformative process. The primacy of Christ is most easily recognizable in the examination of the chiastic elements within the text.

The second of the two linguistic elements examined is the existence of chiastic elements within the pericope. There are four[219] chiasmi embedded within the pericope of Colossians 3.1-17. Each chiasmus is an intentional aspect of Paul's rhetoric, and each has a specific purpose in his overall theme. All four chiasmi are examined with the backdrop of Paul's rhetoric and the linguistic and network features previously noted in order to generate the spiritualities embedded within the text. While all four chiasmi are discussed, two chiasmi are of particular importance to this research as they relate to the transformation of character and both require investigation to more fully discern the intent of Paul's specific rhetoric. The two chiastic configurations; one that involves the whole of the pericope (3.1-17), and a smaller double chiastic structure found within the first section of the pericope (Col. 3.3-4) contribute to an understanding of the spiritualities created by their intentional inclusion.

The entire pericope forms the first chiasmus. It is beneficial to present an overview of the chiastic structure before examining each of the clusters for their embedded spiritualities and their contribution to Paul's process of character transformation. The five sectional clusters noted in the proposed structure of the pericope form the basis for the chiastic structure and display a specific flow of thought as it relates to the transformation of character. In the intentional use of chiastic structure, the writer is drawing the reader's

[219] The chiasmus embedded in Colossians 3.11 is more of two "chiastic pairs" rather than an actual chiasmus. Some treat it as a valid chiasmus, but it lacks the substantive purpose of chiastic strategy on the part of the apostle Paul in that it does not have a "hinge" or center point to which the chiasmus points. For those who take it as a legitimate chiasmus, they are not without equally valid counter-argument. See Troy Martin, "Scythian Perspective or Elusive Chiasm: A Reply to Douglas A. Campbell," Novum Testamentum 41 (1999): 256–264 for his perspective. For this research it is included in the list of chiasmi but based on the lack of a focal hinge point to which a chiasmus directs the reader or hearer, it does not give enough evidence for a genuine chiasmatic structure. Nonetheless, the structural manner in which the groups are intentionally composed in Colossians 3.11 does warrant exploration and is not without value to an understanding of Paul's radical presentation of a new community centered on Christ. Perhaps had Paul restructured the "chiasmus" with the apodotic section position of ἀλλὰ [τὰ] πάντα καὶ ἐν πᾶσιν Χριστός moved to a middle focal point, then perhaps there would be a stronger rationale for a genuine chiasmus.

attention to the center point, or hinge point, of the chiasmus. As Louw states,

> The hinge upon which it all turns is the expression itself, because it is in the words written or spoken that the minds of a speaker and hearer or writer and reader will meet. Therefore, the way or the manner, i.e. the structure, in which a notion is communicated, is the heart of its effectiveness.[220]

Each section of the pericope relates to the chiastic hinge point section of 3.10-11 (herewith designated as cluster C). The structure can be seen in the conditional commands of the Christ focused eschatological reality that form the four verses of Colossians 3.1-4, (herewith designated as cluster A), and directly relate to the Christ embodied focus of the two verbal imperatives of 3.15 and 3.16 and the conditional subjunctive of 3.17, (herewith designated as cluster A^1). Both sets of commands are to be carried out in life as a result of spiritual realities now extant in the lives of the believers and create specific lived experiences within the readers and hearers. Colossians 3.1-4 (A) reminds the recipients of the spiritual reality of the close relationship with Christ and presents a rationale for the commands that follow.

It is because of this spiritual reality and connectedness to Christ that the Colossian believers are commanded to refocus both the direction of their deepest desires and thoughts. This refocusing creates within the recipients a disposition[221] towards the receptivity of the commands that encompass the vice and virtue lists in 3.5-9 (herewith designated as cluster B) and 3.12-14 (herewith designated as cluster B^1) respectively. The "putting to death" and "putting off" of the habits incongruous with the life of a Christ-follower and the "putting on" of the virtuous habits leads to the spiritual goal or *τελος* of 3.17 within the cluster of 3.15-17 (A^1). The verses that constitute this cluster "form a distinct unit, with two third person present imperatives (βραβευέτω, ἐνοικείτω) that relate to 'the peace of Christ' (v. 15) and 'the word of Christ' (v. 16) respectively, and two second person present imperatives (γίνεσθε, v. 15; [ποιῆτε], v. 17).[222]

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[220] Johannes P. Louw, "Discourse Analysis and the Greek New Testament," *The Biblical Translator* 24 (Jan. 1973): 101.

[221] At this point it is helpful to remember the Aristotelian model presented at the outset of this research. Aristotle posited that character transformation occurs through a process that includes a disposition of character that is inclined towards virtuous habits. These habits, as they become ingrained and part of the person's character, lead to a further disposition and commitment toward a greater ongoing practice of those habits of virtue. This cyclical process leads ultimately, according to Aristotle, toward εὐδαιμονία with full virtue requiring applied, practical wisdom, or φρόνησις.

[222] Harris, *Colossians and Philemon*, 138. Harris parses the verb ποιῆτε as an imperatival rather than subjunctive as do Callow and O'Brien, based on the use of ποιεῖτε (present active imperative) instead of the NA27 ποιῆτε, which is parsed as a present active subjunctive. For this research, the subjunctive is the preferred based on the NA27 text. In either case, with an imperative or a subjunctive, the flow of Paul's rhetoric leads to the τελος of the summation of all body-mind activity to be in line with the character of the

The imperative, imperfective nature of the present tense and active voice of the verbal elements in 3.15, 16 in conjunction with the subjunctive mood in 3.17 establishes a progressive movement towards the goal of character transformation. This movement, in turn, creates a greater disposition and commitment to remember the spiritual reality in which the believer is grounded in Colossians 3.1-4. The nature of the transformation process can be portrayed more accurately as an upward spiral.[223] As one grows in the dehabituation or "putting off" of the vice habits and the re-habituation or "putting on" of the virtue habits, one is not forced to revisit each issue over and over in cyclical fashion. The habitual, ongoing process of replacing the vices with the virtues moves progressively towards that *τελος* of a greater lived experience of Colossians 3.17 and a realized renewal in the image of Christ posited in the cluster C.[224]

Paul is intentional in his rhetoric and structure of his character transformation process outlined within the pericope. It is not merely behavior modification that leads to transformation of character, as one might interpret Aristotle. Rather, the hinge point of the chiastic structure in which Paul embeds his process of character transformation is found in cluster C. It is here that he presents the divine agency of the transformation process as well as the human responsibility that facilitates it. In Colossians 3.10 Paul presents the ongoing, imperfective verbal aspect of the present tense renewal process that originates *outside* of the "τὸν νέον" that is being renewed. He also presents the goal or model to which that renewal is moving; "κατ' εἰκόνα τοῦ κτίσαντος αὐτόν." The significance of this formation process and the importance of these verses relative to the position in Paul's chiastic structure is difficult to overstate. Paul utilizes the rhetorical strategy and linguistic feature of the chiastic structure to generate spiritualities that lead to a process of character transformation. The implications of these spiritualities and their role in the process are more thoroughly investigated in the following chapter on the theological textures within the text. Each of the components of the chiastic structure with

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Lord Jesus.

[223] This understanding of the transformation process would be in keeping with the discussion of the linguistic feature of spiral reasoning discussed earlier in 5.2.

[224] It should be noted that this is not entirely different than Aristotle's concept of transformation of character though the rationale and the goal do differ substantially such that the pneumatological reality and dependency inherent in Paul's "process" transcends any Aristotelian similarity due to the inclusion of the divine in the transformation equation. There is within Paul's process a definite divine/human agency that Aristotle does not include. Paul would completely discount any substantive possibility of transformation of character without the pneumatological empowerment and agency inherent in the process. Such would amount to humanistic "works" based transformation that has no place in Pauline sanctification. See Phil. 1.6; 2.12-13 among others.

related spiritualities is defined here with a subsequent proposal of a more developed model that reflects Paul's rhetoric and intent.

The chiastic structure of the pericope begins with the cluster of Colossians 3.1-4 (A). The cluster starts a new division within the epistle as Paul shifts from a doctrinal presentation in the first two chapters of Colossians where he displays the supremacy Christ stating that "ὅς ἐστιν εἰκὼν τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ ἀοράτου, πρωτότοκος πάσης κτίσεως" (Col. 1.15), and his encouragement to "ἐν αὐτῷ περιπατεῖτε" (Col. 2.6). He precedes his orthopractic teaching in Colossians 3 with the final admonitions in Colossians 2 to disregard the instructions of those who would lead the Colossian believers to a locus of faith in someone or something other than Christ alone. He reminds them of their spiritual experience stating that

> Ἐν ᾧ καὶ περιετμήθητε περιτομῇ ἀχειροποιήτῳ ἐν τῇ ἀπεκδύσει τοῦ σώματος τῆς σαρκός, ἐν τῇ περιτομῇ τοῦ Χριστοῦ, συνταφέντες αὐτῷ ἐν τῷ βαπτισμῷ, ἐν ᾧ καὶ συνηγέρθητε διὰ τῆς πίστεως τῆς ἐνεργείας τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ ἐγείραντος αὐτὸν ἐκ νεκρῶν (Col. 2.11-12).

It is significant that he concludes the argument against heretical doctrine in this section of Colossians 2 with the warning that all of the additional "requirements" presented as essential for spiritual maturity "ἅτινά ἐστιν λόγον μὲν ἔχοντα σοφίας ἐν ἐθελοθρησκίᾳ καὶ ταπεινοφροσύνῃ [καὶ] ἀφειδίᾳ σώματος, οὐκ ἐν τιμῇ τινι πρὸς πλησμονὴν τῆς σαρκός" (Col. 2.23).[225] It is with that backdrop that Paul shifts from doctrinal teaching to a practical picture of life and characterological transformation for followers of Christ beginning in 3.1.

The chiastic cluster A opens with "Εἰ οὖν" in 3.1. This opening designates a clear break from the preceding section of 2:8-23. It points back to and relates to 2:6-7 as an overarching consideration and command resultant of a now existing reality. Paul also employs the rhetorical tool of "frame of reference" here as well as "right dislocation" which serves to restate "thematic information about the entity that constrains the reader to think about it in a particular way."[226] It separates,

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[225] One aspect of the significance of Paul's statement in Colossians 2.23 is that they contrast the language with which Paul is about to use to describe how to confront issues of "πλησμονὴν τῆς σαρκός." His rationale that unfolds in Colossians 3 for eliminating such behavior is motivated and empowered from a different source than those "ἅτινά ἐστιν λόγον μὲν ἔχοντα σοφίας ἐν ἐθελοθρησκίᾳ καὶ ταπεινοφροσύνῃ [καὶ] ἀφειδίᾳ σώματος."

[226] Runge, *A Discourse Grammar of the Greek New Testament*, 314.

> a portion of the information from the initial reference and delays the complete reference. This is especially the case where the reference in the main clause is too underspecified to identify the entity without the dislocated information.[227]

This structure can be seen in the discourse analysis diagram with the main clauses left-justified according to the margin.

In cluster A, the recipients are immediately reminded of their union with Christ. They are confronted with four aspects of their lived spiritual experience: they (1) "συνηγέρθητε τῷ Χριστῷ;" (2) "ἀπεθάνετε γὰρ;" (3) "καὶ ἡ ζωὴ ὑμῶν κέκρυπται σὺν τῷ Χριστῷ," and (4) "ὅταν ὁ Χριστὸς φανερωθῇ, ἡ ζωὴ ὑμῶν, τότε καὶ ὑμεῖς σὺν αὐτῷ φανερωθήσεσθε ἐν δόξῃ." Each of these components except "κέκρυπται and φανερωθήσεσθε" has an aoristic verbal aspect that reflects a statement of an event that occurred. The two non-aoristic verbal elements are in the perfect and future tense respectively. Paul both reminds the recipients of the reality of specific spiritual events that have happened in their lives as well as brings to mind two realities that are still in a progressive state or are yet to take place. This rhetoric creates a spirituality within the recipients of both trust and hope. In light of the spiritual reality of their union with Christ, they can trust that Christ is indeed sufficient for the totality of their spiritual experience. Their life is directly connected to Christ himself who is indeed "ἡ ζωὴ ὑμῶν." Since that union is their lived experience, this creates a spirituality of trust that as Christ currently has the "seat" of authority at the right hand of God, so Christ also will be revealed as victorious at the *parousia*. If their union with Christ is genuine, then their lived experience will be that they too will be revealed as victorious with him. This image of the *parousia* creates a spirituality of hope in the lives of the recipients that transcends the circumstances and difficulties of this present life.

The primary focus of cluster A immediately precedes the "σχῆμα διανοίας."[228] Paul commands the recipients to both "τὰ ἄνω ζητεῖτε" and to "τὰ ἄνω φρονεῖτε" and contrasts that locus of seeking with, "μὴ τὰ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς." This comparison creates a spirituality of redirected seeking and thinking. As noted previously in this research the Colossian believers were likely converts from the cultural and spiritual milieu that permeated the area, and their conduct likely reflected that lifestyle. Paul poignantly

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[227] Runge, *A Discourse Grammar of the Greek New Testament*, 313.

[228] This σχῆμα διανοίας is introduced here but more fully developed with regards to its significance in Paul's overarching causal agents in character transformation in a later section.

reminds the recipients in 3.7, "ἐν οἷς καὶ ὑμεῖς περιεπατήσατέ ποτε, ὅτε ἐζῆτε ἐν τούτοις."

This spirituality of redirected seeking and thinking is directly and inextricably linked to the corresponding chiastic cluster A^1 as well as generating the additional spiritualities of shalom, community, and gratitude. In this cluster of A^1, Paul directs the believers toward the goal of character transformation with the double imperatives to both "ἡ εἰρήνη τοῦ Χριστοῦ βραβευέτω ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις ὑμῶν" (3.15); "Ὁ λόγος τοῦ Χριστοῦ ἐνοικείτω ἐν ὑμῖν πλουσίως" (3.16). Both of these commands bring the Christ-follower to the place where there is the potential for a lived experience in which "πᾶν ὅ τι ἐὰν ποιῆτε ἐν λόγῳ ἢ ἐν ἔργῳ, πάντα ἐν ὀνόματι κυρίου Ἰησοῦ" (3.17). The lived experience or spirituality of redirected seeking and thinking upon "τὰ ἄνω, οὗ ὁ Χριστός ἐστιν," leads to characterological transformation of both the body, on an individual and corporate level ("ἡ εἰρήνη τοῦ Χριστοῦ βραβευέτω ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις ὑμῶν, εἰς ἣν καὶ ἐκλήθητε ἐν ἑνὶ σώματι"), and the mind ("Ὁ λόγος τοῦ Χριστοῦ ἐνοικείτω ἐν ὑμῖν πλουσίως").[229] The resultant effect of that progress toward characterological transformation brings about a greater lived spiritual experience of seeking and thinking upon the above things; the focus of which is distinct because of the presence of Christ.

Obedience to the command in 3.15, "καὶ ἡ εἰρήνη τοῦ Χριστοῦ βραβευέτω ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις ὑμῶν, εἰς ἣν καὶ ἐκλήθητε ἐν ἑνὶ σώματι καὶ εὐχάριστοι γίνεσθε," generates the three spiritualities of shalom,[230] community, and gratitude in the recipients. The peace to which they are commanded emanates out of the very core of the person's being: the locus of the heart.[231]

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[229] See Romans 12.1-2 where Paul states, "Παρακαλῶ οὖν ὑμᾶς, ἀδελφοί, διὰ τῶν οἰκτιρμῶν τοῦ θεοῦ παραστῆσαι τὰ σώματα ὑμῶν θυσίαν ζῶσαν ἁγίαν εὐάρεστον τῷ θεῷ, τὴν λογικὴν λατρείαν ὑμῶν· 2 καὶ μὴ συσχηματίζεσθε τῷ αἰῶνι τούτῳ, ἀλλὰ μεταμορφοῦσθε τῇ ἀνακαινώσει τοῦ νοὸς εἰς τὸ δοκιμάζειν ὑμᾶς." The focused commands to present the body and to be transformed through the renewing of the mind mirror the commands by Paul in Colossians 3.1-4 and 3.14-17 as well as create spiritualities within the hearers and readers through their dynamic interaction with the text.

[230] The idea of εἰρήνη is more fully understood with the Hebrew comparative שָׁלֵם and bears the idea of completeness and soundness which only comes through the peace that Christ has brought as Paul expresses in Colossians 1.20. He contrasts that peace with the reminder to the Colossians in 1.22 of the body and mind locus prior to their regeneration which was "ἀπηλλοτριωμένους καὶ ἐχθροὺς τῇ διανοίᾳ ἐν τοῖς ἔργοις τοῖς πονηροῖς." See Brown, F., Driver, S., Briggs, C. *The New Brown-Driver-Briggs-Gesenius Hebrew and English Lexicon*, (no. 7999), 1022 for a fuller explanation of the idea of שָׁלֵם.

[231] As will be pointed out in the theological ramifications of this command that influence the lived experience of the recipients the locus of the heart is not intended to be interpreted as the physical, anatomical organ. The heart, as Paul intends here, does influence the body but not in the way the organ would do so.

When Paul instructs the readers and hearers to "Ὁ λόγος τοῦ Χριστοῦ[232] ἐνοικείτω ἐν ὑμῖν πλουσίως" he is specific in his rhetorical choice. As Lohse states,

> Instead of "the word" (ὁ λόγος 4:3), "the word of God" (ὁ λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ 1:25) or "word of the Lord" (λόγος κυρίου 1 Thess. 4:15; 2 Thess. 3:1), "the word of Christ" (ὁ λόγος τοῦ Χριστοῦ occurs here. It corresponds to the expression used in v 15: "the peace of Christ" (ἡ εἰρήνη τοῦ Χριστοῦ). This word is the "Gospel of Christ" (εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ Χριστοῦ Gal 1:7; 1 Cor 9:12; 2 Cor 2:12, etc.), which "in the word of truth, i.e. of the gospel" (ἐν τῷ λόγῳ τῆς ἀληθείας τοῦ εὐαγγελίου) came to the community, where it gained ground (1:5f).[233]

Paul links the "peace of Christ" to the "word of Christ" as a rhetorical strategy to highlight the centrality of Christ to the new community formed through the renewal process of Colossians 3.10-11.

The spirituality of community is created as the Christ-followers reflect on Paul's indication that the peace to which they are commanded to yield is one to which they were called "ἐν ἑνὶ σώματι." Throughout the rest of the cluster, Paul alludes to "community" transformative habits.[234] These are habits they are to "put on" in the presence of and with the assistance of the other members of the community of Christ-followers for which they are to be grateful. The spirituality of gratitude is created as Paul lays before the Colossian believers the spiritual reality of their new identity with one another and as they consider what Christ has done for them. Paul tells them in 3.15, "καὶ εὐχάριστοι γίνεσθε." In 3.16, as "Ὁ λόγος τοῦ Χριστοῦ ἐνοικείτω ἐν ὑμῖν πλουσίως," they are to participate in community activities of wisdom infused teaching and correction (See 2 Tim. 3.16) and they are to sing to God "ἐν [τῇ] χάριτι ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις ὑμῶν τῷ θεῷ." The substance of their singing; "ψαλμοῖς, ὕμνοις, and ᾠδαῖς πνευματικαῖς" will continuously bring to their recollection the greatness of God and the redemption and transformation to which they are called.

As Paul moves from cluster A to cluster B, his rhetoric shifts from eschatological

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[232] It is noteworthy that this phrase occurs only here and Heb. 6.1 in the New Testament. In the latter, it is communicated as τοῦ Χριστοῦ λόγον. The interpretive aspects generally point to "the gospel" or the "teaching of Christ" as a whole but not limited to strictly "the words spoken by Christ" (as would be the case if the phrase were a subjective genitive). It is much more likely, given the lack of a plural nature to the word "λόγον" that the intention is one of an objective genitive. See Pao, *Colossians and Philemon*, 247. See also Colossians 1.5-6 for an inter-textual understanding of the word dwelling among the Colossian believers.

[233] Lohse, *Colossians and Philemon*, 150.

[234] See Colossians 3.16 especially. These are habits that are to typify the renewed lives both in their community and specifically in their worship.

reality and transformation in seeking and thinking to a lived experience of behavioral habits. In cluster B the apostle Paul commands the recipients to "Νεκρώσατε οὖν τὰ μέλη τὰ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς and νυνὶ δὲ ἀπόθεσθε καὶ ὑμεῖς τὰ πάντα." In his description of what they are to put to death and to put off, he presents two lists of vices. The lists are distinctly different. The first list (3.5) deals primarily with misplaced sexual activity, concluding with the vice of πλεονεξίαν, and the second (3.8) deals with the verbally abusive treatment of others, yet both lists are related. The substantive content of both lists were the first two topics addressed by Jesus in Matt. 5.27-30 and 5.21-26 respectively.

Misdirected sexual expression, here coupled by Paul with greed, and expressions of anger are rooted in the same sinful orientation. Both vices reflect an attitude of pride. The vices expressed in the first list seek to use others or to have what others have for one's satisfaction. Anger is "a *feeling* that seizes us in our body and immediately impels toward interfering with, and possibly even harming, those who have thwarted our will and interfered with our life."[235] The root of such prideful behaviors expressed in the vices of misplaced sexual focus and misappropriated desire for material things is idolatry which, Paul says, "δι' ἃ ἔρχεται ἡ ὀργὴ τοῦ θεοῦ [ἐπὶ τοὺς υἱοὺς τῆς ἀπειθείας]."[236] Paul states that these acts and attitudes are to be "put to death" and "put away" noting that they were part of their lives and behavior prior to their union with Christ. The rhetoric of Paul creates within the recipients the spiritualities of obedience, humility, and self-examination. Their former lives of untransformed character reflected a formed character from such behaviors that now in coming to Christ they have "put off." Their lived experience and their experience of the divine create the spirituality of obedience such that their outward behavior must reflect a genuine spiritual change. As the recipients reflect on their former lives and how they previously treated others, both with outward behavior and inner attitude, Paul's rhetoric expressed in the inclusion of the vice lists creates the spiritualities of humility and self-examination that leads to a greater experience of the divine.

Cluster B^1 stands in contrast to cluster B in as much as B reflects vices that have no place in the life of a Christ-follower and B^1 presents those kinds of virtues that are evident in the Christ-follower's character in the process of transformation. Both clusters

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[235] Willard, *The Divine Conspiracy*, 147.

[236] It is of interest to note here that pride is identified as the first sin that resulted in the fall of humankind. It is also equated with idolatry which places self above all others including God. Idolatry, in whatever vice it finds expression, is also the first commandment of the Decalogue given to Moses (Ex. 20.3-6 and that commandment which receives more elaboration than any of the remaining nine.

begin with an aoristic verbal element in the imperative mood. These are not suggestions but commands.[237] The tone of the two lists shifts from those things which are characteristic of "τὰ μέλη τὰ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς" in cluster B to those which are characteristic of "τὰ ἄνω" in B^1. Witherington comments on the virtues saying, "it is noteworthy that all of them are said somewhere in the Bible to be characteristic of God or Christ."[238] This connection would be a reasonable association with the locus of "τὰ ἄνω" identified as "οὗ ὁ Χριστός ἐστιν ἐν δεξιᾷ τοῦ θεοῦ καθήμενος." The virtues are identified with Christ and representative of those things which the Christ-followers are to focus upon with mind-body in both attitude and action. Paul's rhetoric in this progression of virtues and commands generates within the recipients the spiritualities of inclusion, active love, shalom, gratitude, and community.

Paul identifies the Christ-followers as "ἐκλεκτοὶ τοῦ θεοῦ ἅγιοι καὶ ἠγαπημένοι." These three identifiers, the elect ("chosen" of God), holy, and loved by God[239] describe the new humanity and community of those who "συνηγέρθητε τῷ Χριστῷ." "More clearly than anywhere else in Colossians it is evident that the Gentile recipients of the letter were being invited to consider themselves full participants in the people and heritage of Israel."[240] The association of the Christ-followers with "ἐκλεκτοὶ τοῦ θεοῦ ἅγιοι καὶ ἠγαπημένοι" creates within the recipients a spirituality of inclusion or belonging into the realm of those actively being loved by God and reinforces "the boundary between believers and the outside world and to generate cohesion."[241]

Paul's list of five virtues that stands in stark contrast to the two lists of five vices each (3.5, 8) and is capped with the statement in 3.14, "ἐπὶ πᾶσιν δὲ τούτοις τὴν ἀγάπην, ὅ ἐστιν σύνδεσμος τῆς τελειότητος." The person whose character is in the transformation

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[237] The voice aspect of both verbs differs with Νεκρώσατε being in the active voice and Ἐνδύσασθε being in the middle voice. While both are aoristic and point to an event that occurs as well as imperatival and as such commands, the possible inferential nuance with the shift from an active voice to the middle voice is worth further attention.

[238] Witherington III, *The Letters to Philemon, the Colossians, and the Ephesians*, 179.

[239] The participial element in verse 12, ἠγαπημένοι, used to describe the Christ-followers is in the passive mood. They are the focus and object of love relating back to τοῦ θεοῦ yielding the translation being loved by or of God. It is a perfect tense and "implicates contemporaneous action, in which the action of the participle occurs at the same time as that of the leading verb" (Campbell, xxvii), in this case, Ἐνδύσασθε. This verbal aspect suggests an arena of renewal and transformation in which the Christ-follower is putting on the habits of the new person/human of 3.10 (ἐνδυσάμενοι τὸν νέον τὸν ἀνακαινούμενον). Such obedience is operative and occurs within the sphere of focused love from God.

[240] Dunn, *The Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon*, 228.

[241] MacDonald, *Colossians and Ephesians*, 139.

process and who is the focus of the love of God is to put on the habits characteristic of God and Christ. These habits are to be done with active love that holds them all together perfectly and completely. Such an encounter with this text generates the spirituality of active love in the recipients.

The hinge point of the chiastic structure is found in cluster C. The cluster is bordered on both sides by the lists of vices and virtues. It is to this cluster that Paul is drawing the most attention as he considers the process of character transformation in the lives of the recipients. They have, at the point of regeneration, "put off" the old person and now "ἐνδυσάμενοι τὸν νέον τὸν ἀνακαινούμενον εἰς ἐπίγνωσιν κατ᾽ εἰκόνα τοῦ κτίσαντος αὐτόν" (Col. 3.10). This statement of two ongoing spiritual realities ("ἐνδυσάμενοι τὸν νέον") and ("τὸν ἀνακαινούμενον")[242] creates the spiritualities of active participation and emulation.

