

MOISÉS SILVA



Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament

B Baker Academic

Grand Rapids Michigan

©1992, 2005 by Moisés Silva

Published by Baker Academic a division of Baker Publishing Group P.O. Box 6287, Grand Rapids, MI 49516-6287 www.bakeracademic.com

Printed in the United States of America

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means—for example, electronic, photocopy, recording—without the prior written permission of the publisher. The only exception is brief quotations in printed reviews.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Silva, Moisés.

Philippians / Moisés Silva.—2nd ed.

p. cm. — (Baker exegetical commentary on the New Testament) Includes bibliographical references and indexes.

ISBN 0-8010-2681-4 (hardcover)

1. Bible. N.T. Philippians—Commentaries. I. Title. II. Series.

BS2705.53.S58 2005

227′.607—dc22 2004015093

A mis queridos padres

Contents

Series Preface ix	
Author's Preface to the Second Edition	xi
Author's Preface to the First Edition xi	ii
Abbreviations xv	
Transliteration xviii	
Map xx	

Introduction to Philippians 1

- I. Opening (1:1–11) 37
- II. Paul's Missionary Report (1:12-26) 59
 - A. Paul's Circumstances (1:12-17) 61
 - B. Paul's Attitude (1:18–26) 68
- III. A Call to Sanctification (1:27–2:30) 79
 - A. Christian Citizenship (1:27–2:4) 80
 - B. Christian Humility (2:5–11) 92
 - C. Christian Obedience (2:12–18) 117
 - D. Resumption of Paul's Missionary Report (2:19–30) 134
- IV. Doctrinal Polemics (3:1–4:1) 143
 - A. Judaizers as the Context for Theology (3:1–6) 146
 - B. The Essence of Pauline Theology (3:7–11) 155
 - C. Practical Theology (3:12–4:1) *170*
- V. Final Concerns (4:2–23) 190
 - A. Exhortations (4:2–9) 191
 - B. A Word of Thanks (4:10-20) 200
 - C. Closing (4:21–23) 210

Excursus: Scribal Tendencies in the Pauline Epistles 211

Works Cited 214

Index of Subjects 229

Index of Authors 233

Index of Greek Words 238

Index of Scripture and Other Ancient