The spirituality of active participation is created through the personal responsibility of "ἐνδυσάμενοι τὸν νέον," but the passive nature of the renewal process evidenced by the passive voice used to describe it with "τὸν ἀνακαινούμενον." The process of character transformation involves the dynamics of human and divine agency. The use of repetition by Paul reinforces the need for the recipients to be actively engaged in the transformation process through the putting off and putting on of characterological habits that are no longer part of their new life in Christ or are to represent that new life through habits and actions that are part of the character and nature of God and Christ. The active participation is balanced with the reality that all ongoing renewal is wholly and ultimately the work and responsibility of the divine.

The Christ-followers are dynamically involved in the transformation process with active participation. Part of Paul's rhetorical strategy is to point the believers to the goal and model of their transformation. This goal is evident in the apodosis of 3.10. Paul states that "τὸν ἀνακαινούμενον εἰς ἐπίγνωσιν κατ᾽ εἰκόνα τοῦ κτίσαντος αὐτόν." The

[242] The participial elements in Colossians 3.10 referenced are aorist middle and present passive, respectively. The aoristic verbal element of the first participle points back to an event that occurred prior the action of the main verb; in this case, it points back to ψεύδεσθε εἰς ἀλλήλους in 3.9. It would appear that even though "ἀπεκδυσάμενοι τὸν παλαιὸν ἄνθρωπον σὺν ταῖς πράξεσιν αὐτοῦ," the issue of lying was still resident in their members. Paul is commanding them to stop this ongoing vice with the rationale that they have left the spiritual "clothing" of that former person behind and it is not representative of the life they are now to live. This process of ongoing transformation would be evidenced by the present passive participle that refers to the renewing of that new person which they have now put on. Of note is the characteristic middle voice used to denote all of the references to "putting off" and "putting on," but the command to "put to death" is an aorist active imperative.

ongoing renewal of the new person has a model by which it is being renewed, and that is "κατ' εἰκόνα τοῦ κτίσαντος αὐτόν." In Colossians 1.15 Paul identifies Christ "ὅς ἐστιν εἰκὼν τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ ἀοράτου." As noted earlier in network d the referent of "τοῦ κτίσαντος αὐτόν" is God. It is the image into which "the new" is being renewed that is the center point of the cluster. In the transformation process, Christ is the focus (3.-14), the image (3.10), and the embodied expression of a transformed character (3.15-17).

The ongoing renewal process also creates a spirituality of identity. In Colossians 3.11 Paul states, "ὅπου οὐκ ἔνι Ἕλλην καὶ Ἰουδαῖος, περιτομὴ καὶ ἀκροβυστία, βάρβαρος, Σκύθης, δοῦλος, ἐλεύθερος, ἀλλὰ [τὰ] πάντα καὶ ἐν πᾶσιν Χριστός."

> Paul says that in the new humanity, whose knowledge of reality conforms to the viewpoint of the Creator, no distinction is drawn between Greek and Jew, between those who are circumcised and those who are not, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free because Christ in each one is the only thing that matters.[243]

Paul speaks this word into a worldview of separation and suspicion of outsiders; of dyadic relationships and collective identity infused with issues of honor and shame and punctuated with purity codes. Paul describes a new collective identity and a new dyadic relationship with Christ as both the basis and model for the new person. A spirituality of identity is created within the Colossian believers as they experience the ongoing renewal and transformation of character.

The pericope displays a progression that begins with 3.1-4 and an admonition to "τὰ ἄνω ζητεῖτε" and "τὰ ἄνω φρονεῖτε" based upon the present conditional reality "Εἰ οὖν συνηγέρθητε τῷ Χριστῷ" with an eschatological reality that is not yet realized but will be so "ὅταν ὁ Χριστὸς φανερωθῇ." This subsection is composed of a σχῆμα διανοίας in 3.3-4 that provides structural cohesion and allows insight into the justification for the subsequent admonitions in the pericope. The double chiasmus is seen in the representation of Colossians 3.3-4 in Fig. 7.

3 ἀπεθάνετε	γὰρ καὶ	ἡ ζωὴ ὑμῶν	κέκρυπται	σὺν	τῷ Χριστῷ	ἐν	τῷ θεῷ· 4 ὅταν ὁ
A1		A2	A3		A4		
Χριστὸς	φανερωθῇ,	ἡ ζωὴ ὑμῶν,	τότε καὶ	ὑμεῖς	σὺν αὐτῷ	φανερωθήσεσθε	ἐν δόξῃ
B4	B3	B2			B1		

Figure 7. Double Chiasmus of Colossians 3.3-4[244]

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[243] Willard, *The Divine Conspiracy*, 126.

[244] This chiastic structure is based upon the work of Louw, *Semantics of New Testament Greek*,

This double chiasmus creates the image of the essential kerygmatic message of the death, burial, and resurrection, though not precisely in that order. Paul takes the kerygmatic picture a step further in the way he points to the *parousia* and the φανερόω of Christ with his believers at that time. By utilizing this structure, the apostle Paul identifies the believers with Christ in their salvation experience and reminds them of their spiritual union with him. The center point of the chiasmus is "τῷ θεῷ" bordered on either side by "τῷ Χριστῷ" and "ὁ Χριστὸς" respectively. It is "ὁ θεὸς ἐν Χριστῷ" who gives the believers both the risen life and the motivation to live that risen life accordingly.

The third chiasmus is found in Colossians 3.7 in Paul's transitional statement between the two vice lists of Colossians 3.5-6 and 3.8 respectively. This chiasmus is displayed in Figure 8.

7 ἐν οἷς	καὶ ὑμεῖς περιεπατήσατέ	ποτε,	ὅτε	ἐζῆτε	ἐν τούτοις	
A	B	C	C^1	B^1	A^1	

Figure 8. Chiastic structure of Colossians 3.7[245]

"Word order in Greek, however, points to a chiastic structure with "then" and "when" at the center, highlighting the former pattern of behavior of these believers."[246] With the chiastic structure of 3.7, Paul draws the attention of the reader to the distinction between their previous way of living and the fact that they were immersed in such a lifestyle. This dialectic creates tension in the readers as they are reminded that the behaviors listed are part of a former life and not to be representative of their present state, already presented in Colossians 3.1-4.

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[245] Pao, *Colossians and Philemon*, 222.

[246] Ibid.

The fourth chiasmus is displayed in Colossians 3.11 as Paul presents the new community for which Christ is both model and central focus. Pao proposes the following diagram for this "chiasmus-like" structure stating that "this proposal not only maintains the contrasting nature of this pair, but it also explains the relationship between the first and second pair, and thus the third and fourth." This structure is displayed in Figure 9.

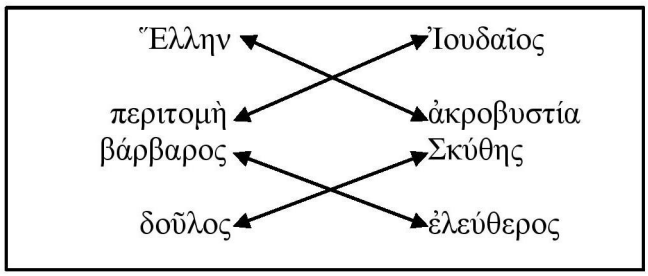

Figure 9. The chiastic relationship between the four paired groups in Colossians 3.11[247]

As noted, the structure lacks a cohesive hinge point, and so doubt remains as to the validity of the actual chiasmus. However, the structure does serve to highlight the extreme nature of the new identity in Christ as it unravels every cultural, religious, and social barrier within the prevailing worldview.

There intentional use of the chiastic structures presents distinct theological significance. The elements that compose the chiasmi, with their corresponding structure, support the viewpoint that it is God and Christ who are the center point for regeneration. Further, it is also God that initiates the transformation and renewal process through the Christ agent with the person of Christ as the model for the transformation process. In light of the examination of the chiastic structure and the related components, a more detailed transformation triangle is presented in Figure 10 that serves as a proposed model for Paul's process for transformation of character.

[247] Ibid., 228.

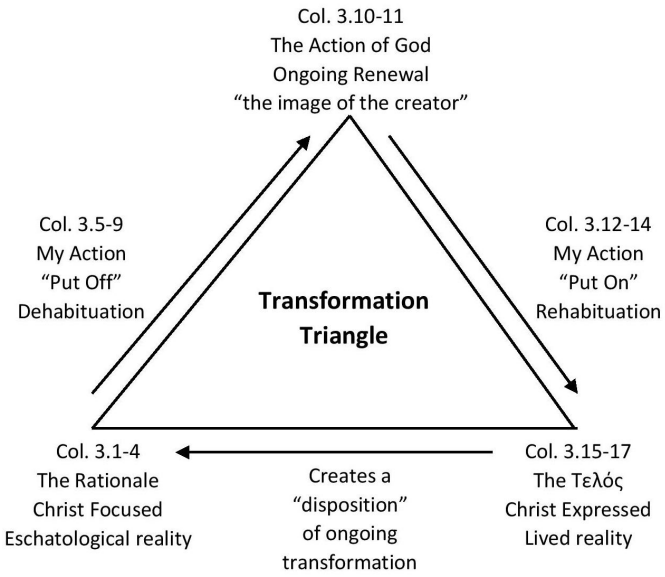

Figure 10. A proposed Pauline model for the process of transformation of character

5.3.3 The Second Effect: Composition of Images

The encounter between the text and the reader or hearer leads to an experience below the level of conscious observation. This level of observation is necessary in order for the recipient to make sense of the text and, as such, forms part of the process of participation in the experience of the text. The foundational level of this "encounter" experience is the second effect of textual encounter: the creation of images. Words, on a page or spoken, create images. "The mental imagery . . . is something which accompanies our reading" and as it is on the subconscious level; it is neither completely under the control of the reader nor is it the primary focus of attention.[248] These images are an essential aspect of reading a text; "we always have to form mental images, because the 'schematized aspects' of the text only offer us knowledge of the conditions under which the imaginary object is to be produced."[249] The use of the senses enhances the creation of images. As one *hears* a text read, the sounds of the words and the rhythm of grammatical construction help form images that accompany the substance of the discourse. The chiastic structures noted above are examples of such an experience. They serve to create images for the reader or

[248] Iser, *The Act of Reading*, *136*.

[249] Ibid., 137.

hearer based on the hinge or focal point of the chiasmus. The "reader has been pulled into the text and the text into the reader."[250]

The rhetoric of the apostle Paul in Colossians 3.1-7 creates images for the readers and hearers. Though these created images are below the surface of the consciousness, they serve to orient the text in the mind of the reader, immerse the reader within the text, and to enhance the lived experience of the text. The images created through an encounter with the text of Colossians 3.1-17 will vary based on the previous lived experience of those who encounter the text. However, the creation of some images can be inferred, based upon the previous research as to their worldview, culture, beliefs, values, and likelihood of lived experience.

Some of the images created through the first effect of the dynamic interaction with the text of Colossians 3.1-17 are mentioned here, but they are explored further in the following chapter that addresses the spiritualities that are generated through these images. Within the first chiastic cluster, Paul uses words like "συνηγέρθητε τῷ Χριστῷ," "ἀπεθάνετε γὰρ," "καὶ ὑμεῖς σὺν αὐτῷ φανερωθήσεσθε ἐν δόξῃ." These words create images of death, the crucifixion of Christ himself, and images of what will happen at the *parousia*. The images created by the use of the word picture "τὰ ἄνω" come into sharper focus when they accompany the descriptive spatial imagery of "οὗ ὁ Χριστός ἐστιν ἐν δεξιᾷ τοῦ θεοῦ καθήμενος." Paul creates subconscious images when he uses words like ἀπόθεσθε, ἀπεκδυσάμενοι, ἐνδυσάμενοι, and Ἐνδύσασθε. These words can create images related to baptism or a time when the commitment was made to follow Christ in obedience. The creation of the image of a new identity comes through Colossians 3.10-11 and "τὸν νέον τὸν ἀνακαινούμενον εἰς ἐπίγνωσιν κατ' εἰκόνα τοῦ κτίσαντος αὐτόν" with the corresponding new community. "This has the effect of reminding the readers that Christian ethics is not a matter merely of individual resolve, but involves a corporate dimension; Adam Christology leads directly into a theology of the body of Christ."[251]

The images created through a dynamic encounter with the text are limited only by the imagination of the reader and hearer. These examples noted here are by no means meant to be exhaustive but merely representative of the kinds of images that are created through the lived experience of the text. The created images lead to a third effect upon the

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[250] Waaijman, *Spirituality*, 742.

[251] Dunn, *The Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon*, 222–223.

reader, and that is the dialectic of retention and protension.

5.3.4 The Third Effect: The Dialectic of Retention and Protension Through Repetition

The dialectic of retention and protension is part of a tripartite lived experience of "primal impression, retention, and protension,"[252] that is created when the text is repeatedly read aloud. The reading of the text and the interaction between the text and reader causes the reader or hearer to have a phenomenological experience whereby the sensation of hearing the text[253] is accompanied by associations with past knowledge or experience. This experience is accompanied by tension over what is yet to happen in the unfolding text. This dialectic comes together to form the nexus of the "now" moment of retention and protension.[254] "Thus every moment of reading is a dialectic of protension and retention, conveying a future horizon yet to be occupied, along with a past (and continually fading) horizon already filled."[255]

There are a number of semantic relations within the pericope that facilitate the dialectic of retention and protension. The temporal categories in 3.1-4 bring the reader or hearer to look back to the point of baptism or union with Christ and what is yet to come with the *parousia*. The repetition of terms like "τὰ ἄνω" and the progression of the phrase "τὰ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς" generate the dialectic of retention and protension, especially as Paul introduces the further explanation of those things in the images created with Νεκρώσατε, ἀπόθεσθε, ἀπεκδυσάμενοι, ἐνδυσάμενοι, and Ἐνδύσασθε. These semantic relations bring

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[252] John Brough, *Edmund Husserl: Critical Assessments of Leading Philosophers*, vol. 3, eds. Rudolf Bernet, Donn Welton, and Gina Zavota (London: Routledge, 2005), 262.

[253] The experience is facilitated by either the repetition of reading the same text or through the use of repetitive words in the text that form critical concepts or phrases that have their own relation to created images.

[254] See John Brough, *Edmund Husserl*, 262. The concept of temporal determinations is difficult to express in such a limited span. The application of the concept to the effect of the text upon the reader is less difficult to grasp if one envisions the unfolding images that are created through the encounter with the text. These images provide sensorial experiences within the hearer. Those experiences are connected in the mind and related to past events or encounters that one brings to the text. This connection to past experiences is what is meant in the term retention. The hearers "retains" past experiences in the memory and connects them with the new experiences generated through the creation of the images. This retention leads to the temporal "leap" a person makes that provides the tension over what is yet to unfold in their lived experience of the text. This is the aspect of forward-looking tension, or *protension*. Waaijman, *Spirituality*, 744, expresses it this way, "Retention preserves the past in the memory which, though filled with it, is at the same time divested of presentness and therefore empty: a state which makes possible a constant resumption,"

[255] Iser, *The Act of Reading*, 112.

the dialectic to the "now" moment of their experience with the text. The use of repeated words like πᾶν and πάντα create the dialectic of protension when looked at the semantic relationship with the use of the word πάντα in 3.8. In 3.8 Paul exhorts the readers to put off completely "all" the vices that follow, while in 3.17 he is exhorting them to do "all" things, with the emphasis on totality, "ἐν ὀνόματι κυρίου Ἰησοῦ." The third effect upon the reader through a textual encounter, like the first two, finds expression through the embedded rhetorical strategies of Paul.

5.4 Conclusion to the Inner and Intertexture of Colossians 3.1-17

The application of discourse analysis to the pericope of Colossians 3.1-17 reveals distinct semantic and linguistic networks. Within these networks, Paul embeds spiritualities that generate a lived experience of the divine in the lives of the readers and hearers. Paul is intentional and strategic in his use of rhetoric and structure to convey his process for the transformation of character. He uses the mechanism of chiastic structure to add texture and highlight those aspects that are most central to the theme and process.

Throughout the pericope, there is a central focus upon the person of Christ and God. These persons form the basis for the shape of the pericope. The passage begins with Christ (3.1-4) and ends with Christ (3.15-17). It begins with spiritual regeneration (3.1) and ends with characterological transformation (3.17). Within the body, of the pericope Paul draws distinctions between behaviors that, though once were part of the lived experience of the readers (3.5-9), the believers' fundamental orientation has changed (3.1-2). There is no longer any place in their lives for those characterological expressions. Paul commands them to count the former parts of their lives as dead (3.5) and to put off, once and for all time forward, those behaviors (3.8). Paul does not leave the believers without a moral compass. He commands them to put on (3.12) characterological qualities that reflect the persons of Christ and God (3.12-14). If the paraenetic material went no further than this, it would not differ substantively from any of the transformational philosophy of Aristotle or humanistic philosophy of more recent times. Paul never intends such a misinterpretation. The focal point of the entire discourse centers on the persons of Christ and God (3.10). God is the initiator of the salvific experience (3.1), and he is the sustainer of the sanctification experience (3.10). Christ is the focus of body-mind activities (3.1-4), the model for the ongoing process of renewal (3.10), and the embodiment of the transformational process (3.15-17).

Paul is clear about the intention of God in that transformation. God creates a new identity (3.10) that forms a new community (3.11). The ongoing process of character transformation generates spiritualities and lived experiences of the divine in the lives of the Christ-follows that encounter the text. These spiritualities and the theological texture embedded within the text are explored in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 6

THEOLOGICAL AND EMBODIMENT TEXTURES OF COLOSSIANS 3.1-17 AND THE SPIRITUALITIES FOSTERED THROUGH TEXTUAL ENCOUNTER

6.1 Defining the Interconnectedness Between Theology and Spirituality

While discourse analysis allows for the discernment of a reliable hermeneutic, that hermeneutic is not an end unto itself. There are additional textures embedded within the text that arise through the interpretative process. One of these textures is the creation of a theological texture by which the recipient interprets the intended message and facilitates a deeper understanding of God. A second, though often unexplored, essential texture to understanding the original sender's intent is the effect upon the reader/hearer through the creation of various spiritualities within the lives of the intended recipients. The theological and spirituality textures of a text provide more than a simple linear level of understanding focused upon the structural and grammatical mechanisms utilized by the writer. The textures of theology and spirituality inform the development of faith through the understanding of the divine and the manner in which the divine interacts with human life and the world.

> While the nexus of the two textures of theology and spirituality is the comprehension and experience of the divine, both terms require further explanation in order to understand their inter-relatedness. As Schneiders states, "The recognition that there exists a vital relationship between faith and spirituality on the one hand and theology and spirituality on the other by no means clarifies either what is meant by the term "spirituality" or what the relationship among faith, theology, and spirituality is."[1]

Spirituality is difficult to define in terms with which all who study the field would agree. As Kourie points out, "there is no clear, unequivocal definition of the concept that is acceptable to all interested in the field."[2] The working definition of spirituality previously proposed in this research is a synthesis of faith and belief that arises through a

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[1] Schneiders, "Spirituality in the Academy," 678.

[2] Celia Kourie, "The 'Turn' to Spirituality," *Acta Theologica Supplementum 8,* 27 no. 2 (2007): 22.

lived experience of the divine. This synthesis becomes the perception of lived reality as it provides the framework for further lived experiences. According to Chan, "Spirituality is the lived reality."[3]

Further, spirituality is inextricably linked to theology in that Christian theology seeks to process and systematize the understanding of the divine as it is expressed in the Bible.[4] Thus, spirituality and theology concomitantly inform each other and provide validation of both the lived experiences and the perceived understanding of the experience of the divine.[5] As McGrath notes, "Perhaps the simplest way of characterizing the relation between theology and spirituality is to suggest that the former is about the theory, and the latter the practice, of the Christian life."[6] Spirituality expresses the lived experience of the divine and facilitates the embodiment of hypothesis and theory expressed in theology. Sheldrake states, "Spirituality is not simply concerned with experience but embodies a viewpoint (theory), commitments (ethics), and practices (not simply devotional practices but action in the world)."[7] Theology provides the biblical grounding for generated

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[3] Simon Chan, *Spiritual Theology* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1998), 16.

[4] Both here in the discussion of theology and in the discussion of spirituality it is the position of this research that such discussion is rooted in a more traditional understanding of theology as it relates specifically to the study and understanding of the God revealed through canonical Scripture. Additionally, the discussion of spirituality reflects the same "rootedness" in that while there are a multitude of secular spiritualties that may exist and provide valuable expression to lived reality, the arena of Christian spirituality and specifically that which finds foundational the constructs of Scripture provide the framework for all discussion of the subject. The viewpoint of this research would be that expressed by Schneiders, "Christian spirituality as Christian specifies the horizon of ultimate value as the triune God revealed in Jesus Christ to whom Scripture normatively witnesses and whose life is communicated to the believer by the Holy Spirit making her or him a child of God." Sandra M. Schneiders, "Approaches to the Study of Christian Spirituality," *The Blackwell Companion to Christian Spirituality*, ed. Arthur Holder (Oxford: Blackwell, 2005), 27. Thus, every reference to spirituality in this research assumes the position of Christian spirituality without the necessity to repeat the distinction. See Waaijman, *Spirituality*, 429-30 for further elaboration of various investigative criteria, though none are addressed here. For further discussion on the divergence of spirituality outside of the reams of religion see Anne C. Jacobs, "Spirituality: History and Contemporary Developments – An Evaluation," *Koers – Bulletin for Christian Scholarship* 78 no. 1, Art. #445 (2013): 1-12.

[5] It should be noted here that the perspective of this research is that the ultimate ground for authority for understanding God and interpreting spirituality is canonical Scripture. While spirituality and theology inform and validate each other, all validation is ultimately compared with the revelation of the nature and character of God through the Bible. Since God is infinite, God can never be fully understood or grasped. Therefore, all experiences of God and hypothesized understanding of God are subjected to biblical authority for validity. Where spirituality and theology are in agreement with biblical evidence, they are held with hypothesized certainty. Where the two conflict with canonical Scripture, they are disregarded based on the ultimate authority of Scripture for all matters of life and practice, including the understanding of theology and the interpretation of spirituality.

[6] Alistair McGrath, *Christian Spirituality: An Introduction* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1999), 25.

[7] Philip Sheldrake, "Spirituality and the Integrity of Theology," *Spiritus: A Journal of Christian Spirituality*, 7 no. 1 (2007): 96.

spiritualities that come through phenomenological realities of human/divine interaction. Both theology and spirituality are essential for an understanding of God. Without theology, spirituality has no basis for objective evaluation and mooring for veracity. Without spirituality, theology is relegated to lifeless theory and untried hypotheses and lacks applicability to experiential interaction with God and God's interaction with God's created order.

The apostle Paul understands the essential interconnectedness of theology and spirituality and often demonstrates this in the structure of his canonical writings. This interconnectedness is apparent in the pericope of Colossians 3.1-17 as Paul begins his discourse with a focus upon theological foundations with implications that foster particular spiritualities. Paul wants his readers to ground their corporeal activity and considered thinking within the constructs of theology as they relate to the spirituality realized through their experience of Christ and the work of God in their lives (3.1-2). Paul further expresses this interconnectedness of theology and spirituality with a call to ethical conduct based on theological realities and fostered spiritualities that lead to changed behavior. The theologically grounded paraenetic material in the pericope deliberately generates specific spiritualities within the recipients as the consequence of particular effects resultant from the encounter with the text.[8] "The spiritualities form part of the rhetoric of the text to motivate the reader to adhere to the exhortations."[9] These spiritualities that arise from the text and the lived experience of the divine that occurs through the repetition of this textual encounter facilitates the texture of embodiment through the embedding of the text itself into the lives of the recipients.

The embedding of text within the lives of recipients is a deeply profound experience facilitated by the mechanisms of dynamic interaction between the text and the reader, the creation of images, and the dialectic of retention and protension. The embedding of the text is the essential fulfillment of theology and spirituality as the recipients become the living embodiment of the text and the text is repeatedly expressed in their lived experience of the divine. This process of embodiment creates a theological and spirituality

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[8] Three of these effects, briefly introduced in the preceding chapter, include the dynamic interaction between the text and the reader, the creation of images, and the dialectic of retention and protension.

[9] van der Merwe, "1 John: 'Effects' in biblical texts that constitute 'lived experiences' in the contemplative reading of those texts," 4, accessed January 22, 2018, http://dx.doi.org/10.4102/ids.v49i2.1930.

cascade that further synthesizes faith and belief and is the culmination of the transforming progression into Christlikeness.

The theological and spirituality textures within the pericope are examined through the mechanism of the semantic networks embedded within the text as indicated and briefly discussed in the preceding chapter and the inner textures of Colossians 3.1-17. These inner textures are further thickened through the incorporation of theological intertextures within the Colossian epistolary material preceding and following the pericope.[10] The textures in the focal pericope are further considered together with an application of the images created and the dialectic of retention and protension that arise from the dynamic interaction between the text and the reader. These two textures, as they relate to the transformation of character in Colossians 3.1-17, find fulfillment in the texture of embodiment, which follows the examination of the theological and spirituality textures.

6.2 Theological and Spirituality Textures Embedded in the Networks

In his discussion of the sacred texture of the text, Robbins presents eight subtextures or "categories [that] attempt to guide the reader in a programmatic search for sacred aspects of a text" and are beneficial to the discernment of the theology inherent within the texture.[11] An examination of the sacred texture of a text "will derive the theology

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[10] It is acknowledged that the scope of this research does not allow the fullest development of the theological intertexture much beyond the Colossian epistle. With few exceptions, the intertextural material will be limited to epistolary material in Colossians that precedes and follows the pericope. The Colossian material that follows the pericope is included due to the nature of the effects of the creation of images and the dialectic of retention and protension since both are generated through repetition of interaction with the text. Logically, the interaction with the text through reading or hearing would most likely not stop with the conclusion of the focal pericope but proceed to the end of the epistle. The examination of these effects, as is the case with the intertextures, is limited to the material most relevant to the textures developed within the pericope and their impact upon the process of transformation of character.

[11] Robbins, *Exploring the Texture of Texts*, 120. Gratitude is expressed to Robbins for his thorough presentation of available facets by which one can examine the experience of the divine in a text (120-131). The scope and objective of this research will limit the focus on five of the most critical aspects of the textures as they relate to the pericope of Colossians 3.1-17. These five categories are deity, holy person, human commitment, religious community, and ethics. The five categories are explored as they are expressed in four of the semantic networks embedded within the pericope. The four networks are utilized in an order that presents a more logical flow to the texture rather than in the order in which they appear within the text. As such, the following semantic networks are utilized in the order presented here with their corresponding textural categories: semantic network f: deity, semantic network e: holy person, semantic networks h, i: religious community, semantic network a: human commitment and ethics. It is noted that the theological texture of the two semantic networks, h and i, are examined based on one theological subtexture. The subtexture of religious community is best realized through the examination of both the references to plural pronouns and the inclusive pronouns found within the pericope. Neither network on its own fully exploits the development of the subtexture of religious community. It is further noted that semantic network a is examined on the basis of two theological subtextures. The rationale for the dual application is that the paraenetic nature of the discourse leads to a synthesis of human commitment expressed through ethical

of the text from what the text says about God and religious life. In other words, theology would be contextual – what the text assumes about the sacred."[12] Five sacred subtextures identified by Robbins are utilized in this research to explore the formation of the theological texture embedded within the semantic networks of the focal pericope as well as the spiritualities generated from the dynamic interaction with that text.[13] The theological texture of the text is further thickened by Paul through the exploitation of the creation of images. These images are created through the dynamic interaction between the text and the reader. As the reader considers the text and the images that arise, a dialectic of retention and protension occurs within the reader. This dialectic serves to thicken the theological texture of the text.

6.2.1 Network f: Paul's descriptive terms for God reveal the theological subtexture of Deity

Within the pericope of Colossians 3.1-17, Paul refers to God in ways that affirm God's deity. Paul describes activities of God and ascribes particular character traits to the nature of God that are beyond human characteristics and in so doing creates an image of a God who is unlike humans in many ways. At the same time, Paul identifies attributes of the deity who is God that demonstrate God's desire for an intimate relationship with humans. The deity Paul portrays in Colossians 3 is one that intends, through this relationship with God, for humans to possess traits of character that God possesses. This intention is a thread that runs through the entirety of the epistle. For those who interact with the text, Paul's picture of a "God that initiates and desires relationship" creates the image of a deity that is distinctly different than humans, yet despite the vast difference this deity

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behavior. Additionally, some of the categories find expression across multiple semantic networks. In those cases of overlap, the corresponding networks will be identified and exploited in order to allow for greater thickening of the texture of the text.

[12] Duane F. Watson, "Why We Need Socio-Rhetorical Commentary and What It Might Look Like," *Rhetorical Criticism and the Bible: Essays from the 1998 Florence Conference*, eds. Stanley E. Porter and Dennis Stamps (London: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002): 149-50.

[13] As previously noted, the scope of this research is not entirely situated within the socio-historical interpretive method, but much of the terminology is utilized as it is beneficial to the understanding of the text and Paul's focus upon transformation of character. The theological texture of the text is one of those areas where, if one were to strictly adhere to the socio-rhetorical interpretive model, the sacred texture would be the appropriate referential term. However, the terminology for this research substitutes Robbins' use of "sacred texture" with the more applicable "theological texture" while noting and expressing gratitude for the valuable addition to the understanding of the theology embedded in sacred text with his "sacred texture" terminology.

desires to be in relationship with humans.

The theological subtexture of deity in Colossians 3.1-17 is created by Paul with the understanding that previous references to God within the epistle serve as the theological backdrop and foundation upon which the intended message about the deity is communicated. The readers of Colossians 3.1-17 do not encounter the focal text in isolation but as part of the larger corpus of Colossians. Therefore, the images and dialect created in the epistolary material preceding the pericope build and reinforce those created within the focal passage. It is essential to include many of these intertextural aspects of the deity of God in order to more fully grasp the impact of those within the pericope and their impact upon transformation of character.

For Paul, God is the deity whose will supersedes his own (1.1); God has authority to dispense grace and the gift of peace (1.1, 6); God has the power to grant knowledge "τοῦ θελήματος αὐτοῦ" (1.9). God the deity can be known as Paul prays for the Colossians that "αὐξανόμενοι τῇ ἐπιγνώσει τοῦ θεοῦ" (1.10). This is a knowledge that is reflected in lives that are pleasing to the Lord and "ἐν παντὶ ἔργῳ ἀγαθῷ καρποφοροῦντες" (1.10). It is a knowledge that extends to "τοῦ μυστηρίου τοῦ θεοῦ, Χριστοῦ, ἐν ᾧ εἰσιν πάντες οἱ θησαυροὶ τῆς σοφίας καὶ γνώσεως ἀπόκρυφοι" (2.2). God the deity is one that has power that Paul states "ἐρρύσατο ἡμᾶς ἐκ τῆς ἐξουσίας τοῦ σκότους καὶ μετέστησεν εἰς τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ υἱοῦ τῆς ἀγάπης αὐτοῦ" (1.13). For Paul, God is the deity with whom there is "τὴν ἀπολύτρωσιν, τὴν ἄφεσιν τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν" (1.14).

Paul presents God as the deity who has the power that raised both the Colossians together with Christ from the dead (2.12) and made them alive together with Christ (2.13). At the same time the relationship between God as deity and humans takes a familial characteristic in Colossians as God is described as Father; to the Colossian believers to whom he gives χάρις and εἰρήνη (1.2), to whom "μετὰ χαρᾶς εὐχαριστοῦντες τῷ πατρὶ" (1.12), and who is "τῷ θεῷ πατρὶ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ" (1.3). The intertextual evidence is that the deity that Paul portrays in Colossians is the God of power that gives and redeems life, has the authority to provide direction as to God's desire for the living of that life, and relates to those in a relationship with God in Christ as their Father.

Paul brings these created images and the theological subtexture of deity forward into the paraenetic material of the focal pericope. He bases his hortatory argument on the presupposition that the Colossian believers "συνηγέρθητε τῷ Χριστῷ" (3.1): a passive event brought about by the power of God at work in their lives. The relationship the Christ-followers share with God is because God "συνεζωοποίησεν ὑμᾶς σὺν αὐτῷ" (2.13). God

alone as deity has the power and authority to initiate that relationship. Paul's rhetorical constructs remind the Colossian believers of their relationship with God and create within them the image of their union with Christ under the power of God. In this encounter with the text the Colossian believers experience a dialectical tension as they remember that time in their lives when they were spiritually dead and that God has now made them alive together with Christ. This tension arises within the Colossian believers as they consider the nature of their relationship with the deity of God what is yet to come in that relationship.

> The more 'present' the text is to us, the more our habitual selves – at least for the duration of the reading – recede into the 'past'. The literary text relegates our own prevailing views into the past by itself becoming a present experience, for what is now happening or may happen was not possible so long as our characteristic views formed our present.[14]

The creation of the images of their union with Christ and the dialectical tension fostered by the retention and protension that comes through the reading of the text prepares the fertile soil of further created imagery with Paul's subsequent command to "τὰ ἄνω ζητεῖτε, οὗ ὁ Χριστός ἐστιν ἐν δεξιᾷ τοῦ θεοῦ καθήμενος" (3.1). Paul draws the readers into the setting of the relationship with Christ and commands them to direct their body-mind activities to "τὰ ἄνω ζητεῖτε" (3.1) and "τὰ ἄνω φρονεῖτε" (3.2). The locus of these "above things" further affirms the theological subtexture of deity in the lives of the readers by identifying it as where Christ is, the one with whom they are in union, seated at the right hand of God.[15] God is the one in ultimate authority and grants to Christ the place of "honor and prominence."[16] It is there that God hides their lives in union with Christ in God's self. It is God as deity that chooses the timing of revealing Christ, and when that time comes, those in union with Christ will also be revealed by God in glory. Paul's use of rhetoric to describe the eschatological reality for the Colossian believers creates images of union, power, and victory. It generates spiritualities of assurance and trust. These two spiritualities provide hope and comfort to the Colossian believers as they consider their lives and their surroundings; both from a political and religious perspective but also from the physical

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[14] Iser, *The Act of Reading*, 131.

[15] It is widely asserted that this is a reference to the messianic aspect of Psalm 110 and is referential to Christ and the authority he has and has been given by God. See Bruce, *The Epistle to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians*, 132; D.M. Hay, *Glory at the Right Hand: Psalm 110 in Early Christianity*, 155; O'Brien, *Colossians, Philemon*, 163; MacDonald, *Colossians Ephesians*, 127; Dunn, *The Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon*, 203; Barth and Blanke, trans. Beck, *Colossians*, 395; Moo, *The Letters to the Colossians and to Philemon*, 247, among others.

[16] Moo, *The Letters to the Colossians and to Philemon*, 247.

uncertainties that arise from living in an unstable geographical environment.[17] The believers can take confidence that the deity who is God and with whom they have an intimate relationship also has their lives and futures secure. Paul's rhetoric influences the Colossian believers to grasp the reality of the depth of their relationship with God and look forward with confidence to the culmination of the promise of revelation with Christ who is their life.

The image of God that Paul creates for the Colossian believers is one who leads the Christ-followers to actively pursue with body-mind that which is characterologically congruent with the realm where Christ and God are. The deity imaged by Paul is one with authority and power, and that deity is the one with whom the Colossian believers have a relationship through their union with Christ. The theological texture in Colossians 3.1-4 creates the image of the deity that rules with power and authority and initiates a relationship with humans through Christ.

The theological subtexture is further thickened through Paul's rhetoric in 3.6. Those who are now in a relationship with God and alive in Christ are instructed regarding their expressed behavior. Paul begins by describing behavior which has no place in their lives. It is behavior that is to be once and for all reckoned as dead.[18] Paul describes the response of God concerning behavior that is not representative of a relationship with God in union with Christ. Paul states that it is "δι' ἃ ἔρχεται ἡ ὀργὴ τοῦ θεοῦ" (3.6). The dialectic of retention and protension that arises within the believers through the encounter with the text causes the Colossian believers to consider their former way of living. Paul describes this behavior in Colossians 3.5 and connects it to the cause of the wrath of God (3.6) that is coming because of such behavior. Paul presents God as the deity who has authority to direct body-mind behavior and bring judgment upon that which is deemed inappropriate. God is also the deity that affirms appropriate living and body-mind behaviors as the model

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[17] The reference here is to the research presented in chapter four regarding the geological climate of the Lycus Valley, the instability of the area, and the political and cultural shifts that take place within their time frame.

[18] The strength of the imperatival command in 3.5 to Νεκρώσατε οὖν comes immediately following the generated spiritualities of assurance and trust from 3.1-4. It is stark in its contrast but effective as a rhetorical strategy. Paul creates images in 3.1-4 and validates the strength of relationship the believers have with God and the hope that awaits them. Then, with urgent and vivid language he brings the believers back to the present reality of how life should be lived and the implications of living in ways deemed inappropriate by God. This rhetorical strategy generates the spiritualities through images embedded within the text. It also creates the dialectic of retention and protension through the radical shift of focus towards what is yet to come in the believers' lived experience compared with the reality of their physical existence.

for those chosen in union with Christ and with whom God has a relationship (3.12).

It is the relationship that God as deity has with the Christ-followers that forms the substance of Paul's rhetoric in 3.12-17. Paul presents God as the one who initiates and sustains the relationship with them through Christ in 3.1-4. God is the one who brings wrath "ἐπὶ τοὺς υἱοὺς τῆς ἀπειθείας" (3.6), whose habituated pattern of living is inappropriate. Beginning in 3.12 Paul portrays God as the deity who not only has power and authority, but who also has distinct affections towards those with whom he is in a relationship. Paul describes the Colossian believers as "ὡς ἐκλεκτοὶ τοῦ θεοῦ ἅγιοι καὶ ἠγαπημένοι" (3.12). These three terms create images for the Colossians. The images are of being chosen, of holiness, and the objects of love. God, as deity, initiates the relationship with the Christ-followers, and God bestows upon them the honor of inclusion and identification with God. Paul's rhetoric creates these spiritualities of inclusion and identification in the lives of the believers and strengthens the unique dyadic relationship that God has with them. These spiritualities would be of particular significance to those with a Mediterranean worldview and are explored more fully in the theological subtexture of religious community.

Paul recognizes the inherent goodness of God as deity and three times directs the believers to "εὐχάριστοι γίνεσθε" (3.15), "ἐν [τῇ] χάριτι ᾄδοντες ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις ὑμῶν τῷ θεῷ" (3.16) they are to worship God, and in every act of mind-body they are to engage these activities "εὐχαριστοῦντες τῷ θεῷ πατρί" (3.17). Paul creates a theological subtexture of God as deity who is loving, who loves, and who models for the believers the kind of character that God has (3.12-14). Paul carries forward the image he created in explicit terms at the outset of the epistle by addressing the deity who is God as τῷ θεῷ πατρὶ (3.17). The *nomen agentis* used by Paul carries significant theological weight and creates a myriad of images for those who interact with the text of the pericope. Taken in context with the intertextural occurrences, the term creates a wealth of spiritualities within the lives of the readers/hearers. It is possible that Paul uses the term "τῷ θεῷ πατρί" (3.17) to create the image that God is the one who has, in a real sense, *fathered*, the believers. It is God that initiated the relationship and brought the believers to life from death. This is an image of critical importance to the Colossian believers and their theological understanding of their relationship with God. Without God, the Colossians would have no life and would have remained spiritually in death.

The possibility also exists that Paul uses the term to create the image of the identity of God as head of their newly formed spiritual family. It is the deity that is God that deserves and demands the rightful place of familial authority. As such, obedience to

the familial authority is to be expected. It is also plausible that Paul uses the term "θεῷ πατρί" to highlight the integral relational nature of God. The Colossian believers are ἠγαπημένοι. They are the objects of his active love expressed through God's nature and character. It is a character that God desires to be part of the nature of relationship the Colossian believers have towards one another. Through their outward expression of his character towards one another, they become the corporeal agents of the love of God and demonstrate familial identification with the Father.

When considering how the believers are to express the character of their familial relationship with God, Paul instructs them to "ἐπὶ πᾶσιν δὲ τούτοις τὴν ἀγάπην, ὅ ἐστιν σύνδεσμος τῆς τελειότητος" (3.14). All of the character traits and body-mind activities of 3.12 can be accomplished without the added qualification of "ἐπὶ πᾶσιν δὲ τούτοις τὴν ἀγάπην." However, as objects of the love of God the Father who are in relationship with God through union with Christ, the familial image is made complete as they reflect the Father in their character displayed through their body-mind expressions.

There are seven references to God in Colossians 3.1-17. Of the seven references, six are explicit. To neglect the implicit reference to God in 3.10 is to miss a significant aspect of God as deity embedded within the rhetoric of Paul. There are images created through the implicit reference to God in 3.10 that lead to a dialectic experience of retention and protension within the lives of those who interact with the text. These images and this dialectic experience serve to contribute to the formation of spiritualities within the lives of the Colossian believers.

Colossians 3.10 carries forward an argument begun by Paul in 3.9 where he commands the readers to "μὴ ψεύδεσθε εἰς ἀλλήλους." He grounds his command in the spiritual reality that the Colossian believers have put off their former way of life, characterized by "τὸν παλαιὸν ἄνθρωπον σὺν ταῖς πράξεσιν αὐτοῦ" (3.10), and that they have now "ἐνδυσάμενοι τὸν νέον." Paul is referring to the union with Christ portrayed in Colossians 1.21-22 and 2.11-13 where he uses some of the same language ("τῇ ἀπεκδύσει τοῦ σώματος τῆς σαρκός" in Col. 2.11) to image the new relationship they have with God through Christ.[19] The believers have a new reality in which they live, and Paul utilizes

[19] For the relationship between the rhetoric of Paul here and a possible reference to the symbolism of baptism and other initiation rites see Moo, *The Letters to the Colossians and to Philemon*, 266; Lohse, *Colossians and Philemon*, 141; Talbert, *Ephesians and Colossians*, 228; Dunn, *The Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon*, 221.

imagery of "putting off" and "putting on" to describe this new spiritual reality.

The implicit reference to God in Colossians 3.10 comes as Paul states that the believer in union with Christ has now ἐνδυσάμενοι τὸν νέον (3.10) and that this "new" is involved in a process of "ἀνακαινούμενον εἰς ἐπίγνωσιν κατ᾽ εἰκόνα τοῦ κτίσαντος αὐτόν" (3.10).[20] Within the text of Colossians 3.10, Paul's embedded implicit reference to God is God as τοῦ κτίσαντος. This embedded reference generates the image of the creation event itself as God creates the first humans in God's own image ("καὶ ἐποίησεν ὁ θεὸς τὸν ἄνθρωπον, κατ᾽ εἰκόνα θεοῦ ἐποίησεν αὐτόν" in Gen 1.27). God both *initiates* the relationship through union with Christ (Col. 1.12), and it is God that *develops* that relationship in a way that only God can through a process of renewal. This renewal creates within the readers a spirituality of confidence.

The grammatical nature of the word describing this renewal, ἀνακαινούμενον, is as has been previously noted, a passive participial that communicates to those interacting with the text that it is God that is the one who is directing the renewal process, not the believer. God alone possess the power and is the one who is active to bring about the renewal process. The spirituality of confidence comes as the Colossian believers recall the manner in which their lives were lived prior to their union with Christ (3.7). This experience with the text further creates a conflict within the believers as they recognize that while they are not ultimately responsible for the renewal process, there is tension that arises as they consider how this renewal will take place in their relationship with God. Those who interact with the text experience the dialectic of retention and protension. They recall God's role as creator, their former way of living, and the new spiritual reality they have in union with Christ. Now here in Colossians 3.10, they experience the conflict of protension as they consider the implications of an ongoing renewal process at work within them for which they are not causal agents. The deity who is God is the causal agent.

Paul is clear regarding the manner and model for this ongoing renewal process. God is renewing the Colossian believers "εἰς ἐπίγνωσιν." The intertextural references that occur in Colossians 1. 9-10 are essential to an understanding of the manner in which God is renewing the Colossian believers and are critical to grasping the depth of the focus of

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[20] See Campbell, *Colossians and Philemon*, 55, and Harris, *Colossians*, 153, for the identity of God as creator. In order to avoid repetition of established realities and academic support and for additional discussion on the biblical specificity of the identity of τοῦ κτίσαντος, see the related findings under the appropriate network examination and connected discussion in the section regarding linguistic features in the chapter on the discourse analysis. Ultimately, there is no other plausible reference here than to the deity who is God.

that knowledge being God. As noted in the previous chapter in the discussion of semantic network d, this is not just knowledge based on factual information but extends much deeper to "the knowledge of God, an understanding of who he is in terms of Christ and what that understanding means for living rightly. It is this knowledge that human beings lost in the fall into sin."[21]

The model for the renewal process is "κατ' εἰκόνα τοῦ κτίσαντος αὐτόν" (3.10).[22] This εἰκόνα is the precise pattern for the renewal of humanity in relationship with the Father. While the practical aspects of the renewal process are discussed in the embodiment texture, the theological subtexture of deity is revealed as Paul presents God as a deity of power that can initiate and bring a lived reality of spiritual life from death (3.1-4). God is the one who patterns the renewal of humans who are in relationship with God, and it is God who determines the manner in which that renewal occurs (3.10).

Throughout the pericope, Paul uses his rhetoric to creates images regarding the relationship between God and humans. As those who interact with the text reflect on these relational images, there arises within them a dialectic of retention and protension. All of these experiences create spiritualities expressed in the lives of the Colossian believers and are aspects of the theological subtexture of God as deity. Paul presents God who is the deity: divine in his authority to both respond to life lived out of character as he intended, and to subject that living to his wrath (3.5-9).

At the same time, Paul portrays God as deity who is love, both in character and nature. Paul's use of rhetoric creates the image of the divine loving Father that sees the believers as beloved by the Father; articulated in the new dyadic relationship formed in the union with Christ (3.12, 14, 17). God is expressed as the deity who sustains the relationship with humans in an ongoing renewal process through his creative power and according to the image and model of Jesus who is the Christ (3.10). As such, it is important now to focus upon the references to Jesus in semantic network e where Paul develops the theological subtexture of holy person.

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[21] Moo, *The Letters to the Colossians and to Philemon*, 269.

[22] The identity of the image as Jesus Christ in relation to εἰκόνα τοῦ κτίσαντος αὐτό is discussed in the previous chapter within the semantic network d but for further reference see Campbell, *Colossians and Philemon*, 55; Harris, *Colossians*, 133; Wright, *Colossians and Philemon*, 138.

6.2.2 Network e: Paul's use of the descriptive terms for the person of Jesus reveals the theological subtexture of Holy Person

The exploration of the theological subtexture of holy person involves the examination of those individuals within the sacred text that possess a distinct connection with God. In the text of the New Testament, the person that rises to a place of prominence *nonpareil* among those considered as holy persons is Jesus called the Christ. "The term "Christ" means a person specially chosen and appointed by God to bring humans into a saving relation to God, or perhaps to enact the punishment of people who are evil."[23] In Colossians 3.1-17 there is only one occurrence of a specific reference to the name of Jesus, and that comes in 3.17 in conjunction with the instruction, "καὶ πᾶν ὅ τι ἐὰν ποιῆτε ἐν λόγῳ ἢ ἐν ἔργῳ, πάντα ἐν ὀνόματι κυρίου Ἰησοῦ, εὐχαριστοῦντες τῷ θεῷ πατρὶ δι' αὐτοῦ." Paul uses the *nom personnel* in the genitive construction κυρίου Ἰησοῦ to describe the manner in which all things in word or deed are to be done. He is referred to as κυρίου Ἰησοῦ, a reference to his position of authority.[24] This recognition of Jesus as the holy person who is Lord and one that has authority creates the image of the relationship between slave and master for the Colossian believers; a cultural reality for the Colossians (4.1). Jesus as Lord is to have ultimate authority over the Colossian believers. The creation of this image leads to the formation of the spirituality of obedience for the Colossian believers. Paul presents a Jesus who is Lord for the Colossian believers. He is a holy person and one that is to be obeyed because he has complete authority over their lives.

The term κύριος is also indirectly ascribed to Jesus in 3.13 as the one who models the depth of forgiveness that the Colossians are to show to each other; "καθὼς καὶ ὁ κύριος ἐχαρίσατο ὑμῖν, οὕτως καὶ ὑμεῖς." Paul uses his rhetoric to remind the Colossians of the implications of their own forgiveness and to create the image of the crucifixion for the Colossians. It is by the means of Jesus crucifixion on the cross that they have redemption and forgiveness as "νυνὶ δὲ ἀποκατήλλαξεν ἐν τῷ σώματι τῆς σαρκὸς αὐτοῦ διὰ τοῦ" (1.22). The experience of this created image brings about a dialectic of retention and protension for the believers as they recall their former way of living and how they "ποτε ὄντας ἀπηλλοτριωμένους καὶ ἐχθροὺς τῇ διανοίᾳ ἐν τοῖς ἔργοις τοῖς πονηροῖς"

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[23] Robins, *Exploring the Texture of Texts*, 121.

[24] Arndt, William, Frederick Danker, Walter Bauer, eds., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 458-60.

(1.21). The protension comes as they consider this new life and what it means for them to be presented "ἁγίους καὶ ἀμώμους καὶ ἀνεγκλήτους κατενώπιον αὐτοῦ" (1.22) in relationship with God through the "κυρίου Ἰησοῦ."

Paul projects Jesus as a holy person and one that has a distinct connection and relationship to God; in particular as the son of God. Paul states that thanksgiving is directed towards "τῷ θεῷ πατρὶ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ" (1.3). It is "εἰς τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ υἱοῦ τῆς ἀγάπης αὐτοῦ" to which God has transferred believers as a result of their rescue from the kingdom of darkness (1.13). Paul specifically refers to Jesus as τοῦ υἱοῦ τῆς ἀγάπης αὐτοῦ. While it is likely that the written account of the gospels did not come about until after Paul wrote his epistle to the Colossians,[25] the oral nature of the culture makes it possible that the early accounts of the life of Jesus were known, at least in part, to the Colossian believers. The narrative accounts of the baptism of Jesus and the transfiguration of Jesus provide rich intertexture to the images created through Paul's rhetoric. The Colossians recall the narrative in which the voice from heaven speaks about Jesus saying, "σὺ εἶ ὁ υἱός μου ὁ ἀγαπητός, ἐν σοὶ εὐδόκησα," (Mark 1.11) and again at the transfiguration where the voice from heaven states, "οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ υἱός μου ὁ ἀγαπητός," (Mark 9.7). Jesus, as the son of God, distinguishes the relationship with God, the Father of the Lord Jesus. Paul's description of that relationship creates and affirms the image of Jesus as a holy person.

Paul's primary reference to the person of Jesus is with the term Χριστός. Jesus is the locus of the faith of the Colossian believers (1.4), and the one whom they receive in faith (2.6). The term and its related cognates occurs seven times throughout the pericope. While the personal name of Jesus is not connected with the multiple uses of the term, there is overwhelming intertextual evidence in the epistle as a whole that Paul is referring to the person of Jesus.[26] Paul centers the relationship that the Colossian believers have with God

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[25] Likely dates for the writing of Colossians prior to the earthquake of 61/62 A.D. would predate the estimated dates for completion of written gospel accounts, the earliest of which is believed to be Mark, with the vast majority of scholars dating the gospel in the mid to late 60's. See Carson and Moo, *Introduction to the New Testament*, 181.

[26] Paul begins the epistle with his self-revelation of identity being that of "Παῦλος ἀπόστολος Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ." There are roughly sixty-three references to Jesus in his capacity as Christ and Lord throughout the epistle, not including all of the occurrences of the pronoun. In the referential occurrences to the person of Christ, there are sixteen pronouns in 1.15-22, all related to the antecedent τοῦ υἱοῦ in 1.13 and eight pronouns associated with Χριστός in 2.8-15. The term Χριστός is used twenty-five times, and the reference to κύριος occurs fourteen times, four of those times in combination as in Col. 3.17. See Colossians 1.1, 2, 3, 7, 10, 13, 14, 15, 16-20, 22, 24, 27, 28, 29; Col. 2. 2, 5, 6, 8, 9, 11, 12, 13, 17, 19, 20; Col. 3.1, 3, 4, 10, 11, 13, 15, 16, 17, 18, 20, 22, 23; Col. 4.4. Many of the verses contain multiple references to the person

in the holy person of Jesus who is the Christ.

> Paul constantly keeps before them both the person and the role of Christ, that he is none other than the eternal Son of God, in whose kingdom they now live and serve, and that whatever else, he is also their Redeemer and the head of his body, the church, of which they are a part. And the same Son of God who is their Redeemer, their deliverer from darkness, is the Creator of all things, including the unseen "powers," whose power has been altogether negated through Christ's death and resurrection.[27]

Jesus as the Christ is presented as existing in the same spiritual realm ("τὰ ἄνω") as God and that realm is "οὗ ὁ Χριστός ἐστιν ἐν δεξιᾷ τοῦ θεοῦ καθήμενος" (3.1). That position of authority and power is given by God to Jesus the Christ. This relationship with God identifies Jesus as the holy person established by the authority of God. As οὗ Χριστός, Jesus is the holy person with whom the Colossian believers experience the eschatological reality of "συνηγέρθητε τῷ Χριστῷ" (3.1); that their life is "κέκρυπται σὺν τῷ Χριστῷ ἐν τῷ θεῷ" (3.3); and that there is an anticipation of the time when "καὶ ὑμεῖς σὺν αὐτῷ φανερωθήσεσθε ἐν δόξῃ" (3.4). Paul embeds within his rhetoric the images of death, burial, and resurrection. The Colossian believers have died (3.3), and their life is hidden with Christ in God (3.3). The believers have both already been raised to spiritual life (3.1), and they will ultimately, at the eschatological fulfillment of time, be resurrected or raised with Christ when he is revealed in glory (3.4). Paul's rhetoric creates these images within the lives of those who interact with the text and these images generate spiritualities of hope, fulfillment, and perseverance. The relationship with the holy person of Jesus the Christ forms the spiritual reality of the believers to the extent that Paul tells the Colossians that Christ "ἡ ζωὴ ὑμῶν" (3.4). This creates the spirituality of identity and community. They have identity with Christ as the source and essence of their life. They have community as they are together hidden with Christ in God within that realm of "τὰ ἄνω" until such a time that "ὁ Χριστὸς φανερωθῇ" (3.4) and they are revealed together with Christ.

The believers are further instructed to "ἡ εἰρήνη τοῦ Χριστοῦ βραβευέτω ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις ὑμῶν" (3.15), and in the same way to allow" Ὁ λόγος τοῦ Χριστοῦ ἐνοικείτω ἐν ὑμῖν πλουσίως" (3.16).[28] These two commands centered in the holy person of Jesus the

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and work of Jesus who is the Christ and Lord.

[27] Gordon D. Fee, *Pauline Theology: An Exegetical-Theological Study* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2007), 290.

[28] Both of these aspects of Christ are carried forth from and informed by the foundational emanations in Colossians 1.20 and 1.23 respectively. Throughout the "hymn" of 1.15-20 and verses immediately following, the apostle Paul presents characteristics of Jesus that find further elaboration in the remainder of the epistle. See Matthew E. Gordley, *The Colossian Hymn in Context: An Exegesis in Light of*

Christ creates the spiritualities of *shalom* and groundedness. The peace to which they are commanded to yield "control" is the peace of Christ, and the domain of that rule is the heart. It is Christocentric in type, and the locus conveys more than just the absence of external conflict (which would have been typical with untransformed ethnic and cultural divisions as noted in Col. 3.11). Such inner wholeness created by this peace is impossible apart from the *type* of peace to which they are to yield. The "ἡ εἰρήνη τοῦ Χριστοῦ" is to be their approach that permeates the entirety of their being and impacts their external relationships. This generates a spirituality of *shalom* which is "a state of well-being" that is "characteristic of the messianic kingdom," and is effectively "the peace *brought* by Christ"[29] to bear on all matters of body, mind, and spirit. "The peace the Colossian believers could experience in their hearts was further proof that they belonged to the people of the. . ." holy person of the Christ.[30] Such a totality of mind-body peace begins on the inside in attitude and flows outward through action in the community to which they have become a part.

As "ἡ εἰρήνη τοῦ Χριστοῦ" creates the spirituality of *shalom*, "Ὁ λόγος τοῦ Χριστοῦ" creates the spirituality of groundedness. "The λόγος has already been identified as the gospel."[31] In the relationship with God through the holy person of Jesus, the Colossian believers are to be grounded in the "λόγῳ τῆς ἀληθείας τοῦ εὐαγγελίου" (1.5) and is identified as "τὸν λόγον τοῦ θεοῦ" (1.25).[32] Paul presents the source for spiritual instruction and worship; centered in the message that came to them that prompted faith in Christ. It is "τῷ λόγῳ τῆς ἀληθείας τοῦ εὐαγγελίου" (1.5) that comes to them, and it is growing and bearing fruit as they continue "καρποφοροῦντες καὶ αὐξανόμενοι τῇ ἐπιγνώσει τοῦ θεοῦ" (1.10).

Within the epistle, there are two significant inferential references to the holy person of Jesus, one intertextual and the other within the pericope, that warrant examination. These linked references form a thread within the tapestry of the text that

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Jewish and Greco-Roman Hymnic and Epistolary Conventions (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2007), 267.

[29] Arndt, William, Frederick Danker, Walter Bauer, eds., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 227.

[30] Dunn, *The Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon*, 234.

[31] Ibid., 236.

[32] See Dunn, *The Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon*, 236; Pao, *Colossians and Philemon*, 247-8; Lohse, *Colossians and Philemon*, 150.

facilitates the understanding of the role of Christ in the transformation of character in the lives of the Colossian believers. Further, the examination of the interconnectedness of these references enables a thickened subtexture of Jesus as holy person interwoven within the theological texture of the text.

The two inferential references are centered upon the term εἰκὼν (1.15) and its cognate εἰκόνα found in Colossians 3.10.[33] In the verses preceding the Colossian inter-textual reference of 1.15, Paul states that it is to the kingdom of υἱοῦ τῆς ἀγάπης αὐτοῦ (1.13) that the Father has transferred the believers and that it is in the son that the believers have redemption. Beginning in 1.15 Paul describes the nature and character of the son in what has been called a Christological hymn.[34] In the Christ-focused pericope, "the relative pronoun opening v. 15 can be seen as integrating this passage firmly in its context"[35] of the preceding verses referring to the son. Paul is precise with his description of the son in that "ὅς ἐστιν εἰκὼν τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ ἀοράτου" (1.15) in which the image here "corresponds to its original."[36] Jesus who is the Christ and the son of the Father is the exact representation of the Father, who is unseen.[37] All the fullness of the deity who is God dwells in Jesus (1.19). In Colossians 2.9 Paul affirms of Jesus "ὅτι ἐν αὐτῷ κατοικεῖ πᾶν τὸ πλήρωμα τῆς θεότητος σωματικῶς." Through his rhetoric Paul creates the image of God revealed in corporeal form for the believers. While God the Father is invisible, the Colossian believers can grasp what God the Father is like in all the fullness of God's character through the exact representation - identical to the invisible the Father - in Jesus, the son. These images of Jesus the Christ found in the hymn create the spirituality of connection for the Colossian believers. As the readers grow to understand the holy person of Jesus the Christ, they come to know and understand more fully the person of the invisible God the Father. This

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[33] The discussion that follows is based upon the presupposition that any gnostic inference or allusion to Christ being part of a created order are disregarded completely. Great care is taken in the explanation of the theological implications and texture of this text to prevent any such inference.

[34] However, see Nicholas Wright, *The Climax of the Covenant*: *Christ and the Law in Pauline Theology*, (London: T&T Clark, 1991), 99-119. The exact text of the "hymn" is debatable when considering the opening sections and whether they are suppressed or contained within the preceding verses. As such, Wright takes the position that the passage is poetic rather than a hymn since "nothing would be more calculated to puzzle a congregation than tampering with a hymn they are in the act of singing," Wright, 100.

[35] Moo, *The Letters to the Colossians and to Philemon*, 108.

[36] Arndt, William, Frederick Danker, Walter Bauer, eds., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 222, no.1b.

[37] Further inter-textual evidence supporting the understanding of the holy person Jesus as the exact representation of God the Father is found in Romans 8.29; 1 Corinthians 15.49; 2 Corinthians 3.18; 2 Corinthians 4.4; Hebrews 1.2-3.

knowledge is the substance of the ongoing, ever-developing answer to the Paul's prayer (Col. 1.9-10).

When Paul comes to describe the renewal process in Col. 3.10, he returns to the language of Col. 1.15 to specify the model for this ongoing renewal. Paul states that "ἀνακαινούμενον εἰς ἐπίγνωσιν κατ' εἰκόνα τοῦ κτίσαντος αὐτόν" (3.10). The image of God found in the person of Christ is the model after which the image of renewed humanity in Christ is being formed. It is at this point that the description in Colossians 1.15 and 3.10 necessitates further clarification. There is a significant difference between the two references to "images" of Colossians 1.15 and 3.10. In Colossians 1.10, Christ is *the* image of God, while the renewal process for humans in relationship with the Father through the holy person of Jesus is being done *κατ'* εἰκόνα. This difference must be understood in order to grasp the essence of the transformation of character embedded within the rhetoric of Paul. The redeemed humanity is being renewed *according to* or *in* the image which is Christ. This renewal is *according to* the image of the one who is *the exact image* of the invisible God.[38] As Paul states in Romans 8.29, "ὅτι οὓς προέγνω, καὶ προώρισεν συμμόρφους τῆς εἰκόνος τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ." This understanding brings rich theological texture to the meaning of τὸν νέον in Colossians 3.10, which Paul says the Colossian believers have "put on," and brings the subtexture of Jesus as the holy person into clear focus. The Colossian believers "ἀπεκδυσάμενοι τὸν παλαιὸν ἄνθρωπον σὺν ταῖς πράξεσιν αὐτοῦ" (3.9) who was dead (2.13) when God made them "alive together with [Christ] (2.13) and "συνηγέρθητε τῷ Χριστῷ" (3.1). Thus, the new identity the Colossian believers have in Christ is τὸν νέον - the new humanity that they have "put on" - which is ὁ Χριστός, who is their life (3.4), and who is "Χριστὸς ἐν ὑμῖν, ἡ ἐλπὶς τῆς δόξης" (1.27).

As the Colossian believers interact with the text, they experience the presentation of Jesus the Christ as holy person in that he is both Lord and uniquely in relationship with God as the son of the Father (1.3). Further, Jesus Christ is the exact image of the invisible God. And it is into the image of the holy person Jesus, the model human *par excellence*, that the creator is renewing the new identity of the Colossian believers (3.10).

The overwhelming textual evidence presents Jesus as holy person. There is a

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[38] See Arndt, William, Frederick Danker, Walter Bauer, eds., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 222, no. 2 for the distinction and connection with Rom. 8.29 and the influence on Gen. 1.26f.

theological subtexture within the text that reveals other holy persons as well. In Colossians 1.2 Paul addresses the recipients of the epistle as "τοῖς ἐν Κολοσσαῖς ἁγίοις καὶ πιστοῖς ἀδελφοῖς ἐν Χριστῷ." Paul refers to them with a word translated as "saints" meaning ones who are "consecrated to God."[39] The Colossian believers are presented to God as "ἁγίους καὶ ἀμώμους καὶ ἀνεγκλήτους" (1.22) because of the work of reconciliation by Christ. They have joined together with Christ, in whom "κατοικεῖ πᾶν τὸ πλήρωμα τῆς θεότητος σωματικῶς" (2.9) and the Colossian believers "ἐστὲ ἐν αὐτῷ πεπληρωμένοι" (2.10). They are further designated as "πιστοῖς ἀδελφοῖς ἐν Χριστῷ." Through their union with Christ, the believers also have a familial relationship to Jesus as "brother" since Paul describes God as "πατρὶ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ" (1.3).

In Colossians 3.12, as Paul describes the "life in renewal" the Colossian believers are to live, he refers to them as "ὡς ἐκλεκτοὶ τοῦ θεοῦ ἅγιοι καὶ ἠγαπημένοι." Because of their relationship in union with Christ (Col. 3.1-4), the Colossian believers recognize they are "set apart" or consecrated by God. They are "chosen" by God as "ὡς ἐκλεκτοὶ τοῦ θεοῦ," and they are both holy and beloved by God. The totality of their relationship stands in stark contrast to the description of their life prior to their union with Christ. Paul tells them that "ὑμᾶς ποτε ὄντας ἀπηλλοτριωμένους καὶ ἐχθροὺς τῇ διανοίᾳ ἐν τοῖς ἔργοις τοῖς πονηροῖς" (1.21). But now, they are designated as holy persons by their relationship with God through union in Christ.

Paul uses his rhetoric to create specific images. As the Colossian believers interact with the text, that interaction creates the image of a people that are distinctly different from others because of their intimate, familial relationship with the deity who is God. The dynamic interaction with the text also creates the image of people who are now the focus of the active love of the God who is both their father and the Father of the Lord Jesus Christ. Indeed, this interaction serves to create the image of a holy people.

Paul does not fail to highlight the distinct difference in both the spiritual lives and the behavioral lives of those who are now in union with Christ. In Colossians 1.21, when he tells them that "ὑμᾶς ποτε ὄντας," he notes a demarcation that is not just a temporal reality measured on a calendar but the reality of a former lived experience. He carries this forward in 3.7 when he describes the body-mind activities that typified their lives prior to

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[39] Arndt, William, Frederick Danker, Walter Bauer, eds., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 10, no. d.β. See also Col. 1.4 where Paul acknowledges the Colossian believers' love εἰς πάντας τοὺς ἁγίους; 1.26 where the mystery of God in the gospel has now been revealed to τοῖς ἁγίοις αὐτοῦ.

their union with Christ as he tells them "ἐν οἷς καὶ ὑμεῖς περιεπατήσατέ ποτε, ὅτε ἐζῆτε ἐν τούτοις." These reminders cause the dialectic of retention and protension in the lives of the Colossian believers. There is the tension that comes as they recall how they were at one time alienated from God, hostile in their minds and thinking, and spiritually dead. They remember the manner in which they lived that now has no place in their lives as people who are in a relationship with God. There is protension as they consider the implications of their spiritual reality and their union with Christ.

The images that are created by interacting with the text and the conflict that arises in the resultant dialectic generate spiritualities that are effectively embedded within the text. The Colossians experience a spirituality of belovedness. They come to know a spirituality of expectation as well. Through union with Christ, the believers' lived experience of God is one that carries expectations of characterological changes that reflect their new spiritual reality as holy persons of God. The model by which the character of the Colossian believers is transformed is according to the character of Christ himself. These holy persons are now in union with Christ, in relationship with God the Father, and experience a new relationship with each other as well. The theological texture of the pericope is thickened through an examination of the subtexture of religious community expressed through semantic network d.

6.2.3 Network h and i: Paul's use of plural and inclusive pronouns reveals the theological subtexture of Religious Community

At the outset of his epistle to the Colossians, Paul expresses the plurality of the intended recipients. He addresses the epistle "τοῖς ἐν Κολοσσαῖς ἁγίοις καὶ πιστοῖς ἀδελφοῖς ἐν Χριστῷ" (1.2). The letter is sent to the Colossian congregation as a whole, unlike selected other epistles addressed to a single individual.[40] The corporate nature of the letter is verified through Paul's use of both plural pronouns and inclusive pronouns throughout the epistle and extensively in the focal pericope of 3.1-17. The only occurrence of singular pronouns is noted as Paul discusses particular individuals such as Epaphras in

[40] Paul directs three epistles to individuals: 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, and Titus. The epistle to Philemon is, on the surface, addressed to the individual Philemon but it is noted in Philemon 2 that it also includes "Ἀπφίᾳ τῇ ἀδελφῇ καὶ Ἀρχίππῳ τῷ συστρατιώτῃ ἡμῶν καὶ τῇ κατ' οἶκόν σου ἐκκλησίᾳ." It could be that the desired effect of the letter, in which Paul seeks to apply a degree of pressure upon Philemon concerning the situation with Onesimus, is strengthened by the inclusion of others, making it a public letter to an individual.

1.7-8, the person of Christ, and God the Father,[41] the "anyone" who would take them captive "διὰ τῆς φιλοσοφίας καὶ κενῆς ἀπάτης" (2.8), judge them in matters related to "βρώσει καὶ ἐν πόσει ἢ ἐν μέρει ἑορτῆς ἢ νεομηνίας ἢ σαββάτων" (2.16), or cause them to be condemned, "θέλων ἐν ταπεινοφροσύνῃ καὶ θρησκείᾳ τῶν ἀγγέλων, ἃ ἑόρακεν ἐμβατεύων, εἰκῇ φυσιούμενος ὑπὸ τοῦ νοὸς τῆς σαρκὸς αὐτοῦ, καὶ οὐ κρατῶν τὴν κεφαλήν" (2.18-19a), and to those individuals noted in the final greetings of 4.7-18. Every other address regarding the substantive instruction of the epistle is directed to the collective group of believers that make up the church at Colossae.

The intention of the apostle Paul is that the letter addressed to the Colossians be read in the company of the religious community formed there on the basis of their union "ἐν Χριστῷ" (4.16). This opportunity for the reading of the letter allows the opportunity for the religious community to experience the dynamic interaction with the text through both reading and hearing the content of the epistle. As with the other networks under examination, the dynamic interaction with the text creates images and the encounter with those images facilitates a dialectic within the readers and hearers as they consider what they hear and bring it to bear upon their lived experiences. The lived experience of textual interaction generates spiritualities within the lives of the readers and hearers. As the Colossians interact with the text and they experience the plural and inclusive nature of the pronouns, that interaction creates the spiritualities of separation and identity. The Colossians are part of a group that is the corporeal representation of Christ; "τοῦ σώματος αὐτοῦ, ὅ ἐστιν ἡ ἐκκλησία" (2.24) over which Christ himself "αὐτός ἐστιν ἡ κεφαλὴ τοῦ σώματος τῆς ἐκκλησίας" (1.18). It is this same body to which Paul is referring when he tells the believers "καὶ ἡ εἰρήνη τοῦ Χριστοῦ βραβευέτω ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις ὑμῶν;" the rationale being that it is to that peace of Christ "εἰς ἣν καὶ ἐκλήθητε ἐν ἑνὶ σώματι" (1.15). It is to this same body and its relationship to Christ that Paul refers to when he describes those who are trying to pass judgement on the Colossians on matters of religious practice stating that they are "οὐ κρατῶν τὴν κεφαλήν, ἐξ οὗ πᾶν τὸ σῶμα διὰ τῶν ἁφῶν καὶ συνδέσμων ἐπιχορηγούμενον καὶ συμβιβαζόμενον αὔξει τὴν αὔξησιν τοῦ θεοῦ" (2.19). The rhetoric of Paul creates the image of a corporeal body for the readers/hearers of the text. This image generates within them the spirituality of unity as they grasp the connectedness they have with Christ who is both the head of the body and the source of its

[41] The references to God the Father and to Christ are noted in previous discussions on their respective semantic networks. In order to avoid repetition those sections are best consulted for the occurrence of the pronouns.

nourishment and integrity.

As Paul moves through his discourse and comes to the pericope of 3.1-17, he continues with the use of the plural and inclusive pronouns. As the readers hear the words of the text there is a corporate realization that they are raised together in union with Christ and that as a collective they are hidden together with Christ in God (3.1-4). The spirituality of unity carries through at this point, and there is the creation of the image of a spiritual realm in which Christ dwells, seated at the right hand of God.

The corporate reality and images shift in Colossians 3.5 as the positive reinforcement of an eschatological reality gives way to a practical understanding that, as a body united together in relationship with God, the activities of their former lives and way of living have no place in their new religious community. The body-mind activities of Colossians 3.5 and 3.8 that are characteristic of their "τὰ μέλη τὰ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς" are to be "reckoned as dead" and "put aside." Those activities are incompatible with the body-mind (ζητεῖτε and φρονεῖτε) activities of a religious community focused upon "τὰ ἄνω" (3.1-2) where Christ, the head of the body, "ἐστιν ἐν δεξιᾷ τοῦ θεοῦ καθήμενος" (3.1).

Paul reinforces the image of the religious community in Colossians 3.9, 13, and 16 with his use of the reciprocal pronoun ἀλλήλων (3.9, 3.13) and the reflexive pronoun ἑαυτοῦ (3.13, 16). Paul gives a negative command to stop lying to one another in 3.9 and then the positive instruction to "ἀνεχόμενοι ἀλλήλων" (3.13). The "bearing with one another" in this religious community is to lead to forgiving each other as Christ has forgiven them. The word of Christ is to dwell in them richly as they teach and admonish one another in all wisdom and express gratitude in worship (3.16).

Paul presents the image of a religious community that is the locus of transformative relationships. The characterological transformation that happens in the lives of the Colossians occurs in the context of a relationship with Christ and within the context of the religious community. The commands to radically cease body-mind activities (3.5, 8, 9) that reflect their characterological condition prior to union with Christ are given to the collective body. The command to practice the body-mind activities (3.12ff) that are reflective of the character of Christ is given to the collective body. They have each "put on" "τὸν νέον" which is "ὅ ἐστιν Χριστὸς ἐν ὑμῖν, ἡ ἐλπὶς τῆς δόξης" (2.27) and collectively they have become part of a new religious community. This religious community is the relational environment in which their ongoing state of renewal and reformation into the image of Christ (3.10) takes place.

Paul confronts the Colossian believers with the challenges of religious community. Truth, patience, and forgiveness are to mark their relationships. The "Ὁ λόγος τοῦ Χριστοῦ," as it dwells in them richly, is to inform their teaching, their mutual correction, and it is to permeate their worship. This experience generates the spirituality of transparency and congruence. The new religious community, brought to life in union with Christ, is to allow their inner spiritual transformation from death to life inform their outward transformation so that "περιπατῆσαι ἀξίως τοῦ κυρίου εἰς πᾶσαν ἀρεσκείαν, ἐν παντὶ ἔργῳ ἀγαθῷ καρποφοροῦντες καὶ αὐξανόμενοι τῇ ἐπιγνώσει τοῦ θεοῦ" (1.10). It is the union with Christ that makes the religious community possible. This new community is the outward manifestation of the fact that "ἐνδυσάμενοι τὸν νέον τὸν ἀνακαινούμενον εἰς ἐπίγνωσιν κατ' εἰκόνα τοῦ κτίσαντος αὐτόν" (3.10).

It is through a relationship with Christ and the formation of the body under Christ as the head that a new religious community is formed. As previously noted in the discussion on the prevailing worldview of the nascent Colossian church, the identity and value of a person is found in their "relationship with someone or something else."[42] In the religious community that is in union with Christ, there is the formation of a new collective identity created through new dyadic relationships. Their new collective identity is found in relation to each other in community. Their fundamental dyadic relationship is now centered in the person of Christ, the head of the church. Paul expresses the radical disintegration of their previously established collective identity and dyadic relationships in Colossians 3.11. He tells the new religious community that in "τὸν νέον" that they have "put on" ὅπου οὐκ ἔνι Ἕλλην καὶ Ἰουδαῖος, περιτομὴ καὶ ἀκροβυστία, βάρβαρος, Σκύθης, δοῦλος, ἐλεύθερος, ἀλλὰ [τὰ] πάντα καὶ ἐν πᾶσιν Χριστός (3.11). The depth of worldview reorientation is hard to grasp outside of life in that worldview. Every cultural, religious, and social barrier within the prevailing worldview is broken. These barriers formed the fabric of society and relationships for the Colossians. Paul tells them that in Christ those barriers and constructs no longer exist. A new religious community is formed, centered on Christ alone.

Paul's recitation of the various ethnic, religious, and social groups creates images of a division for the Colossians and portrays an accurate description of their lives before their union with Christ. This experience gives rise to a significant dialectic within them as they consider the tensions that are commensurate with the living of life in the midst of factious and divisive dyadic relationships. It is possible that the protension arises within

[42] Jerome H. Neyrey, "Dyadism," 49.

them as to how they will be able to live so vastly different in their new religious community. A worldview consists of those beliefs and values that are held most deeply. Those beliefs and values are often impossible to articulate because they are such an integral part of the fabric of existence. The Colossians have never known a reality outside of their prevailing worldview. As they consider the radical implications of the image of the new religious community that Paul creates for them in 3.11, the possibility exists that they would encounter an experience of intense protension regarding their ability to live within this new religious community.

The establishment of the new religious community in Christ generates specific spiritualities for the Colossian believers. Embedded within the rhetoric of Paul is the spirituality of unity. The Colossians are no longer a collection of factious groups, separated by religious or political beliefs, ethnicity, or social status. Their unity is solidly located in union with Christ (3.11). It is this unity that Paul seeks to preserve and warns against those who are "οὐ κρατῶν τὴν κεφαλήν, ἐξ οὗ πᾶν τὸ σῶμα διὰ τῶν ἁφῶν καὶ συνδέσμων ἐπιχορηγούμενον καὶ συμβιβαζόμενον αὔξει τὴν αὔξησιν τοῦ θεοῦ" (2.19).

The unity of the new religious community is lived out in relationship. If that relationship is centered in Christ and it is God who does the work of ongoing renewal into the image of Christ, why is it essential for the Colossian believers to radically alter their behavior? If God is the one who is doing the renewal, does it matter how the Colossian believers live? Why is their participation in their characterological transformation into the likeness of Christ necessary? Those are questions addressed in the investigation of the theological subtexture of human commitment and ethics, expressed through semantic networks a and c.

6.2.4 Networks a and c: Paul's exhortation to focus on "τὰ ἄνω" and his command to the believers to "νεκρώσατε" and "ἀπόθεσθε" the habits of "τὰ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς" reveals the theological subtextures of Human Commitment and Ethics

In the examination of the theological texture of semantic networks a and c, the two semantic networks and the two theological subtextures of human commitment and ethics are investigated concomitantly due to the nature of the text. Robbins states that the theological subtexture of human commitment is "the response of humans at the level of

their practices."[43] The subtexture of ethics reveals how "thinking and acting are motivated by commitment to God."[44] It is apparent that both of these theological subtextures involve human commitment and behavior. These two interconnected subtextures are revealed in the investigation of subnetworks a and c, and when viewed together they allow a thickening of the overall theological texture of the text.

Theology is interwoven throughout the Colossian epistle and facilitates a deeper understanding of God. A considerable amount of content in the first two chapters of Colossians focuses on theology with a particular focus on Christology. However, in 3.1, the rhetoric of Paul's epistle begins to shift revealing the theological subtextures related to human commitment and ethics. Paul's rhetoric becomes directly focused on behaviors that are resultant of human commitment. According to Wilson, it might be best to understand Colossians as "paraenetic theology."[45] Paraenesis is a rhetorical style used for moral exhortation. Paul weaves together foundations of theology and the paraenetic style of rhetoric in order to assist the Colossian believers with "moral formation that helps the readers habituate teachings they already know and overcome obstacles in fulfilling their initial commitment to a new way of life."[46] The investigation of the theological subtextures of human commitment and ethics revealed in the paraenetic rhetorical discourse of Paul facilitates an understanding of the process of character transformation in the lives of the Colossian believers. That process is embedded within the pericope of Colossians 3.1-17 and understood in the context of Paul's motivation behind the epistle to the Colossians.

While Paul did not start the Christian community in Colossae, he considers them part of his responsibility as an apostle (Col. 1.23b). His writes the epistle to the Colossian believers because he "θέλω γὰρ ὑμᾶς εἰδέναι ἡλίκον ἀγῶνα ἔχω ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν" (2.1). For Paul, the Colossian church is part of the overall plan of God involved in human history. "Paul envisioned his communities a divine effort to transform persons throughout the world. . .. Christological and moral exhortation became a focal point in these church settings. Rhetorically, therefore, the approach was direct and personal."[47] Paul frames his

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[43] Robbins, *Exploring the Texture of Texts*, 126.

[44] Ibid., 129.

[45] Walter T. Wilson, "The 'Practical' Achievement of Colossians: A Theological Assessment." *Horizons in Biblical Theology*. 20 no. 1 (1998): 59.

[46] Wilson, "The Practical Achievement of Colossians," 57.

[47] Thomas H. Olbricht, "The Foundations of the Ethos," in *Rhetoric, Ethic and Moral Persuasion in Biblical Discourse*, eds. Thomas H. Olbricht and Anders Ericksson (London: T&T Clark,

direct and personal rhetoric in the epistle to the Colossian church from a perspective that is both theological and orthopractic.[48]

> First it is plain that Colossians represents a form of direct moral appeal. In the letter Paul is busy prescribing a certain life that the readers are to observe as Christians: he teaches, admonishes, and encourages them to do so. The letter's prescriptive character is evident, for example, in its relatively large number of direct commands, about thirty of them, many of which are buttressed by subordinate participles that extend the moral application.[49]

Paul writes the epistle to the Colossians with a specific purpose in mind. "The text reveals both the perspectives of the writer and perhaps to a lesser degree of the recipients and the manner in which the writer hopes to achieve specific outcomes."[50] The specific outcome Paul hopes to achieve is expressed in Colossians 1.23, where he states that his desire is that the Colossians "ἐπιμένετε τῇ πίστει τεθεμελιωμένοι καὶ ἑδραῖοι καὶ μὴ μετακινούμενοι ἀπὸ τῆς ἐλπίδος τοῦ εὐαγγελίου οὗ ἠκούσατε." Paul grounds his epistolary teaching within the framework of human commitment and their expressed faith in Christ Jesus (Col. 1.4). As Robbins notes, "In Christian texts, this special form of human commitment is usually called discipleship."[51]

Paul creates the image of discipleship and human commitment through the text of his prayer for the Colossian believers in 1.9-14. Paul's ongoing prayer for them arises because of his hearing of their faith commitment to Christ. His image for the discipleship of the Colossian believers is rooted in the desire ἵνα πληρωθῆτε τὴν ἐπίγνωσιν τοῦ θελήματος αὐτοῦ (1.9). Paul locates this knowledge of God's will within the context of πάσῃ σοφίᾳ καὶ συνέσει πνευματικῇ (1.9). For Paul, this knowledge is not merely mental assent to Scriptural truths, but it is knowledge that leads to wisdom in application and conduct.

> If [Paul] is concerned with correcting the beliefs of the Colossian Christians, it is not for the sake of beliefs as such, but in order to shape the audience's moral dispositions

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2005),143.

[48] While theology is expressed throughout the epistle, the primary teachings regarding theological correction occur in Colossians 1-2 with the practical outworking of that in Colossians 3-4.

[49] Wilson, "The Practical Achievement of Colossians," 56.

[50] Thomas H. Olbricht, "The Stoicheia and the Rhetoric of Colossians," in *Rhetoric, Scripture and Theology*, eds. Stanley E. Porter and Thomas H. Olbricht (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996), 308.

[51] Robbins, *Exploring the Texture of Texts*, 126.

and behavior.[52]

Paul believes that the ethical and behavioral result of the application of the knowledge of God's will is that the Colossian believers "περιπατῆσαι ἀξίως τοῦ κυρίου εἰς πᾶσαν ἀρεσκείαν" (1.10). The practical outworking of that application of the knowledge of God's will is that the believers will "ἐν παντὶ ἔργῳ ἀγαθῷ καρποφοροῦντες καὶ αὐξανόμενοι τῇ ἐπιγνώσει τοῦ θεοῦ" (1.10) as a result of their commitment to God in Christ. Paul proposes that a filling of the knowledge of God's will and the application of that will in wisdom leads to a life of commitment that is both worthy of the Lord and pleasing to him. Paul also states that as they lead that ethical kind of life they will bear fruit and grow *further* in their knowledge of God (1.10). All of these aspects: the fulness of the knowledge of the will of God, its application in wisdom, and the resultant bearing of fruit and further knowledge of God serve to bring about significant commitment and characterological changes within the Colossian believers. In discipleship they experience growth in their lives and they grow stronger with a strength that comes from God (1.11). They grow in their ability to endure, and they grow in patience (1.11). Concomitantly they are able to "μετὰ χαρᾶς εὐχαριστοῦντες τῷ πατρὶ" (1.11-12). "As new practices develop, subtle changes occur in the moral character of the community and in the worldview of those implicated."[53] Through his rhetoric, Paul creates the image of discipleship for those who interact with the text. This image generates the spiritualities of commitment and obedience as the believers grow deeper in their knowledge of God and the practical, ethical expressions of their faith.

The practical, ethical expression of the human commitment to Christ by the Colossian believers finds epistolary prominence in the focal pericope of 3.1-17. Paul opens the paraenetic discourse with a reminder to the believers of the significance of their faith commitment (3.1). The context of the verse follows the section that begins with the conditional phrase, "Εἰ ἀπεθάνετε σὺν Χριστῷ" (2.20) and continues with the warning that religious practices "οὐκ ἐν τιμῇ τινι πρὸς πλησμονὴν τῆς σαρκός" (2.23). From there, Paul takes the readers into the next conditional phrase; one which progresses through the created image of the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ, and one in which Paul engages the

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[52] Wayne A. Meeks, "Moral Formation in the Pauline School," in *Hermes and Athena: Biblical Exegesis and Philosophical Theology*, eds. Eleonore Stump and Thomas P. Flint (Notre Dame, IN: Univ. of Notre Dame Press, 1993), 39.

[53] Wilson, "The Practical Achievement of Colossians," 65.

reader with the consequential and conditional, "Εἰ οὖν συνηγέρθητε τῷ Χριστῷ" (3.1).

For the context of the transformation of character that is developed within the pericope, it is important to note that Paul brackets behavioral ethics with spiritual commitment. For Paul, faith commitment and ethical behavior co-inform each other.[54] The *rationale* for behavioral and ethical change is a faith commitment to Christ and participation in Christ. The Colossian believers are "συνηγέρθητε τῷ Χριστῷ" (3.1). Their death with Christ (2.20; 3.3) and their participation with Christ in being raised together with him form the ethical framework for the proper understanding of the expectations of their characterological transformation. Paul tells them, "If you have been raised with Christ, stop living according to those behaviors that do not reflect your spiritual reality and your new character. Those behaviors are "τὰ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς." Instead, "τὰ ἄνω ζητεῖτε" (3.1) and "τὰ ἄνω φρονεῖτε" (3.2). The substance of the Colossians' being and life is now in their participation with Christ; in dying with Christ and in being raised together with Christ. The theological reality of that transformative faith commitment now informs and sets the standard for their ethical behavior. The believers are to focus their body-mind activities on those things that are representative of a lived reality in the presence of Christ (3.1-2).

There is both the *expectation* of commitment in Paul's conditional phrasing of "Εἰ οὖν συνηγέρθητε" (3.1) and a *call* to commitment beginning with the commands to seek and to think differently. Paul recognizes that within the lives of the believers there remains a habituated force at work that is represented by "τὰ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς" (3.2) and that force finds an outlet of expression through "τὰ μέλη τὰ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς" (3.5).[55] Paul understands the serious nature of "the battle" and recognizes the Colossian believers must redirect their mind-body activities toward "τὰ ἄνω." They have united with Christ "ἐν τῇ ἀπεκδύσει τοῦ σώματος τῆς σαρκός" (2.11). They were "νεκροὺς ὄντας [ἐν] τοῖς

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[54] The distinction between faith commitment and ethical behavior is essential at this point to facilitate an understanding Pauline theology and a proper understanding of the transformation of character. Ethical behavior and obedience may *reveal* faith commitment and *co-inform* each other, but ethical behavior and obedience do not *create* a faith commitment. Faith commitment and ethical behavior/obedience are inextricably linked, as James notes (James 2.14-16). However, faith commitment comes from a relationship with God that, according to Paul, is not generated by any ethical behavior or obedience, but grounded in the grace of God that comes through faith alone (Eph. 2. 8, 9). This framework is the presupposition for this research and the discussion of the transformation of character that follows.

[55] The reference to τὰ μέλη carries the same meaning as Paul's use of the term in Romans 7.22 where he refers to the war being raged ἐν τοῖς μέλεσίν μου and again in 7.23 where he describes "τῷ νόμῳ τῆς ἁμαρτίας τῷ ὄντι ἐν τοῖς μέλεσίν μου." This is not a Gnostic deprecation of the physical as opposed to the spiritual but rather the recognition that sin "takes up residence" in the body through habituation of the mind-body activities lived apart from the spiritual regeneration that comes with faith commitment to Christ.

παραπτώμασιν" (2.13) but have been made alive. Their physical living must now reflect their spiritual reality.

Paul recognizes that the change of focus alone is insufficient to obliterate the residual effects of a habituated life lived when they "ποτε ὄντας ἀπηλλοτριωμένους καὶ ἐχθροὺς τῇ διανοίᾳ ἐν τοῖς ἔργοις τοῖς πονηροῖς" (1.21). Their condition requires radical, definitive action. The habituated vices must be effectively de-habituated in order for the transformation of character to take place in the lives of the Colossian believers. Their spiritual reality and their lived reality must come to congruence. In 3.5 Paul commands the believers, "Νεκρώσατε οὖν τὰ μέλη τὰ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς." Paul uses his rhetoric to create the images of life and death for the believers. In 3.4 he refers to Christ who is their life, and now in Colossians 3.5, he commands them to kill that which is within them that belongs to their "earthly" nature. The grammatical construction is precise, and the call for human commitment to ethical conduct is clear. The believers are to take immediate, once and for all action regarding body-mind activities that have no place in their lives, now lived in participation and union with Christ. Paul begins with overt and inappropriate actions and moves from external expression to an inner attitude.[56] In Colossians 3.7 Paul reminds them that these actions were commensurate with their former way of living. As the Colossians reflect on the words of Paul, it is at least plausible that a dialectic begins to arise as they experience the retention of memories regarding the way they lived prior to their union with Christ. The dialectic of protension would follow as they consider their new life and the kind of ethical behavior that reflects that. The dialectic may extend to the speculation of how they are going to find the power to live in obedience.

In Colossians 3.8 Paul carries the call to commitment further as he challenges the believers to "ἀπόθεσθε καὶ ὑμεῖς τὰ πάντα," and he gives them a second list of mind-body behaviors that are incongruent with an ethic of lived obedience to God. The image Paul creates is one of an unencumbered life. The things which are inappropriate are killed off and removed. Further, all of these "vices" are activities that are expressed in relationship to others. The spiritualities embedded in Paul's rhetoric that are generated through the encounter with the text are obedience and responsibility. The Colossian believers, in relationship with God, are called to obedience as they recognize they are responsible for their inner attitudes as well as their outward behavior.

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[56] The substance of the vice and virtue lists are discussed under the appropriate sections in semantic networks c and a respectively and can be found in the previous chapter.

Paul's call to commitment to refocus the attention of the will and to redirect the thinking to "τὰ ἄνω" finds lived ethical expression in his command in 3.12 to "Ἐνδύσασθε οὖν. . .." Paul frames the ethical commands of 3.12-14 within the image of the Colossian believers as chosen by God, holy, and beloved by God. As with 3.1-4, Paul wants to clearly articulate and create the image of the believers' rightful position with God before he presents the call to commitment and ethical behavior. These images are the substance of future experiences of retention as they repeatedly encounter the text.

The characterological behaviors of 3.12-14 all center on traits expressed in Scripture by both God and Christ.[57] This locus of characterological behaviors aligns with Christ as the model for the new humanity (3.10). The outworking of the transformation process within the lives of the believers and the ongoing renewal process brings them to the place of characterological expression in the manner of Christ; the image according to which they are being renewed. As the believers refocus their body-mind activities toward "τὰ ἄνω," those things which characterize Christ are habituated through a decisive process of "putting on" in Colossians 3.12.

Like the vices of Colossians 3.5-8, all of these characterological behaviors presented in 3.12-14 find expression in relationships. The newly formed dyadic relationship within the religious community created by God in union with Christ is the milieu for characterological expression and transformation. Paul brackets the command to habituate these ethical with the reminder that the Colossian believers are the beloved by God, and they are to practice the virtues in that same kind of love. "Their new lifestyle was to reflect the love of God shown specifically through Christ. These loving characteristics are to permeate the relationships . . .."[58]

The interaction with the text reveals the embedded spiritualities of sacrificial love and security. The believers are to express the character of Christ in self-sacrificial love that seeks the edification of the other as opposed to self. At the same time, because the believers are loved by God with this same kind of love, the spirituality of security is their lived experience of the divine. They do not have to seek their own good, for the collective community seeks it for each member as they express sacrificial love to one another. They

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[57] As with the vices and the relationship to semantic network c, the discussion of the character traits and their expression in the person of Christ is noted in the analysis of the relevant semantic network a in the previous chapter.

[58] Olbricht, "The Stoicheia and the Rhetoric of Colossians," 322.

concomitantly rest in the security that they are ultimately the objects of God's own self-sacrificial love. This sacrificial love informs and shapes the religious community as God designs it to be experienced.

The believers' faith commitment to Christ is the ground for the ethical commands that Paul gives. Their faith in Christ leads to a commitment expression of obedience lived out in faith. Faith in Christ is essential for the transformation of their character into Christlikeness. In Colossians 1.1, Paul addresses the believers as "τοῖς ἐν Κολοσσαῖς ἁγίοις καὶ πιστοῖς ἀδελφοῖς ἐν Χριστῷ." Paul is aware of their faith in Christ Jesus (1.4). His desire is that they "ἐπιμένετε τῇ πίστει τεθεμελιωμένοι καὶ ἑδραῖοι" (1.23). They are people that have been "συνηγέρθητε διὰ τῆς πίστεως" (2.12). "Faith for Paul pertains to the whole of the Christian life and more particularly to that life as a participation in Christ."[59]

The Colossians' lived expression of faith and participation in Christ finds teleological articulation in Colossians 3.15-17. As the religious community expresses the character of Christ to one another, Christ becomes their lived experience. The "ἡ εἰρήνη τοῦ Χριστοῦ" is to govern their innermost lives. Indeed, Paul states that it is to this peace that the Colossian believers are called in their religious community. Hence, the peace of Christ finds an individual expression that infuses and shapes the collective identity of the community. This particular peace gives rise to the spirituality of thankfulness (3.15b). Harmony in spirit and community generates ongoing thankfulness in the lives of the believers. While the peace of Christ rules, the λόγος τοῦ Χριστοῦ comes to dwell fully and richly in the lives of the believers. The word of Christ informs and directs their interactions, their teachings, and their worship together.

When Christ becomes the lived experience of the believers, and his characterological nature becomes completely manifest in their lives and relationships, the ultimate expression of the transformation of character is realized as Paul portrays it in Colossians 3.17. Paul tells them that "πᾶν ὅ τι ἐὰν ποιῆτε ἐν λόγῳ ἢ ἐν ἔργῳ, πάντα ἐν ὀνόματι κυρίου Ἰησοῦ." The significant implication of this statement as it relates to the transformation of character is difficult to overstate. Paul is telling the Colossians that the manner in which they are to conduct themselves in a manner which is identical to the way Jesus would conduct himself. "To speak or act in the name of another is to speak or act as

[59] David M. Hay, "Paul's Understanding of Faith as Participation," in *Paul and His Theology*, ed. Stanley E. Porter (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 75.

that person."[60] In every mind-body activity, the believers are to express the very mind-body activity that the Lord Jesus would in that same instance. It is clear that if that level of characterological transformation is fully realized, the lived experience of the believer is indeed that of Christ himself.

As the believer moves toward this lived reality, the natural focus of seeking and thinking becomes "τὰ ἄνω." Characterological traits that are inconsistent with the character and nature of Christ are systematically "put off." The ongoing renewal "εἰς ἐπίγνωσιν" according to the image of Christ is facilitated and "further growth of knowledge of God" is realized, as Paul prays in Colossians 1.10. The attitudes and character traits commensurate with the person of Christ are "put on" through an ongoing process of habituation. This habituation leads to a further actualization of the peace of Christ and the word of Christ ruling and dwelling within the religious community. The ongoing renewal process takes on a spiral formation with a corresponding progressive, upward movement towards Christlikeness.[61] The lived experience "τοῦ μυστηρίου τούτου . . . ὅ ἐστιν Χριστὸς ἐν ὑμῖν, ἡ ἐλπὶς τῆς δόξης" (Col. 1.27) becomes a reality for the believers.

The semantic networks embedded within the rhetoric of Paul's text of Colossians 3.1-17 yield subtextures that further thicken the theological and spirituality textures of the pericope. However, the questions remain with regard to the transformation of character: how do the effects of the dynamic interaction between the text and the reader, the creation of images, and the dialectic of retention and protension substantively contribute to the alteration of the fabric of a person's character such that it undergoes a transformation process? How do the theological realities within the text become the substance of life for the follower of Christ? These questions are answered through the further exploration into Paul's rhetoric and the semantic networks embedded within the text. There is a fourth effect that begins to unfold in the lives of those who interact with the text.[62] This fourth effect is that of embodiment. The embodiment of the text begins to occur

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[60] Hawthorne, "Name," *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, 481.

[61] The ongoing renewal process is not a consistent upward movement but forms a spiral. The process of dehabituation and rehabituation form the downward and upward movements, respectively, but the overarching direction is a progression toward the embodiment of Colossians 3.17 and the reflection of the image into which the believer is being renewed.

[62] Three of the effects have been noted and discussed in detail in the previous chapter and where applicable in the current chapter: the dynamic interaction between the text and the reader, the creation of images, and the dialectic of retention and protension. The fourth effect of embodiment was introduced in the last chapter, but due to the intimate connection with a realized transformation of character, the effect is only discussed at this appropriate juncture in the research.

when the text no longer remains external to the person's lived reality but becomes internalized and an integral part of the person's lived experience of life and the divine. The "gap" between the substance of the text and the lived experience of the person is minimized to the point that the life of the person that it is impossible to differentiate between the person and the text. The person becomes the living embodiment of the text.

As a texture of the text, embodiment provides an added thickness to the textural understanding of Paul's rhetoric. Paul writes his words with purpose and intentionality. He has a desired, well-formed outcome in mind. In Colossians 3.1-17 this well-formed outcome is expressed in the transformational *τέλος* of 3.17, "καὶ πᾶν ὅ τι ἐὰν ποιῆτε ἐν λόγῳ ἢ ἐν ἔργῳ, πάντα ἐν ὀνόματι κυρίου Ἰησοῦ, εὐχαριστοῦντες τῷ θεῷ πατρὶ δι' αὐτοῦ." Paul's ultimate desire is that every expression of a person's words and actions reflects and "embodies" the person of the Lord Jesus. This effect of embodiment, with the internalization and subsequent externalization of the focal pericope, is an outward manifestation of the process by which the transformation of character occurs within the life of the Christ-follower. It is therefore incumbent upon this research to examine this fourth effect of the embodiment texture as it relates to the process of character transformation.

6.3 The Embodiment Texture as the Substance of Character Transformation

Waaijman states that transformation refers to "the most significant transitions in the divine-human relational process" and that it is the essence of spirituality.[63] Lombaard further elaborates on the concept of transformation as a fundamental change of relationship between a human and the divine.

> Transformation, understood within the agenda of spirituality, is an encounter with the Divine that brings about profound change in an individual's relationship with the Holy, to the extent that this changes his or her whole life in such a way that it touches the immediate and the broader . . .[64] [dimensions of all relationships].

This transformation can occur in a single encounter with God, in lived experiences like the "new birth" and "regeneration." These encounters with God, as evidenced in Scripture and throughout Church history, change people's lives

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[63] Waaijman, *Spirituality,* 455.

[64] Christo Lombaard, "Biblical Spirituality and Transformation," *In die Skriflig* 49 no. 2 (2015): 2, accessed July 14, 2018, https://dx.doi.org/10.4102/IDS.V4912.1950.

dramatically.[65] Transformation is not limited to a single event but may also be experienced as a series of transformative *events* leading to an ultimate transformative goal. Waaijman's reference to the plurality of transformation of experiences as "significant transitions" would support such an understanding. The validity of this observation is borne out in the narrative accounts recorded in Scripture where transformation occurs through an ongoing process of continually encountering God in the lived experiences of life.[66] The change related to transformation is "not something which is brought about in an instant; it has to be continually repeated, or, rather, it is a process which has to go on all the time the Christian is in this life."[67]

Waaijman refers to a process of transformation as being comprised of five "layers."[68] Much of the intent of Waaijman's explanation of the transformation layers is utilized here with a slight alteration of the terminology. For this research the five "layers" are expressed as *formed*, *unformed*, *reformed*, *conformed*, and *transformed*. Each is discussed with its relevance to the understanding of Paul's process of character transformation in Colossians 3.1-17.

While there are five "layers" that are discussed in a linear fashion as they arise in the pericope, it must be understood that transformation is not simply a linear process of progression through the successive layers; a process in which when one layer is

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[65] An exhaustive list of the numerous examples in Scripture would exceed the limitations of available space. An excellent representative example of the transformation that takes place in the human-divine encounter is evidenced in the transformation of Saul to Paul in Acts 9.

[66] The process of transformation in the lives of Jesus' disciples, as recorded in the gospel accounts of the New Testament, displays this kind of ongoing kind of transformation. The encounters with Jesus as the Christ brought about both an inward and outward manifestation of transformation evidenced in the post-ascension account of Acts 2.

[67] C.E.B. Cranfield, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on The Epistle to the Romans*, International Critical Commentary, vol. 2, (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1979), 607. While Cranfield is expressing the grammatical implications of the transformation referred to in Romans 12.2 by Paul, the effects in the transformation process in Colossians 3.1-17 are no different. There is an ongoing transformational process at work in the lives of the Colossian believers as they are "rooted and built up" in Christ (Col. 2.6-7).

[68] Great gratitude is expressed to Waaijman, *Spirituality,* 456, for his assistance with understanding the process of transformation and the terminology related to his five layers of transformation. His terminology is utilized here with slight modification and expansion as it relates to the process of character transformation presented by the apostle Paul in Colossians 3.1-17. The five "layers" of transformation noted by Waaijman are expressed utilizing the terminology of St. John of the Cross and are "form, malformation, reformation, conformity and transformation," Waaijman, *Spirituality*, 455. These layers are expanded by Waaijman as "(1) the transformation from non-being to being in God's creation of man; (2) transformation from being malformed to being re-formed in God's re-creation of man; (3) man's being conformed to a divine-human transformation model which introduces a person into divine reality; (4) transformation in love in which the soul is led into God, while God takes up his abode in the soul; (5) the transformation in glory which awaits us after this life but of which the transformation in love already contains a sketch," 456.

"completed," the next layer of transformation begins. The process of transformation is not a series of successive steps that are merely transformational "phases" through which one passes on the way to some higher plane of spiritual existence; each more "spiritual" than the one preceding.[69] Such is not the case, and that kind of linear view negates much of the impact of the effects that arise through interaction with the sacred text. The dynamic interaction between the text and the reader, through repetition, allows for an experience where that which was previously encountered in the text informs the next encounter with the text and every encounter subsequent to that. As a result of this repetition of textual encounters, a dialectic of retention and protension occurs within the reader and hearer. This dialectic creates the potential for the embodiment of the text to occur simultaneously and on multiple levels in a person's life depending on the focus of the dialectic.[70] It is through the repetition of encounters with the divine, both revealed in the text and through lived experiences, that the process of textual embodiment occurs that leads to transformation. The multiple, simultaneous levels on which the embodiment occurs is especially significant for an understanding of a process of character transformation. A progressive embodiment allows for a formative process to unfold in different areas and at different times in a person's life rather than an unrealized (and therefore disappointing) expectation of instantaneous characterological change due to the perceived "completion" of a preceding "layer" of the transformation process. This aspect of the process is further explored within the layers of "*unformed*," "*reformed*," and "*conformed*."

While there are multiple opportunities for transformation to occur through the process of textual embodiment, there is a defined *entry point* for the transformational process. For the apostle Paul, the entry point for the process of character transformation begins with spiritual conversion and the reality of being *formed*.

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[69] The nonlinearity of the process of transformation of character is noted here, but for coherence in explanation of this process, the phases will be discussed in a linear movement from *formed, unformed, reformed, conformed, and transformed*. This progression follows the chiastic formation discussed previously of A, B, C, B^1, A^1. In many cases, the co-linearity of the process will become evident, and where applicable the discussion will include such occurrences, especially in the discussion of the chiastic elements reflected in B and B^1.

[70] In Colossians 3.1-17 the dialectic can take on a myriad of foci. At one point it can be centered around a particular vice (3.5, 7) as it is relevant in a person's life prior to union in Christ and the realization of the need to "put to death" such activity. The dialectic can center around personal interaction and the practice of compassion (3.12), or the presence or absence of "the peace of Christ" (3.15) in their lives. All of these dialectics can be occurring simultaneously, and their outworking towards embodiment happens on many levels at the same time. The degree to which the transformational goal of embodiment is realized varies with each dialectic experience and the outcome of that dialectic.

6.3.1 Formed[71]

The concept of transformation involves moving *from* one form or field of being *to* another form or field of being.[72] In order for *trans*-formation to occur, it logically presupposes a *formation*. The biblical creation narratives of Genesis 1.26-27 and 2.1-7 recount the formation of humankind and the *form* or image in which God creates humanity. Humans are formed "κατ' εἰκόνα θεοῦ" (Gen. 1.27) and given life as God "ἐνεφύσησεν εἰς τὸ πρόσωπον αὐτοῦ πνοὴν ζωῆς, καὶ ἐγένετο ὁ ἄνθρωπος εἰς ψυχὴν ζῶσαν" (Gen. 2.7). "A human being defines himself against the background of non-being. The transition from non-being to being is brought about by God's shaping hand."[73] The image of God is part of the innate nature of humans as God creates them. Humanity bears this image as part of God's design in creation. As Estep notes, "we do not develop into the image of God; we *are* the image of God."[74] This creation in the image of God is by God's divine choice.

The original formation of humankind in the image and likeness of God is tragically *de-formed* through the entry of sin into the human race. Humanity is thereafter *formed* in a pattern of life without God at the center of life and relationship.[75] Sin enters the good creation of God as the first humans willingly shift their focus from the infinitely good God to self-centeredness and desire (Gen. 3.6). "Thereby they distort (deform) themselves."[76] The original spiritual formation in the image of God is distorted and *de-*

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[71] The transformational process described through the discussion of *formed* corresponds to the chiastic element of A, discussed in a previous chapter under linguistic features.

[72] The New Testament term translated as transform is μεταμορφόω, which can mean either a change in outward appearance, as in that of Jesus in his transfiguration (Matt. 17.2) or an inward change that is invisible to initial observation, as in the transforming process of believers into the image of Jesus (2 Cor. 3.18). The latter aspect of transformation is initiated "from within" by the Spirit of God (2.18) and is an "outer working" of what is happening "within" our inner corporeal reality (2 Cor. 4.7).

[73] Waaijman, *Spirituality*, 459.

[74] Estep, Jr., "Christian Anthropology: Humanity as *Imago Dei*," *Christian Formation: Integrating Theology & Human Development*, eds. James R. Estep and Jonathan H. Kim (Nashville: B&H Publishing Group, 2010), 31.

[75] Genesis 3 provides the account of the entry of sin into the human race with the subsequent effect of spiritual death. God previously informs the first humans what happens if they disobey God and eat from the tree "τοῦ γινώσκειν καλὸν καὶ πονηρόν;" the fruit from which they are expressly commanded not to eat (Gen 2.16-17). God tells them that death will be immediate and absolute ("θανάτῳ ἀποθανεῖσθε"). After the experience of disobedience in sin (Gen. 3), the first humans continue to live physical lives but their relationship with God is broken, and they are separated from the spiritual and physical presence of God. The image in which they are created remains, though now deformed through disobedience. Spiritual death and the separation that is involved in death becomes the pattern for their lives and for all of humanity as their offspring.

[76] Waaijman, *Spirituality*, *460*.

formed by sin, but the image still exists within each human.

> To be an image is to be a likeness to the original. Thus, the image of God can be more or less deformed in a human being depending on the scale of likeness. But no matter what the level of deformity of the image through sin, it is never fully eradicated.[77]

The deformation of the image of God and the *formed*, now inherent, sinful nature of humans is evidenced by the attitudinal and physical expressions of habituated sinful behavior. Persistent patterns of disobedient sinful behavior throughout human history both *reflect* this deformed image and *reinforce* the ongoing deformation and spiritual death through habituation of sin and disobedience.[78]

A spiritual formation grounded in the *imago Dei*, resident in all of humanity, allows for the understanding that every human is therefore spiritually formed, just as they are physically formed. This spiritual formation is independent of any recognition or experience of the divine but is an integral aspect of humanity created by God. Consequently, the *de*-formation and distortion of the image of God that comes because of humanity's now inherent sinful nature result in patterns of sinful behavior that become habituated; on both a spiritual and corporeal level.

The image of God in which humanity is *formed*, now marred and damaged through the habituation of sin that emanates from a sinful nature, finds *trans*-formation through spiritual conversion expressed as faith in Christ (Eph. 4.17-24; Col. 2.9-14).[79] This spiritual conversion radically *trans*-forms the person and changes their condition from that of spiritual death to one of spiritual life. Humanity, apart from Christ, is spiritually formed in death and sin due to both an inherently sinful nature and by humans' willful choice.[80] According to the apostle Paul, humanity in such a state is without hope and without God

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[77] Daniel Haynes, "The Transgression of Adam and Christ the New Adam: St. Augustine and St. Maximus the Confessor on the Doctrine of Original Sin," *St. Vladimer's Theological Quarterly* 55 no. 33 (2011): 297.

[78] These patterns are reflected in the list of vices Paul presents in Colossians 3.5, 8 and the degree of habituation of those vices in the lives of the Colossians is seen in 3.7.

[79] The epistle to the Ephesians and the epistle to the Colossians contain many similarities, and as circular letters, they were intended to be read by the local congregations of the area. See Colossians 4.16 and the reference to the letter to the Laodiceans. It is plausible that the Colossians were familiar with the content of other epistles and with that understanding reference is made to some of these; especially content within the letter to the Ephesians.

[80] This research recognizes the existence of original sin as inherited from the first human ancestors and that original sin is passed on to subsequent generations. The limitations of this research do not allow a full discussion of this topic, but it is noted that it does inform the process of transformation of character and the inherent necessity of a new formation in Christ.

(Eph. 2.12). They are "ἀπηλλοτριωμένους καὶ ἐχθροὺς τῇ διανοίᾳ ἐν τοῖς ἔργοις τοῖς πονηροῖς" (Col. 1.21). Humanity is *formed* in the image of God but *deformed* through sin and in an ongoing state of continued *de-formation* through the habituation of such practices. "But this distortion (deformation) ever looks for re-formation."[81]

Paul writes to Colossians who are *formed* anew. Through their faith in Christ Jesus (Col. 1.4) and spiritual conversion, they are rescued "ἐκ τῆς ἐξουσίας τοῦ σκότους καὶ μετέστησεν εἰς τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ υἱοῦ τῆς ἀγάπης αὐτοῦ, ἐν ᾧ ἔχομεν τὴν ἀπολύτρωσιν, τὴν ἄφεσιν τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν" (Col. 1.13-14). Spiritual conversion brings into being the new form and identity of the believer and radically reorients life. Being *formed* anew impacts dyadic relationships fundamental to the Colossians' understanding of self, their relation to the divine, and their relation to others. Spiritual *formation* reorients their understanding of community. This spiritual *formation* restructures the comprehension of their place in the ordering of the world. It *unforms* and subsequently *reforms* their worldview at its deepest level.

> First, spiritual conversion involves a change of the core destination of a person's life. Specifically, the identification of the self with the sacred itself becomes the ultimate source of significance; other strivings, while still potentially very important, cease to be the highest organizing principle of existence. Second, an individual transforms his/her life pathway to reach this destination. This transformation may involve shifts in relationships, habits, patterns of thought, emotional reactions, and, more generally, a new sense of guidance in the journey of life. Taken together, spiritual conversion radically alters a person's understanding of the sacred, the self, relationships, and one's place in the universe.[82]

It is important to understand that this new *forming* of the person in union with Christ is not merely a "re-working" of the damaged, de-formed creation and sinful nature. Spiritual conversion creates a wholly *new* form (2 Cor. 5.17). The necessity of this new form and formation "in Christ" is essential for a biblical understanding of characterological transformation in Christ. The creation of the new form also brings the creation of a new identity and familial relationship formed through faith in Christ. "God became man [in Christ] to turn creatures into sons: not simply to produce better men of the old kind, but to produce a new kind of man."[83] Any attempt at "re-working" the damaged, distorted and

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[81] Waaijman, *Spirituality*, 460.

[82] Annette Mahoney and Kenneth I. Pargament, "Sacred Changes: Spiritual Conversion and Transformation," *JCLP/In Session* 60 no. 5 (2004): 483.

[83] C. S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity* (New York: HarperOne, 2000), 216.

de-formed self that precedes spiritual conversion is effectively moral *re-formation* and it lacks the spiritual life that is indispensable to bring about character transformation in Christ. Prior to their spiritual conversion, spiritual death is the lived experience of the Colossians. The entry into spiritual life from that death is through faith in Christ (Ephesians 2.1-10). For the apostle Paul, spiritual life in Christ is an essential precursor to the trans-*formation* of character.

It is with this perspective on the Colossians' *formation* in union with Christ that Paul begins the paraenetic discourse of Colossians 3.1-4. The Colossian believers have a new identity and an identification with the death (2.20; 3.3) and resurrection of Christ (3.1); both in present reality and an eschatological one as well (3.3-4). That identification with Christ shapes the rationale for the commands Paul gives to the believers in Colossians 3.1-2. The apostle concludes his warnings against moral formation and adherence to regulations that "οὐκ ἐν τιμῇ τινι πρὸς πλησμονὴν τῆς σαρκός" (2.23) in the pericope immediately preceding Colossians 3.1. The exhortation in 3.1 flows from the image of death (2.20) to life evidenced by the resurrection "Εἰ οὖν συνηγέρθητε τῷ Χριστῷ. . ." (3.1). Through identification in union with Christ, the Colossian believers are formed anew. They are also formed after a specific pattern: that of Christ himself, "ἡ ζωὴ ὑμῶν" (3.4). Their new *form* is to also have a new *focus,* and that focus is to be "τὰ ἄνω" (3.1-2).

Spiritual conversion provides the opportunity for the formation of rightly motivated dispositions or ἕξεις by which the Colossian believers can reorient the focus of their body-mind activities on "τὰ ἄνω," as opposed to "τὰ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς."[84] The formation of these ἕξεις is essential for growth toward a characterological transformation into the image of Christ. "Such growth is [a pattern] of relentless seeking." [85] Characterological transformation involves reorienting one's actions and πρᾶξις toward the things that reflect the actions and πρᾶξις of Christ himself, who is always present to the believers (Col. 3.1).

> For the early Christians to place Christ in heaven, as they understood it, was for them to affirm that he is still in this same world but now in a radically different form. The manner of his being in the world is that we can encounter him and his power . . . in the everyday reality of our own lives.[86]

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[84] As discussed previously, these locatives are not specifically geographical references but refer instead to those things associated with a focus that is "worldly" in orientation as opposed to the things oriented towards God. See Moo, *The Letters to the Colossians and to Philemon*, 248.

[85] Dallas Willard, *Renovation of the Heart: Putting on the Character of Christ*, (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 2002), 94.

[86] Oliver Davies, *Theology of Transformation: Faith, Freedom, and the Christian Act*, (Oxford:

The relentless seeking that accompanies the ἕξις of φρονεῖτε (Col. 3.2) is best understood not as merely focused thinking and intellectual assent but a "fundamental orientation of the will" and is "a habit of the mind."[87] The spiritual transformation in conversion affects both the deepest desire and intention of the will and captures the focus of thought activity. In relocating the body-mind focus upon "τὰ ἄνω," Paul presents the opportunity for the development of ἕξεις which become the habituation of actions, πρᾶξις, attitudes, and rightly oriented thinking that are representative of the model of characterological transformation; the person of the Lord Jesus. The concrete expression of the "τὰ ἄνω" body-mind activities is expressed in Colossians 3.12-14 and developed in the section on *conformed*.

The continual confrontation with the text of Colossians 3.1-17 repeatedly brings the believers to the place where they redirect their habituated body-mind activities to align with "τὰ ἄνω," and the embodiment of the text begins to take place. The fundamental orientation of their will and the consistent focus of their thinking becomes "τὰ ἄνω." The process of textual embodiment involves the spiritual self-awareness to engage the dialectic of where the person is in relation to the commands of the text as well as the awareness of where the person desires to be if the text becomes the expression of their lived experience.

"Spiritual transformation is always a matter of self-awareness. This aware- ness of form can be triggered by something negative (e.g. the absence of a desired form) or something positive (e.g. the appearance of the desired form)."[88] The Colossian believers face the challenge of possessing a spiritual reality that does not align with the lived experience of their behavioral manifestations. Paul repeatedly writes to them regarding this condition (Colossians 1.23, 28; 2.4, 6-8, 16, 18-23; 3.7). Paul recognizes the process of change that begins from within and the prevenient spiritual conversion that must "work itself outward" with the corresponding physical manifestation of their body-mind experiences. These experiences overflow and inform every component of their lives; including their social contexts as will be seen in subsequent sections.

In a life lived outside of union with Christ, a character is habituated and *formed* in a way that is incongruent with the character of Christ and it must be *unformed*. It cannot

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Oxford Univ. Press, 2013), 119.

[87] Moo, *The Letters to the Colossians and to Philemon*, 248.

[88] Chris A.M. Hermans, "Spiritual Transformation: Concept and Measurement," *Journal of Empirical Theology* 26 (2013): 171.

be simply "reworked" and "salvaged." This process must take place in the lives of the Colossian believers if their characterological transformation is to align with their lived experience of the spiritual reality that results from their conversion. This alignment finds its expression as the believers "put off" "τὰ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς" and "put on" "τὰ ἄνω" attitudes, actions, habituated πρᾶξις, and ἕξεις reflective of the character of the Lord Jesus. In order for this to occur, the believers must be simultaneously *unformed* and *conformed*.[89]

6.3.2 Unformed[90]

Paul brings forward the body-mind connection in characterological transformation as he commands the Colossian believers, "Νεκρώσατε οὖν τὰ μέλη τὰ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς" (Col. 3.5). These "members upon the earth" are

> those parts of a life lived *entirely in terms of natural powers of the embodied self*. . . These are the "parts" of our life that are "upon the earth," in the sense that they do not come "from [τὰ ἄνω]" or God. Because of them, human beings become "children of disobedience." Their basic nature becomes disobedience or rebellion. They are inherently at war with God and therefore subject to God's wrath."[91]

The implicit idea behind Paul's command is that the believers have died (Col. 2.20) and they are now spiritually alive and raised together with Christ. Christ is, both spiritually and physically, to be the "sum total" of their life (Col. 3.4). But their experiential reality is that their physical lives are still practically lived out on earth "and subject to all its dangers and temptations."[92] They are to reject those dangers and temptations, and their body-mind activities are to be the behaviors that typify the lives of those who have experienced spiritual conversion. Paul is instructing the Colossian believers to bring congruence to their physical and spiritual realities. He exhorts them, if "ἀπεθάνετε σὺν

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[89] It is at this point that the non-linear nature of the transformation process has concomitant activity. This simultaneous nature is noted here, though the flow of the text is followed through the *formed*, *unformed*, *reformed*, *conformed*, *transformed* format. The text of Colossians 3.1-17 does not present a linear progression of transformation stages. Much of what is happening in the process of character transformation is occurring simultaneously, and the importance of some of these aspects will be pointed out.

[90] The transformation process discussed as *unformed* corresponds to the chiastic structure of B in the Linguistic Features of the previous chapter.

[91] Willard, *Renovation of the Heart*, *163*. The body is not a secondary element in salvation such that the spiritual "component" of the individual experiences conversion and the body remains largely the residue of life formerly lived apart from Christ. In Rom. 8.11 Paul rejects dualism and brings unity to the integrated concept of the "en-spirited body." As Willard notes, "Our body is not just a physical system, but is inhabited by the real presence of Christ," 163.

[92] McL. Wilson, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Colossians and Philemon*, 224.

Χριστῷ ἀπὸ τῶν στοιχείων τοῦ κόσμου, τί ὡς ζῶντες ἐν κόσμῳ?" (Col. 2.20) and again in Colossians 3.3, "ἀπεθάνετε γὰρ." "Paul teaches us to think of ourselves as if the world's sinful motivational system were nothing to us, were dead to us, because of the vision of that alternative life present with us in Christ."[93] Those aspects of their physical and mental behaviors that reflect their life prior to union with Christ must be viewed as dead and treated that way for their lives to be in spiritual and physical congruence.

Three times in Colossians 3.5-9 Paul refers to the cessation of body-mind behaviors that do not align with the new spiritual reality of the believers.[94] These behaviors typified the habitual pattern of life for the Colossians before their union with Christ. Paul describes these body-mind activities as "the habituated manner in which they lived" when they "walked in them" prior to redemption. "Paul understood redemption as a progressive sequence of real human and divine actions and events that resulted from the transformation of the body and the mind."[95] The Colossians are reminded that "ποτε ὄντας ἀπηλλοτριωμένους καὶ ἐχθροὺς τῇ διανοίᾳ ἐν τοῖς ἔργοις τοῖς πονηροῖς" (Col. 1.21). In Colossians 3.7 Paul tells them that "ἐν οἷς καὶ ὑμεῖς περιεπατήσατέ ποτε, ὅτε ἐζῆτε ἐν τούτοις." The connection (or perhaps *dis*-connection) is clear: habituated patterns of body-mind behavior that accompany a life prior to union with Christ have no place in a life radically trans-*formed* by spiritual conversion. The only acceptable recourse is to view those "earthly members" within the believer in a manner physically befitting their spiritual reality. Paul is quite clear: spiritually those members are dead. The "μέλη τὰ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς" are necrotic, dead, and dangerous to real life in Christ and they are to be removed with an understanding that they do great harm to the life God is *forming* in the believers. Through this process of removal, the habituated patterns of behavior that reflect the believer's "character in transformation" are *unformed.*

The question remains, "How does the Paul expect the Colossian Christ-follower to align the physical and mental manifestations of the body-mind to the spiritual realities experienced through conversion?" This is a critical question in the process of transformation of character. "Most of what is called "character" (good *or* bad) in normal

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[93] Dallas Willard, *The Spirit of the Disciplines: Understanding How God Changes Lives*, (New York: HarperCollins, 1998), 116.

[94] Three imperatives accompany these three instances: Νεκρώσατε (3.5), ἀπόθεσθε (3.8), μὴ ψεύδεσθε (3.9).

[95] Willard, *The Spirit of the Disciplines*, 111.

human life consists in what our bodies are or are not "at the ready" to do in the specific situations where we find ourselves."[96] The body-mind activities that reflect such a trans-*formed* character are addressed by Paul when he tells the Colossians to "seek with all of your bodily and willful effort to take hold of . . ." (3.1) and "to devote the full focus of your reasoned thought life toward" (3.2) those things that reflect the character of Christ himself.[97]

An essential component of addressing the question of alignment is the understanding that Paul views character transformation as more than just behavior modification or cognitive assertion. Paul understands the link between the body and mind and recognizes that genuine transformation of character must involve both changes in behavior *and* changes in the thinking that lies behind the behavior. Character transformation involves both the body and the mind. The body is that part of the human that is in direct contact with social constructs and environment. The body provides the mechanism by which the thoughts of the mind, with its generated attitudes and expressions of feeling, are manifest. "The mind is embodied, which means it is housed in your physical self and depends on your body to function."[98] Alignment of both the body and the mind to the characterological expressions of Christ is a fundamental aspect of the transformation of character. "An essential dimension of the transformed self is the transformed mind, and it is out of this transformed mind that the ethical (as well as religious) insights of the believer emerge" and are manifest through the body.[99]

In order to facilitate this characterological transformation, Paul confronts the remnants of the un-transformed self that must be *unformed* before it can be rightly *re-formed* and *conformed* to the pattern of Christ. The confrontation begins with an understanding that the *source* of the body-mind activities arises from the "τὰ μέλη τὰ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς" and appropriate action must be directed toward that source. These "members"[100]

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[96] Willard, *Renovation of the Heart*, 162.

[97] Colossians 3.1, 2. The two commands, ζητεῖτε and φρονεῖτε represent much more than casual looking and thought. The paraphrase is mine. See Arndt, William, Frederick Danker, Walter Bauer, eds., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 339 (2), 866.

[98] Curt Thompson, *Anatomy of the Soul* (Carrollton, TX: Tyndale House, 2010), 29.

[99] Robin Scroggs, "New Being: Renewed Mind: New Perception: Paul's View of the Source of Ethical Insight," *The Chicago Theological Seminary Register* 72 (1982): 9.

[100] These "members" are not just the physical aspects of the body as they are observed. For example, the tongue is not itself outwardly obvious, but the effects of this "member" can be absolutely "hellish" (James 3.6) when inflicted upon others. Likewise, the "members" also include the inner, "hidden"

do not act in isolation or independently, without motivation and direction, but instead, they function inter-dependently with the body and the mind at the center of the activity. In Colossians 3.5 and 3.8-9, Paul presents a pattern of activity that flows from body expression to mind activity (body-mind) in 3.5 and then in 3.8-9 there is the progression of mind activity to body expression (mind-body).[101] The flow of expression in 3.5 begins with physical desires (body) and concludes with an attitude of insatiable desire (mind) for that which others have. The vices Paul identifies in 3.5 all lead to objectifying other humans; seeking them and what they have for self-gratification. This objectification discounts the other's worth as created in the *imago Dei* and diminishes their existence to the level of the satisfying another person's pleasure.

In Colossians 3.8-9, Paul begins with attitudes of the mind (wrath, anger) that lead to expressions of the body (speaking lies). The practice of these vices originates from an attitude that views other people as a threat to the achievement of a desired outcome. "It is a *feeling* that seizes us in our body and immediately impels us toward interfering with, and possibly even harming, those who have thwarted our will and interfered with our life."[102] These are mind-body activities that view others as a source of *dis*-pleasure rather than pleasure, and therefore they are objects of wrath, anger, and derision (3.8). Ultimately, they can be lied to and told whatever is most expedient in order to eliminate the perceived threat to self (3.9). In both instances, the activities are rooted in a desire for self-gratification: through *pleasure* (body-mind) and the *dis–pleasure* (mind-body) that leads to the elimination of the perceived threat to self which, when realized, leads to self-gratifying results.

The seriousness with which Paul views the eradication of these habituated characterological traits is communicated through the imperatival command to "consider those members as dead" (Col. 3.5). They are to put them off (Col. 3.9) and treat them as necrotic and a present threat to the transformation of their character according to the Christ-pattern. The necrotic members require a dehabituation that resembles amputation. "The principle of growth is clear: you must rid yourself of those things that cause you to stumble

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aspects of the mind and the activities of the mind that often get translated through the body and impact the social contexts in which a person lives. It is with and through the body that a person has the primary point of contact with the world and those within it.

[101] This flow of activity is noted in the discussion of the semantic network c in the previous chapter.

[102] Willard, *The Divine Conspiracy*, 147.

(sin) in order that you may put on those ways that honor God."[103]

The manner in which this amputation is achieved is through mortification. Mortification means that "the old man," with his faculties, and properties, his wisdom, craft, subtlety, strength; this, says the apostle, must be killed, put to death, mortified."[104] Putting to death, or mortification "is the utter elimination of the sinful flesh."[105] These members, habituated in sin and practices that are incongruent with the believer's new life in Christ, are behind Paul's understanding of "τὰ μέλη τὰ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς."

> When [Paul] directs us . . . to mortify our members upon the earth (Col. 3.5), we are to interpret his words in light of his acts. And when we do so there is no doubt that he is directing us to undertake the standard activities for training the natural desires toward godliness, ones that are generally recognized by anyone at all familiar with the history of religion.[106]

The habits of the "members," trained in sin and bearing the residue of their sinful nature even after spiritual conversion, must be eliminated. The believers must be *unformed* before they can experience a *re-forming* process befitting their spiritual reality.

The Christ-followers have a definite role in the transformation of character. There are responsibilities which they bear in the transformation process. They actively participate in the un-*forming* process. Paul is unambiguous in his instruction. They must participate in the willful cessation of activities and the redirection of their thinking towards "τὰ ἄνω:" attitudes, actions, habituated πρᾶξις, and ἕξεις reflective of the character of the Lord Jesus. Those practices of their former life are not just damaging to the individual believer's trans-*formation* of character; they are detrimental to the new community in which the believers find themselves. "To be sure fornication, stealing, or "evil talk" are not to be done by Christians, but the reason such behaviors are forbidden is they are behaviors

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[103] Jay E. Adams, *Temptation: Applying Radical Amputation to Life's Sinful Patterns*, (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing Co., 2012), 10.

[104] John Owen, *The Works of John Owen*, vol. 11, ed. William H. Goold (Albany OR: The Ages Digital Library. 2000), 21, accessed June 5, 2018, http://www.prayermeetings.org/files/John_Owen/Owen_V11_Saint_s_Perseverance.pdf.

[105] Peter J. Leithart, "Stoic Elements in Calvin's Doctrine of the Christian Life," *The Westminster Theological Journal* 56 (1994): 59.

[106] Willard, *Spirit of the Disciplines*, 105. There are those who would advocate for a Stoic influence upon the practices associated with the process of mortification that is inherent in Paul's instructions. If such is true, it is at least plausible that the early Colossian believers, potentially influenced by Stoic teaching prevalent at the time, would have heard Paul's command, and the rhetoric would bring to mind the Stoic teachings and create the image of such practices for the readers and hearers of Colossians 3.5. See A. A. Long, *Hellenistic Philosophy: Stoics, Epicureans, Sceptics* (New York: Scribner, 1974).

that destroy community by making it difficult for people to trust one another."[107]

As the Christ-followers experience the dialectic that arises within them through repeated exposure to Paul's rhetoric in the text, they facilitate the process of character transformation when their lives begin to reflect the cessation of practices that typified their lives before spiritual conversion. This is the un-*forming* process, embodied in the lives of the believers as they "put to death" and "put off" those body-mind activities that are incongruent with the transformation of character after the pattern of Christ.

The apostle Paul is not just concerned about those activities and attitudes which the Colossians are to "put off." The transformation of character is more than just *not* doing activities reflective of life prior to union with Christ. "The radical expectations of the resurrection life are thus not to be understood as typified by what the Christian does not do, though these prohibitions are important, but rather should be typified by a transformed inner person which radically and obsessively lives for others above the opportunity to live for self."[108] It is this inner transformation to which Paul turns attention as he moves from being *formed*, to *unformed*, and now *reformed.*

6.3.3 Reformed[109]

Paul's understanding of the process of character transformation begins with the entry point of spiritual conversion and being "*formed*" in Christ. This formation is an ongoing process that commences with a person's union with Christ and carries forward through an alignment of characterological expression with spiritual reality. Paul gives specific commands to facilitate this alignment. The Colossian Christians are to reorient the focus of their "seeking" and their "thinking" towards those things that are reflective of the realm in which Christ reigns and rules (3.1-2). The believers are to rid their lives of habituated practices that were characterologically representative of their life prior to union with Christ (3.5, 8, 9). Paul uses specific rhetoric to creates images for those who encounter the text. Some of these images are associated with the verbal commands Paul gives to the

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[107] Stanley Hauerwas, "Character Convergence: The Prospect of Holy Living," in *The Holy Spirit and Christian Formation*, ed. Diane J. Chandler (Cham, Switzerland: Springer International Publishing, 2016), 215.

[108] Anthony C. Thornhill, "The Resurrection of Jesus and Spiritual Transformation," *Journal of Spiritual Formation and Soul Care* 5 no. 2 (2012): 254.

[109] The discussion of the *reformed* aspect of the transformation process corresponds to the chiastic element of C in the Linguistic Features found in the previous chapter.

believers regarding those characterological behaviors that do not belong in their new life in Christ. These commands are given to the believers as their responsibility, and their participation in obedience to these commands is essential to the process of character transformation. However, the transformation of character is not merely human activity towards a godly goal. "Spiritual growth doesn't come from inaction, nor does it come from attempting to obey God in your own wisdom and strength. Both human and divine activity must accompany each other."[110] God initiates and sustains the transformation process with the expected participation and obedience on the part of humans engaged in that process.

In Colossians 3.10, Paul carries forward the rationale behind the command in 3.9 to "μὴ ψεύδεσθε εἰς ἀλλήλους." The basis for the command is that the believers "ἀπεκδυσάμενοι τὸν παλαιὸν ἄνθρωπον σὺν ταῖς πράξεσιν αὐτοῦ" and therefore now possess a new identity. The believers do not simply "put off" τὸν παλαιὸν ἄνθρωπον. There is a simultaneous "spiritual identity exchange" in which they "put off" "τὸν παλαιὸν ἄνθρωπον" (3.9) and now "ἐνδυσάμενοι, τὸν νέον τὸν" (3.10). According to Dunn, when the Colossian believers "put on" "τὸν νέον" it is Christ which they "put on." The believers have a new identity, and it is the identity of Christ himself.

While this new *identity* is one which the believers fully possess, it is also *into* that *image* of Christ that they are being renewed.[111] Paul identifies Jesus as the image of God (Col. 1.15), and at the same time, Jesus is the image into which the believers are being transformed in character. "Reformation is aimed at the recovery of the original form of man, the image of God. To that end it orients itself to a form which makes present the original figure."[112] Jesus provides the image and model of what God intends for humanity "for we cannot know what it means to be human without looking to Jesus, who as the *imago Dei* embodying the divine purpose for humankind is the true human."[113] It is to Christ the believers are to look (3.1-2) as their model for character and the goal of transformation of their character as they reflect the person of Christ. This process is accomplished as God

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[110] Adams, *Temptation*, 8.

[111] Dunn, *The Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon*, 221. The discussion of semantic network d in the previous chapter provides the background for an interpretation that identifies the identity of τὸν νέον as being Jesus Christ and is not discussed in detail here.

[112] Waaijman, *Spirituality*, 463.

[113] Stanley J. Grenz, "Jesus as the Imago Dei: Image-of-God Christology and the Non-linear Linearity of Theology," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 47 no. 4 (December 2004): 627.

reforms the believers into that image (3.10).

Paul envisions the transformation of character as a participatory responsibility of the follower of Christ. His imperatival commands refer to actions in which the Colossian believers are to engage (Col. 3.1, 2) and activities that are to be commenced with all urgency (Col. 3.5, 8, 9). When Paul discusses "τὸν νέον" that the Colossians "put on," the imperatival commands and the active exhortations shift to a passive tense as Paul explains that "τὸν νέον τὸν ἀνακαινούμενον" (Col. 3.10). This shift is fundamental to an understanding of the process of character transformation. There are aspects of the process that are ultimately the exclusive expression of divine agency in the life of the human and they are implicit in the passive nature of the verbal components. It is by divine agency alone that God raises humans together with Christ when they are *formed* in Christ (3.1). But human participation is also essential to the process of character transformation. "Character building is neither an accomplishment of autonomous human beings nor something that God imposes on utterly passive subjects."[114]

There are also explicit aspects of human responsibility conveyed through the imperatival commands noted above ("seeking" and "thinking" in 3.1-2), and the Colossian believers are to participate in the *unform*-ing process of their transformation (3.5, 8, 9). In Colossians 3.10, Paul shifts back to the divine agency when he explains that in order to be *reformed* "τὸν νέον τὸν ἀνακαινούμενον εἰς ἐπίγνωσιν κατ' εἰκόνα τοῦ κτίσαντος αὐτόν." God is the only one that can accomplish the process to *reform* "τὸν νέον." The role of the believer is *participation* in the process through cooperation with God in order to allow God to accomplish God's purpose in the life of the believer. "While it is true that God takes the initiative in offering us the possibility of spiritual growth, we must respond by participating in the process to make it happen."[115]

The understanding that there are essential aspects of character transformation that only God can accomplish but necessitate human participation to allow such a process to occur, differentiates Paul's concept of character transformation from mere moral formation and Aristotelian character development. According to Paul, without the active agency of God, character transformation is not possible. This understanding forms the

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[114] David W. Gill, *Becoming Good: Building Moral Character* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2000), 36.

[115] Frank Bateman Stanger, *Spiritual Formation in the Local Church* (Grand Rapids: Francis Asbury Press, 1989), 55.

backdrop to the pericope when Paul states in the closing verses of Colossians 2, "κατὰ τὰ ἐντάλματα καὶ διδασκαλίας τῶν ἀνθρώπων, ἅτινά ἐστιν λόγον μὲν ἔχοντα σοφίας ἐν ἐθελοθρησκίᾳ καὶ ταπεινοφροσύνῃ [καὶ] ἀφειδίᾳ σώματος, οὐκ ἐν τιμῇ τινι πρὸς πλησμονὴν τῆς σαρκός" (Col. 2.22-23).

The human responsibility expressed in the commands of Colossians 3.5, 8 carries a decidedly "once-for-all" verbal aspect of action that is to take place in the life of the believer. However, in contrast to that, the divine agency process in Colossians 3.10 and being *reformed* is one which is *ongoing*.[116] The habituated character that has been *formed* in life outside of union with Christ and is in the process of being *unformed* requires an ongoing divine agency of *reform*-ing. The process of being *reformed* facilitates the growing Christocentric embodiment of characterological expression and an essential congruence between the believers' lived experience and spiritual reality.

Christ is the model for Paul's process of character transformation. In Colossians 1.10, Paul states that the manner in which the *reform*-ation takes place in the life of the believer is "εἰς ἐπίγνωσιν."[117] Knowledge is a recurring theme in Paul's letter to the Colossians. In Colossians 1 Paul makes the connection between knowledge and Christ as he explains that he is commissioned by God to γνωρίσαι the mystery of God and the riches of his glory which is "Χριστὸς ἐν ὑμῖν, ἡ ἐλπὶς τῆς δόξης" (Col. 1.27). He further associates Christ with knowledge as he locates "all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" are hidden in Christ himself (Col. 2.3).

Paul also recognizes the interconnectedness of knowledge and behavior. In Colossians 1.9 Paul prays for the believers that they "may be filled with the ἐπίγνωσιν of God's will." This filling is a Pauline prerequisite to the following connected behavior in Colossians 1.10, "so that you may lead lives worthy of the Lord." "Paul discusses

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[116] When dealing with and addressing the vices in 3.5, 8, Paul takes an aorist verbal approach but when the focus is upon that which is representative of "the above things" and the divine agency of God in 3.10, the ongoing verbal aspect of the present tense is used. This same idea is presented in Colossians 3.1-2 where Paul commands the believers to both "seek" and "think" on those aspects of Christ and his character that are commensurate with the arena in which he reigns and rules. The present tense nature of the commands reflects an ongoing "habit of the mind." See Moo, *The Letters to the Colossians and to Philemon*, 247.

[117] Other than in Colossians 3.10, the concept of ἐπίγνωσις and its cognates appears six times in Colossians. There is thematic importance to the Colossians' "comprehending" the grace of God (1.6), "knowing" the will of God, (1.9), growing in the "knowledge" of God, (1.10), how God "makes known" the riches of the mystery which is Christ in you, the hope of glory (1.27), the "knowledge" of God's mystery, which is Christ himself (2.2), in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and "knowledge" (2.3).

knowledge in such a way that it can only be something gained in conversion."[118] The lives of the believers are "fully pleasing" to the Lord as they "bear fruit in every good work" and as they "grow τῇ ἐπιγνώσει τοῦ θεοῦ" (Col. 1.10).

For the believers, a renewal "in knowledge" brings them to the place of *reforming* their knowledge of God "that human beings lost in the fall into sin and that incorporation into Christ makes possible again."[119] It is in Christ that their minds and their "thinking" are no longer "estranged and hostile," and the behavior that accompanied their previously darkened minds is aligned with Christ himself as they are presented "holy and blameless and irreproachable" before God (Col. 1.21-22). Renewal in knowledge is crucial for the Colossian believers for the transformation of both their minds and their behavior. "An essential dimension of the transformed self is the transformed mind, and it is out of this transformed mind that the ethical (as well as religious) insights of the believer emerge."[120]

As the believer yields to the *reform*-ing process, there is a transformation of the believer into a more unified self. The dichotomy that exists between the believer's spiritual reality of union with Christ and the habituated characterological expressions of behavior that exist as pre-conversion residue from the untransformed self is gradually diminished. "Transformation refers to the self's changes towards a (more) unified self: a gradual process of overcoming the divided self."[121]The knowledge of God and God's will impact the behavior of the believers, and they are *reformed* into the image of Christ. This process of being *reformed* in the image of Christ according to knowledge of the will of God brings congruence to the life of the believer. The believer's spiritual reality and lived experience move to a place of wholeness and unification as God intended for humanity. Waaijman views this process of *reform*-ing as "reshaping the gold of human existence . . . to be 'created in His image and to His likeness': the person after God's heart."[122]

This *reform*-ing process also forms an essential aspect of embodiment for the believer. The person of Christ and the knowledge of God shape the identity and the

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[118] Segal, *Paul the Convert*141.

[119] Moo, *The Letters to the Colossians and to Philemon*, 269.

[120] Scroggs, "New Being: Renewed Mind," 9.

[121] Hermans, "Spiritual Transformation," 169.

[122] Waaijman, "Temptation," 93.

character of the believer through the transformation process. The believer becomes the embodiment of Christ through *reform*-ing (3.10), and the evidence of this process is expressed in the transformed characterological manifestations that align with the knowledge of the will of God (1.9).

The process of transformation that occurs in being *reformed* is not limited to the lives of individuals alone. In Colossians 3.11, Paul moves the sphere of transformation into the realm of a *reformed* community. The grammatical link to the process of renewal is evident as Paul continues the thought from 3.10 with the clause in 3.11 beginning with ὅπου, referring back to the verb ἀνακαινούμενον. "The renewal refers not simply to an individual change of character but also to a corporate recreation of humanity in the creator's image."[123] The depth and extent of the impact of this renewal in the image of Christ cannot be overstated. In 3.11 Paul *reforms* the worldview of the Colossian believers.[124] The creation of new dyadic relationships in a new community *reforms* the arena in which character transformation takes place. "The corporate nature of the "new self" comes very much to the fore in this verse."[125] Paul moves from humanity divided to humanity in unity through Christ. The sense of "belonging" that is inherent in dyadic relationships and community is now are located in the person of Christ. The identity that is conferred through these relationships is now that of Christ alone. There are no longer any social, ethnic, cultural, or religious barriers that would define or limit the development of genuine community. Such a creation allows for a community dimension of character transformation that aligns with the understanding of Christ as "ἡ κεφαλὴ τοῦ σώματος τῆς ἐκκλησίας" (Col. 1.18). It is to this corporate dimension of character transformation that Paul turns as the believers are *conformed* to the image of Christ.

6.3.4 Conformed

"Conformation refers to a process in which a person appropriates for himself (herself) a selected model of transformation in behavior, thinking and willing, remembering, feeling and focus."[126] With regards to the transformation of character, the

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[123] O'Brien, *Colossians, Philemon*, 191.

[124] In the discussion of semantic network d, the various levels of religious, social, ethnic, and racial barriers are discussed and how Paul unites all of these under the banner of a new community formed in Christ. These dimensions are referred to here but not repeated.

[125] Moo, *The Letters to the Colossians and to Philemon*, 270.

[126] Waaijman, *Spirituality*, 464. For the Christ-follower, this "appropriation" of a model is found

model for the "behavior, thinking and willing, and feeling," noted by Waaijman, is the Lord Jesus. As a person is conformed to the image and model of Jesus, the expressions of character that emanate from the behaviors, thinking and willing, and the feelings that would be in keeping with those of Jesus become the authentic representation of the person's transformed character.

> The process of conformation only becomes authentic when three things are carefully borne in mind. (1) A form of piety must be interiorized to such a degree that its power impacts the person inwardly. (2) In the process of conformation, the goal is not uniformity. (3) The form must simultaneously be interiorized *and* abandoned so that it can fulfill its true purpose: to transform a person in God.[127]

These three aspects of the process of *conform*-ing are utilized in the following discussion of the chiastic element B^1, found in the focal pericope of Colossians 3.1-17 with specific emphases on its contribution to the process of character transformation.[128]

It is worth noting again that the components of this transformation process: *formed*, *unformed*, *reformed*, *conformed*, and *transformed*, are not linear in their progression. Practically, spiritual conversion initiates the process of character transformation, and much of it happens concurrently. This phenomenon is especially true when one considers the dynamic of being *conformed*. The *conform*-ing process is simultaneous with the process of *unform*-ing. Paul begins the paraenetic section of Colossians 3.12-14 with the command to "Ενδύσασθε οὖν," (Col. 3.12). This command stands in contrast to the command in to "Νεκρώσατε οὖν," (3.5) and "ἀπόθεσθε" (3.8). As one aspect of the habituated character is "put to death" or "put off," a corresponding habituation is undertaken that reflects the character of Christ and the new spiritual reality of the believers as "ὡς ἐκλεκτοὶ τοῦ θεοῦ ἅγιοι καὶ ἠγαπημένοι" (3.12). The concurrent nature of the process of character transformation is important to understand. In his reference to the apostle Paul's process of "putting off" and "putting on" in Colossians 3, Adams notes that "Paul says nothing of *breaking* habits; his concern is to *replace* sinful

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in the person of Christ. The expressions noted by Waaijman; behavior, as well as thinking and willing, have a direct correlation to the focal pericope of Colossians 3.1-17. The aspects of "thinking and willing" are expressed in 3.1-2, and the behavioral aspect is seen in both of the lists of vices to be put off and the virtues to be put on, as well as other specific behavioral manifestations in the surrounding verses of the pericope. The "remembering, feeling and focus" components are largely seen in the effects brought about by the spiritualities embedded within Paul's rhetoric. The creation of images and the development of the dialectic of retention and protension all involve "remembering, feeling and focus."

[127] Ibid., 465-6.

[128] The section of Colossians 3.12-14 corresponds to the chiastic element discussed in the linguistic features section of the previous chapter and designated as B^1.

patterns with holy ones."[129] The habits that formed the character of the person prior to spiritual conversion must be replaced by habits that are commensurate with the character of Christ. "We know that a habit cannot be eradicated – it must, instead, be replaced."[130]

This concept of character transformation and its actualization through the *conform*-ing process is in agreement with Waaijman's understanding, noted above. The "seeking" and "thinking" upon which a believer is to focus is reflected in the degree of piety expressed in the person of Christ (3.1-4). Paul conceptualizes the depth of the relationship with Christ in order to impact the Colossians at a point where they view their lives and existence inextricably linked to the person of Christ. The "form" of the habituated character that remains after spiritual conversion must simultaneously be abandoned (3.5, 8, 9) and the "*form*" reflective of the character of Christ is interiorized through the "putting on" of those attributes. "Transformation through conformity presupposes that people will not only appropriate the external form for themselves but through it achieve contact with the divine form which animates it."[131]

Paul presents the environment in which the transformation of character occurs by reminding the Colossians of their true spiritual identity and attachment to God. They are chosen by God, set apart, and they are beloved of God. This identity redefines the dyadic relationships and community of the Colossian believers. This new identity and intimate relationship with God stands in stark contrast to the kind of habituated vices that are expressed in their lives prior to union with Christ. Paul utilizes rhetoric that highlights the necessity of abandonment of their former behaviors and seeks to instill a sense of belonging more in keeping with the believers' new community. "To get a man to accept a new self or behavior pattern, he must become dissatisfied with the old one."[132] The old self, with its patterned behavior, does not reflect a transformed character and their spiritual reality. Such characterological expressions are inappropriate for interaction in their new relationships and life in their new community. This shared community relationship forms the rationale behind Paul's declaration "ἀλλὰ [τὰ] πάντα καὶ ἐν πᾶσιν Χριστός," (Col. 3.11)

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[129] Adams, *Temptation*, 10.

[130] Charles Duhigg, *The Power of Habit: Why We Do What We Do in Life and Business* (New York: Random House, 2012), 92.

[131] Waaijman, *Spirituality*, 466.

[132] J. H. Denison, *The Enlargement of Personality: Behavior Patterns and their Formation* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1930), 130.

and the backdrop for the characteristics that follow in Colossians 3.12-14.

In Colossians 3.12-14 Paul provides the virtues that stand as a positive corollary to the negative vices in 3.5-9. These virtues are to be habituated as the replacement for the vices that are to be dehabituated. "When such virtues become woven into our character, they become not occasional components of our life experience but ongoing *habits*, *inclinations* and *dispositions*. We would like to possess virtue so that it is almost reflexive."[133] Incorporating these virtues into life as part of the comforming process involves a *de-habituation* and a corresponding *re-habituation* through directly applied effort and disciplined body-mind activity. Paul expects an immediate *cessation* (Col. 3.5, 8) of body-mind activities that reflect life prior to spiritual conversion as well as the simultaneous *commencement* of body-mind activities appropriate to a life lived in union with Christ.

While the transformation of character is inextricably linked to directly applied effort and the discipline of body-mind in order to bring about dehabituation and rehabituation, Paul provides no specific directives as to a methodology for the Colossian believers to undertake. The instructions given by Paul to the Colossians are much more descriptive than they are prescriptive with regards to the application of disciplines that assist with *de-habituation* of vices and *re-habituation* with virtues. Paul is describing the parameters that encompass a process rather than a rigid formula for orthopraxis. Waaijman's states that "in the process of conformation the goal is not uniformity."[134] The only uniformity to which Paul would point is that the believers are to be conformed to the image of Christ (3.10). To that degree, the *conforming* process is uniform. However, the *path* to that singularity of conformation involves the unique context out of which each person comes to their union with Christ. Each Colossian believer has characterological vices to *de-habituate*. Each Christ-follower has virtues of character to *habituate* and incorporate into their life.[135]

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[133] Gill, *Becoming Good*, 31.

[134] Waaijman, *Spirituality*, 466.

[135] Incorporating these virtues into life so that they become expressions of transformed character has been a concern of Christ-followers for millennia. Paul does not articulate a clear methodological path for application of spiritual disciplines to the transformation of character. However, a few historical examples from the time-frame of the Colossians may assist with the formation of general methodology that demonstrates the aspect of human responsibility in the character transformation process. Aristotle proposed the viability of character transformation since "men indeed can act contrary to their states of character." Bondeson, "Aristotle on Responsibility for One's Character and the Possibility of Character Change," [59]. Aristotle utilizes the concept of training in sport and applies it to that of the training

The concept of training, or spiritual exercises, adapted to fit the Colossian context of character transformation is a vital component of a process for the *de-habituation* of vices and the *re-habituation* of virtues.[136] They provide the habituation context for the body-mind activities and behaviors and are intertwined with the human responsibility aspect of character transformation. The process of habituation (both *de-* and *re-*) facilitates the transformation character which, in turn, informs subsequent habituation. Taken together, the divine agency of God working to *reform* (3.10) and the disciplines of habituation yield corresponding behavioral impact with movement toward the goal of character transformed after the model of Christ. "This habituation (ἐθισμός) involves a transformation of one's character (ἦθος) which in turn transforms one's behavior."[137]

Paul expects the Christ-followers to *de-habituate* ("put off") and to *habituate* ("put on"), and it is their responsibility to do so. This expectation is grounded in their relationship in union with Christ. "The formation of the moral virtues of character is the consequence of being 'in Christ.'"[138] God empowers the believers through the process of renewal (3.10) and creates the context in which facilitates transformation of character

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of character. He posits that regular disciplined and intentional practice of virtue produces results that align with the action, and that a person's character is related to conduct. Aristotle, *Ethica Nicomachea,* ed. J. Bywater (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1894), 114a8-114a11, accessed February 9, 2016, www.Perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3text%3A1999.01.0053%3Abekker%3D1%3Asection%20line%3DI. The text from Aristotle reads as follows: "αἱ γὰρ περὶ ἕκαστα ἐνέργειαι τοιούτους ποιοῦσιν. τοῦτο δὲ δῆλον ἐκ τῶν μελετώντων πρὸς ἡντινοῦν ἀγωνίαν ἢ πρᾶξιν: διατελοῦσι γὰρ ἐνεργοῦντες. τὸ μὲν οὖν ἀγνοεῖν ὅτι ἐκ τοῦ ἐνεργεῖν περὶ ἕκαστα αἱ ἕξεις γίνονται, κομιδῇ ἀναισθήτου." The Church Father, Clement of Alexandria (b. 150 A.D.), proposed appropriate training, or "spiritual exercises," in order to habituate virtue and "make correct judgments." Sellars, *The Art of Living*, 119-20. "But that perfection in virtue is not the exclusive property of those, whose natures are better, is proved, since also those who by nature are ill-disposed towards virtue, in obtaining suitable training, for the most part attain to excellence. . .." Clement of Alexandria, *The Stromata, Book I, Chapter VI*, 601. Orthodox eBooks, accessed August 6, 2018, http://www.orthodoxebooks.org/sites/default/files/pdfs/The%20Stromata%20-%20Clement%20of%20Alexandria.pdf). Though Clement and many of the Stoics of the time focused on philosophy, the application of the principles for the transformation of character is apparent. "We might say that the function of a spiritual exercise is to accustom or to habituate (ἐθίζω) the soul according to philosophical doctrines or principles (λόγοι), to absorb philosophical ideas into one's character (ἦθος), which will, in turn, determine one's habitual behavior." Sellars, *The Art of Living*, 119-20.

[136] Much could be noted here concerning various spiritual disciplines and their application to the specific vices and virtues of Colossians 3.5-14. Unfortunately, the scope of this research does not permit such attention. Resources such as Adele Ahlberg Calhoun, *Spiritual Disciplines Handbook: Practices That Transform Us*, (Downers Grove: IVP, 2005), Dallas Willard, *The Spirit of the Disciplines: Understanding How God Changes Lives*, (New York: HarperOne, 1998), and Richard J. Foster, *Celebration of Discipline: The Path to Spiritual Growth*, (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1998) are foundational for understanding the role of spiritual disciplines and their application for transformation of character.

[137] Sellars, *The Art of Living*, 121.

[138] Douglas Petersen and Murray Dempster, "Redemption and Transformation: A Theology of New Life 'In Christ,'" *Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies* 16 no. 1 (2013): 17.

through the newly formed community (3.11). It is within this community that the spiritual disciplines and practices are shaped by this new formed Body, over which Christ is the head (Col. 1.18).

Throughout Scripture, the interaction between God and humans is overtly relational. God creates in relationship and conforms in relationship.[139] In Colossians 3.12 Paul presents five virtues that, as previously noted, correspond to virtues that are descriptive of God and the person of Jesus. These virtues are preceded by Paul's affirmation of the Colossian believers' spiritual reality as rooted in their relationship with God (3.12). These virtues are now expressed in the lives of the Colossian believers as an embodiment of transformed character, modeled after the person of Jesus. Paul extends their Christlike transformed character to include mutual forgiveness, noting that this forgiveness is to be conveyed to the same extent that they are forgiven by Christ. In essence, the believers are to *embody* Christ. They are to demonstrate the same moral virtues of character possessed by Jesus.

The virtues in Colossians 3.12 are all associated with attitudinal expression displayed in serving others. This expression is in keeping with the pattern and character of Jesus when said spoke about himself, "καὶ γὰρ ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου οὐκ ἦλθεν διακονηθῆναι ἀλλὰ διακονῆσαι καὶ δοῦναι τὴν ψυχὴν αὐτοῦ λύτρον ἀντὶ πολλῶν" (Mark 10.45). Christlike behavior and attitude (body-mind) service towards others, coupled with forgiveness, are to be the transformed characterological marks of the believer. And, as Paul notes in 3.14, they are all to be done enveloped with love, which makes them complete ("σύνδεσμος τῆς τελειότητος") in their expression. It is this love that prevents the manifestation of the virtues from devolving into ritual acts of self-righteousness. In reality, it is not the virtues themselves that are the mark of the transformed character. It is the manner in which they are practiced that reveals the real measure of transformation.

> The danger is that we always think of a transformed person in terms of devotional practices, but those are a means to an end. The goal, the end, to which they are a means, is love. . .. So, a transformed person is somebody who genuinely loves God

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[139] God is the source and sustainer of relationships. God through Christ holds the created order in relationship with itself (Col. 1.17). God initiates the God-human relationships demonstrated in the creation account (Gen. 1.26, 27). God recognizes the need for humans to be in relationship with each other (Gen. 2.18). God is the one that initiates the relationship with the first humans (Gen. 3.8). The testimony of Scripture is that God is the one who seeks to establish and, as necessary, restore and preserve the relationship with humans. The culmination of this restoration and reconciliation of relationship is through the person of Jesus Christ (2 Cor. 5.18).

and genuinely loves other people.[140]

This ἀγάπη form of love is the same one used to describe the attitude of God toward the Colossian believers. They are simultaneously the *objects* of God's love as recipients and the embodied *expression* of this same love as participants in their love in service for others. The character of Christ, "put on" by the believer, "displays what being moral ultimately means for a Christian: namely, to transcend oneself in the service of others, a transcendence which participates in the divine activity itself."[141] The virtues of 3.12-14 only become transformative for the believer when they are lived experiences of ἀγάπη. This expression transcends merely practicing virtuous acts and transforms them into a lived experience of the embodiment of the person of God in Christ; acting through those who are themselves the objects of God's ἀγάπη (3.12). This embodied reciprocating love is the aspect of transformation "in which the soul is led into God, while God takes up his abode in the soul."[142]

The process of character transformation involves the *conform*-ation of character to align with the character of Jesus. Paul unfolds a process that includes the simultaneous *de-habituation* of character and the *re-habituation* of character through "putting off" body-mind activities that do not conform to the model of Jesus and "putting on" activities that reflect the character of Jesus. As these characterological qualities of Christ become embedded within the life of the believer, the person of Christ begins to be embodied through the life of the believer. It is not simply a process of moral formation but a spiritual formation and transformation of character. It is this goal of transformation and how it is expressed that Paul addresses in the next chiastic component of the focal pericope.

6.3.5 Transformed

The verses of Colossians 3.15-17 form the fifth element of the chiastic structure of the pericope[143] and the teleological focus of Paul's process of transformation of

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[140] Dallas Willard, *Living in Christ's Presence*, (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press Books, 2014), 66-7.

[141] Brian V. Johnstone, "Transformation Ethics: The Moral Implications of the Resurrection," *The Resurrection: An Interdisciplinary Symposium on the Resurrection of Jesus*, eds. Stephen T. David, Daniel Kendall, and Gerald O'Collins (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2004), 346.

[142] Waaijman, *Spirituality*, 456.

[143] As noted in the discussion of the linguistic features in the previous chapter, Colossians 3.15-17 form the A^1 aspect of the chiasmus, linked to the chiastic element of A through the focus on the body-mind activities centered in the person of Christ.

character. Paul moves from the personal expression of virtues demonstrated in life to the corporate implications and expectations of people in the process of being conformed to the image of Christ. "The second-person plural imperatives of vv. 12–14 - "clothe yourselves," "bear," "forgive," "put on" - give way to third-person passive imperatives."[144] Christ creates a new community and the believers within this community are to experience the mutual expression of love enveloped virtues that reflect God in Christ.

In Colossians 3.15 Paul commands the believers to "ἡ εἰρήνη τοῦ Χριστοῦ βραβευέτω ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις ὑμῶν." The peace to which Paul refers is not a virtue as much as it is a condition or a state of being. There is the spiritual condition of peace that is a direct result of being in union with Christ. This peace is the lived experience of the believers in their relationship with God (Col. 1.20). This same peace is now to be the lived experience of the believers in their relationship with each other in their new community. Paul explains that it is to peace that the believers are called "ἐν ἑνὶ σώματι;" Paul's metaphor for the church (Col. 1.24), over which Christ is head (Col. 1.18).

There is an implicit divine agency in Paul's command to "allow the peace of Christ to rule" (3.15).

> This is something the Colossians have not to accomplish but to let happen - to let go any attempt to control and manipulate and to let the peace of Christ be the determiner - just as in the following clause peace is a call to which they can only respond. The metaphor is an attractive one: of the knowledge of what Christ has achieved and the inward calm tranquility which believers can enjoy in consequence, determining what courses should be followed in difficult decisions and how the tensions of community relations (cf. 3:13) may be resolved.[145]

This peace is to emanate from within, rather than an external application of regulations in order to quell disturbance and disagreements. Paul instructs the Colossian believers that the locus of rule for the peace of Christ is "ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις ὑμῶν" (3.15). Paul uses "heart" terminology to reorder the believers' mind-body orientation for the appropriation of peace. For the believer, the heart refers "to the whole pattern in [his] thinking, wishing, feeling, and action: the peace which is created through the Messiah should be a determining factor for all areas of life."[146]

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[144] Moo, *The Letters to the Colossians and to Philemon*, 274.

[145] Dunn, *The Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon*, 234.

[146] Barth and Blanke, trans. Beck, *Colossians*, 425.

Paul utilizes his rhetoric to create the spirituality of unity for the Colossian believers. He reminds them that the peace that is to dominate or "rule" their community is the peace of Christ, through whom God has reconciled all things "εἰρηνοποιήσας διὰ τοῦ αἵματος τοῦ σταυροῦ αὐτοῦ" (Col. 1.20). As the peace of Christ is allowed to rule within the Colossian community, the community acts as a divinely empowered transformational agent for interactions between the members. Through this community, the believers are transformed in character to that of Christ as they become the embodiment of Christ and his peace: a peace to which they are called within the body.

The same divine agency implicit in Paul's command to allow "the peace of Christ to rule" is found in Colossians 3.16 where Paul commands that "Ὁ λόγος τοῦ Χριστοῦ ἐνοικείτω ἐν ὑμῖν πλουσίως."[147] The embodied nature of the word of Christ impacts worship within the Colossian community. This word of Christ is to "take up residence with all fullness" within the community and provides the content for teaching, wisely applied admonishment, and forms the underlying source and substance of their worship. The Colossian believers are transformed through the body-mind expression of corporate worship centered in the word of Christ and the application of this word to their daily living. It is here in this latter aspect that the corporate body of the church significantly impacts individual transformation of character. The word of Christ becomes embodied as the corporate body holds the body members accountable for their characterological transformation and facilitates development. In this way, "Ὁ λόγος τοῦ Χριστοῦ" becomes flesh, an image (Col. 3.10) of the expression of the Word of God become flesh.

> God's Word has become flesh, not because we made Him transform into a body, but because He comes to us in such a way that we can relate to Him in our bodiliness. Spiritually speaking, the Other, to whom we relate, transforms Himself towards our shape, and we are shaped towards Him.[148]

Paul brings the transformation to the ultimate teleological expression in Colossians 3.17. The mind-body orientation finds fulfillment as every expression of word and action is done in a manner in which Christ himself would express it.[149] "Specific

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[147] The substance of "the word of Christ" is discussed more thoroughly in the previous chapter and will not be repeated here except as it relates to the embodiment texture of the text. See the discussion under semantic network e as well as within the section related to the first effect and linguistic features for more detail on the nature of the word of Christ referred to here.

[148] Willem Marie Speelman, "A Spiritual Method for Daily Life Practices," *Social Indicators Research* (2011): 3. Accessed June 14, 2018, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/254777910_A_spiritual_method_in_daily_life_practices.

[149] The equating of "the name of Christ" with the person of Christ and his character is

actions are a *consequence,* a natural result of something far deeper, far more profound. The scholastic maxim, *actio sequitur esse,* reminds us that action is always in accordance with the essence of the person who acts."[150]

This τέλος is the fullest expression of transformation and is actualized embodiment. The character of "the members" becomes the character of Christ. The lived experience of the believer *becomes* a lived experience of Christ. This experience transcends simple rote repetition of the words of Jesus or the mimicry of the actions of Jesus. At this point in the process of character transformation, the embodiment of the peace of Christ and the Word of Christ finds contextualized articulation through the individual believer. The person embodies the character of Jesus in every aspect of mind and body expression. When this happens throughout the community, the result is that the body corporate becomes the lived expression of Christ himself.

> At the heart of Christian character formation is the transformation of believers into the image of Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God, as they are united with him and adopted into the family of God through sharing in his sonship. Christian formation proceeds from this reality of adoption into the Sonship of Christ by which believers are able to relate appropriately to God as their Father.[151]

At every point in this final aspect of transformation and the overall process of character transformation, Paul adjures the believers to express thanks and gratitude. As the peace of Christ rules in their hearts and in their midst, they are commanded to "εὐχάριστοι γίνεσθε" (3.15). When the word of Christ indwells every dimension of their corporate interaction, they are to worship with gratitude "ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις ὑμῶν τῷ θεῷ" (3.16).

As the transformation of character extends to the point where every inner and outer expression of word or deed (mind-body activity) is in complete alignment with the expression which Jesus himself would demonstrate, they are to "εὐχαριστοῦντες τῷ θεῷ πατρὶ δι' αὐτοῦ" (3.17). The repetition of this thankful/grateful attitude throughout the final component of characterological transformation is an essential part of this transformation process.[152] In many ways, this can be construed as Paul's reminder to the believers that

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demonstrated in the previous chapter within the discussion of semantic network d.

[150] Richard J. Foster, "Salvation is for Life," *Theology Today* 61 (2004): 300.

[151] Ray S. Yeo, "Christian Character Formation," *Character: New Directions from Philosophy, Psychology, and Theology*, eds. Christian B. Miller, R, Michael Furr, Angela Knobel, William Fleeson (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2015), 546.

[152] Paul's references to thanksgiving and gratitude are examined as part of the discourse analysis

there is a divine agency at the heart of their transformation process. There is no room for the temptation to believe that even the most Christlike of actions and attitudes have their source from within the individual or achieved by one's own merit. Thankfulness and gratitude recognize that there is a source outside of oneself that is ultimately responsible for the results observed. Such an attitude of thankfulness and gratitude nullifies pride, the sin at the heart of every vice. "Pride leads to every other vice: it is the complete anti-God state of mind."[153] As such, the sin of pride negatively impacts the process of character transformation. Paul places the attitude of thanksgiving and gratitude before the Colossian believers and integrates it into their corporate body life. It is the undergirding reminder that in transformation it is God alone that is the source of peace (3.15), wisdom (3.16), and the formation that leads to the embodiment of the Lord Jesus in their lives (3.17). This grateful, thankful attitude gives rise to a spirituality of humility for the Christ-followers in Colossae.

The interaction with the text of Colossians 3.15-17 creates the spirituality of growing attainment and possibility is created within the believers. Their lived experience is one in which the realization of characterological transformation is not yet complete when compared to the modeled person of Christ, but God is doing his ongoing work (3.10). The dialectic of retention and protension that arises within the believers looks back with retention at where they have come from (3.7), who they are now (3.1-4, 12), and looks ahead with pretension to who they are growing (2.6-7) to be (3.13-14, 15-17).

6.4 Conclusion to the Theological and Embodiment Textures of Colossians 3.1-17 and the Spiritualities Fostered Through Textual Encounter

There are a number of conclusions that can be drawn from the examination of the theological and embodiment textures of Colossians 3.1-17. Spirituality as the synthesis of faith and belief that arises through a lived experience of the divine runs through all of the theological subtextures of the Colossians 3.1-17 text. The analysis of each subtexture exposes the potential for multiple spiritualities to be created for those who encounter the text. The semantic networks embedded within the text provide the mechanism by which the theological subtextures are examined. The examination of the theological subtextures within the text, while essential to the interpretive process, does not on its own provide a

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and noted in semantic network g of the previous chapter.

[153] Lewis, *Mere Christianity*, 122.

reliable hermeneutic of Paul's proposed character transformation. The element of embodiment is critical to a thorough understanding of Paul's message to the Colossians.

> Interpretation should never stop at only the academic explication or even the ecclesiological application of the biblical text. Interpretation (hermeneutical process) culminates when the embodiment of analysed texts has taken place in the lives of believers and the Christian principles embedded in texts become a way of life. The embodiment of texts can be assisted when 'lived experiences' ensue in the contemplative reading of biblical texts. Interpretation must become an explication which must consequently become application in order to culminate in the embodiment of the text to result in a way of life. The spiritualities (lived experiences) generated by intersecting with the text should function as catalysts for the embodiment of texts in the hermeneutical process.[154]

While the texture of spirituality runs through the subtextures of the text, the texture of embodiment runs linear to these other textures and subtextures. Embodiment occurs when the message of the text becomes synonymous with the lived experience of the reader/hearer. For Paul and his process of character transformation in Colossians 3.1-17, embodiment is realized on both individual and corporate dimensions.

Another conclusion drawn from the examination of the theological and embodiment textures of the text is that the process of character transformation does not progress in linearly as one moves toward embodiment. The text of 3.1-17 progresses in a near-linear fashion (with concomitant *dehabituation* and *rehabituation*), but the lived experience of the process happens at various rates and levels in the movement toward embodiment. These movements are the result of God's ongoing *reforming* of the believer into the image of Christ in concert with the participation of the believer's obedience in *de-habituation* and *rehabituation*. The divine agency and the human responsibility provide the dynamic environment for the transformation of character. The possibility exists for the Colossian believers to be transformed in their character to reflect the character of Christ. Their spiritual reality and their lived experience of reality can align towards a transformed Christlike character. Such transformation requires participation through obedience. "Character convergence is possible through holy living."[155]

A final conclusion to the current chapter is that transformation of character does not happen in the isolation of individuality. Through Christ, God creates a new humanity

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[154] Dirk van der Merwe, "Reading the Bible in the 21st century: Some hermeneutical principles: Part 1," *Verbum et Ecclesia*, 36 no. 1 (2015): 8, accessed June 12, 2018, https://dx.doi.org/10.4102/VE.V36I1.1391.

[155] Hauerwas, "Character Convergence," 218.

and a new community (3.10, 11). This community provides the milieu for the facilitation of character transformation. As the individuals within the community progress on the journey of character transformation, so also the body of Christ progresses. The individual and corporate expressions of transformed character are through lives intertwined in faith relationships, community accountability, and animated by the love of God in Christ.

CHAPTER 7

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

The examination of Colossians 3.1-17, with the specific focus upon the process of transformation of character and the spiritualities created through the experience with the text, yields several areas of findings and draws a number of conclusions. The investigation into the transformation of character is warranted by the developing interest from a number of academic and theological considerations. The increased interest in the field of spirituality provides further impetus for the research. This research helps to fill the lacuna in the research and body of literature that examines principles of early Christian spirituality, the application of Scripture, and the spirituality texture of embodiment. The review of relevant literature provides insight into the areas of focus for the Colossian epistle. The majority of commentaries and monographs devote great space to the discussion of the Christ hymn (Col. 1.15-20), the seemingly unending debate as to authorship, as well as the potential existence and nature of a relatively unidentifiable nascent heresy that supposedly infiltrated the Colossian church. This research merges principles of Christian spirituality, a textual hermeneutic of Scripture, together with the texture of embodiment and examines the pericope of Colossians 3.1-17 from the perspective of the transformation of character. To date, no other identifiable research undertakes this task.

In order to provide the framework for a reliable hermeneutic and understanding of Paul's process of character transformation in Colossians 3.1-17, the methodology employed involves examination of the socio-historical context of the Colossian believers and the apostle Paul. This context informs the use of the discourse analysis and the resultant linguistic relations and semantic networks. These semantic networks move the research forward in the manner in which they bring theological and embodiment textures to the forefront. All of these methodological tools run throughout the research and inform each area of the progressive nature of the research into the transformation of character as it is portrayed in Colossians 3.1-17.

The application of the socio-historical methodology provides a foundational understanding of the context from which the apostle Paul writes and the Colossian recipients to whom he sends the epistle. Sacred writings are contextual. They have specific

meanings intended by the author for people of a particular time. The socio-historical context provides a window for a more reliable interpretation of the intent and the resultant effect upon the readers.

The socio-historical context and the relative environs of the Colossians to whom Paul writes is complex and layered with issues related to worldview, religious background, political influence, and ethnic diversity. All of these factors influence how the Colossian believers interpret the epistolary message of Paul. The influence of philosophical schools and, in particular, Aristotle, as well as the religious background of the multiethnic and multicultural milieu of the Colossians, impacts the interpretation of Paul's paraenetic material in Colossians 3.1-17.

Paul writes the Colossian epistle to a church in the midst of cultural change. The spread of Hellenism and Roman influence impact their worldview and challenge the prevailing systems; whether they are social, ethnic, or religious. All of those shifts pale in comparison to the dramatic upheaval brought by the gospel which Paul proclaims. The Colossian believers' lived experience of the divine takes on new dimensions as they explore the spiritualities embedded within the text of Paul's epistle. The inner dialectical dialogue that ensues as a result of interacting with the epistolary text confronts the Colossian believers with the tension that accompanies change. Paul brings a deepened understanding of the Christian faith to which they now adhere as well as expectations of ongoing spiritual change and development as followers of Christ.

In the pericope of Colossians 3.1-17, Paul extends the challenge of following Jesus to the practical expression of outward behavior that reflects a transformed character. For those within the Colossian church familiar with the various philosophical thoughts related to the mutability of character, Paul's words run counter to the widely held beliefs of the philosophical schools. How character is transformed is not a matter of simply educative cognitive acquisition and understanding but is rooted in spiritual conversion that comes through Christ. This foundation for transformation radically realigns the availability of transformation to anyone who is in union with Christ. This transformation transcends prevailing cultural, social, religious, and ethnic lines. The mutability of character and the transformation of character is first and foremost a matter of union with Christ through spiritual conversion. Beyond the context of the Colossians, the socio-historical context of the apostle Paul necessitated an investigation in order to get an understanding of his perception and proposed foundations for the message regarding the transformation of character.

Based on the research into the multi-faceted background of the Colossian believers and the contextualized understanding of Paul and the significant "influences" upon his life, some relatively determinate hypotheses are discernable. The question regarding the Hellenistic influence upon the apostle Paul is unquestionably affirmative. The extent to which that influence affects his rhetoric and content is less concrete. Hellenism was the worldview of the time and permeated society to differing degrees on all levels. The Jewish religious context and training which Paul received inform much of his contextualized rhetoric and content.

The target audience for the epistle to the Colossians brings a rich cultural texture to the new church. The paraenetic material of Colossians 3.1-17 and the description of the new community in Christ finds direct application to the socio-religious background of the Colossians as they move towards a redeemed and characterologically transformed community.

This research finds that the socio-historical context of both the apostle Paul and the Colossian believers influence the writing and the interpretation of the Colossian pericope. When the mechanism of discourse analysis is applied to the text of Colossians 3.1-17, the linguistic and semantic relations embedded within the text become apparent through the identification of semantic networks. These semantic networks assist with the development of a reliable hermeneutic from which to interpret the intent of Paul's rhetoric. The linguistic features of the text reveal several prominent themes within the pericope. Paul utilizes tense and grammatical structure to highlight particular aspects of his overall theme of transformation of character. The structural implications of the different chiasma within the pericope support the predominate emphases upon the centrality of Christ in the process of character transformation and the clear demarcation between characterological expressions of life prior to and subsequent to union with Christ.

The semantic networks uncovered in the discourse analysis reveal theological subtextures embedded within the networks. These subtextures create multiple spiritualities for those who interact with the text. These spiritualities are strengthened as the Colossian believers encounter the text through the repetition of hearing and reading. This dynamic interaction with the text creates images for the Colossian believers and leads to multiple facets of dialectic tension within their lives.

While the spiritualities run through all aspects of the networks and the theological subtextures, the texture of embodiment runs linear to all of them and generates spiritualities of its own as the believers progress towards a Christ focused transformation

of character. The importance of the repetition of an encounter with the text cannot be overstated and is significant for the transformation of character. Through the dynamic interaction with the text, the application of the text to the lives of the believers embeds the text within the lives of the believers such that their lived experience becomes the text itself. This embodiment is an essential aspect for effective transformation of character.

From the sociological or philosophical perspective of character *transformation*, when Paul writes to the Colossian believers, the question of whether he adopts a premise that character is immutable and static, or presents the alternative that character is molded and shaped through behavioral choices can be answered affirmatively from both viewpoints. An explanation of these findings is essential. From Paul's understanding, the character of a person who is not in union with Christ is unquestionably effectively immutable. This understanding is evidenced through Paul's comparison of the "old man" and the "new" (Col. 3.9-10). Paul never encourages the Colossians to "reform" or "re-habituate" the "old man" and bring him in line with the corresponding characterological parallel of Christ. The converse is apparent. He radically instructs the Colossians to "put to death" that which is in them that is earthly and to "put off" the old man as one would put off old garments prior to the baptismal event or amputate a necrotic limb. He then goes on to elaborate on those characterological vices associated with such an unregenerate nature. Further, he elaborates on those characterological qualities that reflect the "new man" the believers have "put on" as they have identified with Christ through baptism and entered into in their dyadic union with him. That which is dead is immutable, be it a person's character or the person's spiritual condition, except through the power of God alone (Col. 2.13).

With regards to mutability, this research finds that the character shift of the new Colossian believers is a past event with ongoing implications. In Colossians 3.10, Paul states that their new nature is "being renewed," in knowledge in the image of its creator. Their character has been spiritually and eschatologically achieved, but there is a lived experience of an ongoing renewal as they participate in the molding of their new character into the image of Christ through rehabituation of body-mind activities.

Further findings of this research indicate that as Paul writes to the Colossian believers about their transformation of character he also redefines the goal of character transformation. For much of the Colossians' predominant culture, the goal of life is one that is flourishing (εὐδαιμονία) and is one in which virtue characterizes that life. The virtue is more than the sum of observed behavior and runs to the core of a person's identity. For

Paul, a life that is flourishing is one which is being transformed into the character of Christ. Christ is the sum total of life (Col. 3.4) and source of a new identity for the believer. Further, Paul teaches the Colossians that a flourishing life is evidenced when the character of Jesus is expressed through every mind-body activity in which a person engages (3.17).

Paul exhorts the Colossian believers to direct their transformation of character with a particular τέλος in mind. A eudemonist virtue ethic, as described by Aristotle, is explicitly teleological and holds that virtue is essential to achieve the characterologically flourishing state of life expressed in εὐδαιμονία. In Colossians 3.1-17 Paul also presents what can be described as a teleological virtue ethic. Virtue features as a predominant theme in Paul's paraenetic material, and he expects the lives of the Colossian believers to be marked by virtue in increasing measure. However, in contrast to an Aristotelian teleological virtue ethic, Paul's ethic redefines virtues with regards to their connection to Christ. For Paul, the source and essence of the virtues is Christ himself. The τέλος is not a characterological *state* achieved as in εὐδαιμονία but it is a *person,* and that is the person of Christ.

For both Aristotelian and Pauline expressions of teleological virtue ethics, habits of body-mind activities are an essential aspect of the developmental process. Both expressions hold to a particular, though implicit, *disposition* that serves to motivate the characterological development and transformation. The disposition leads to actions that form habits. These habits, in turn, shape and transform character towards a particular τέλος. That process is visualized through the use of the following Aristotelian virtue ethic diagram in Figure 11, provided and referenced in the Introduction to this research.

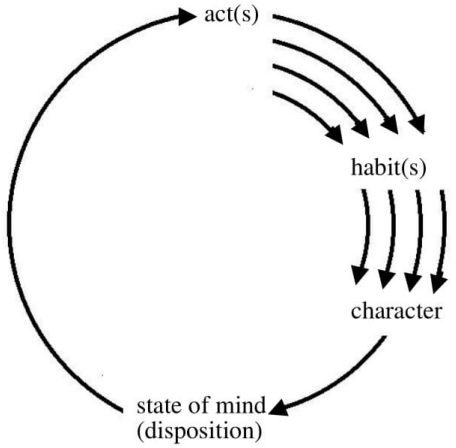

Figure 11. An Aristotelian model of teleological virtue ethics

Aristotle's understanding of disposition is that it is the result of habits that cause the formation of particular feelings that incline an individual toward more progressive virtuous acts that form the cyclical nature of Aristotelian virtue ethics. This research into Paul's understanding of the transformation of character finds a significant divergence at this point. For Paul, the initial disposition that positions one on the path to the transformation of character is spiritual conversion. This conversion is the premise of the paraenetic material in Colossians 3.1-17 and is validated by Paul in 3.1 where he states the "raised together with Christ" aspect of the Colossians' spiritual condition. For Paul, virtues alone cannot transform, and those virtues cannot sufficiently motivate towards a transformation of character that is modeled after Christ (Col. 2.23).

Paul's model of transformation of character is better portrayed as a spiral rather than cyclical. The research findings that Christ is the model of the transformational process, coupled with the ongoing nature of the process (3.10), is informed by Paul's desire for an "upward movement" of growth and maturity in Christ (1.28; 2.6-7). A process of the embodiment of Colossians 3.17 creates a more developed disposition which is increasingly "disposed" to "τὰ ἄνω ζητεῖτε" and "τὰ ἄνω ζητεῖτε" (Col. 3.1-2). These two commands provide both the direction ("οὗ ὁ Χριστός ἐστιν ἐν δεξιᾷ τοῦ θεοῦ καθήμενος," Col. 3.1) and the substance (3.12-14) for the body-mind activities related to the formation of habits in the ongoing process of renewal towards the transformation of character.

The findings of this research also further refine the process of character transformation portrayed in the triangular diagram depicted in Figure 10 to be more accurately represented according to Figure 12.

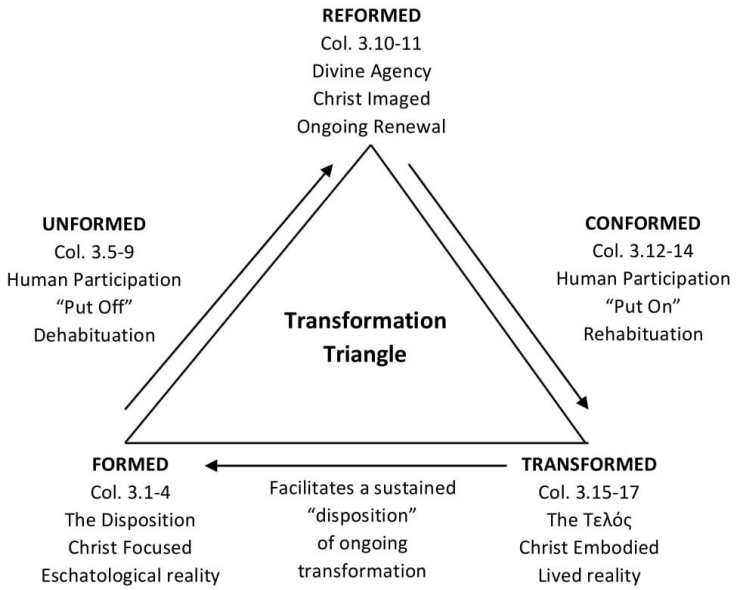

Figure 12. The transformation triangle and Paul's process of character transformation in Colossians 3.1-17

The five "layers" of transformation identified by Waaijman have almost direct application to a process for the transformation of character in Colossians 3.1-17 and reflect the chiastic structure (A, B, C, B^1, A^1) expounded upon in chapter five, under the section of the first effect and linguistic features. The majority of this transformation triangle is discussed under the relevant semantic network of the linguistic feature that expounds upon the chiastic structure.

This research finds a direct correlation with Waaijman's five "layers" of transformation and the process of character transformation expressed by Paul in Colossians 3.1-17. Each of these layers forms a significant component of the ongoing process.

This research also finds that transformation of character is a process that is best described as participatory. It involves both human responsibility and divine agency. There are aspects of character transformation that are the responsibility of the human and that God will not do for the human. This responsibility is expressed by the direct commands of Paul through both "putting off" and "putting on" activities. At the same time, there are aspects of the transformation process that only God alone can do. This divine agency is the passive aspect of the initial spiritual conversion that facilitates "disposition" toward transformation. It also involves the ongoing nature of the renewal process in which the cooperative human is passive but not uninvolved.

Another finding noted in this research is the centrality of Christ to Paul's process of character transformation. At every point on the transformation triangle, Christ is present as the model for the believer's character. Colossians 3.1-4 depicts a *Christ-focused character* as the believers are to seek and to think upon those things that represent the person of Christ in the realm where he has full reign and rule. Colossians 3.10-11 describes a *Christ-imaged character* as the model for God's ongoing process of character transformation. Colossians 3.15-17 portrays a *Christ-embodied character* as the peace of Christ rules in hearts, the word of Christ dwells in fullness. The teleological focus upon which all character transformation is moving is Colossians 3.17. It is this ongoing process of becoming the living embodiment of Christ in every aspect of being and culminates the process of a realized transformed character.

Among the multiple findings and conclusions that can be drawn from this research, the most apparent is that Paul presents a clear model of character transformation within the pericope of Colossians 3.1-17. Paul envisions this transformation as part of the

ongoing lived experience of the Colossian believers and is the sanctification "link" that fills the lacuna between justification and glorification in the overall soteriological experience. The limitations of character transformation are defined by the degree to which the Colossian believers participate with God in the transforming process and embrace the paraenetic commands given by Paul in the pericope. The ultimate finalization of transformation is the embodiment defined by Colossians 3.17. The Colossians embody Christ as they participate in the new community which is intrinsically involved in both individual and corporate transformation. This transformation is evidenced as the totality of body-mind expressions are increasingly patterned after the person of Christ. It is to this realized potential that Paul directs the Colossian Christians and the transformation of their character.

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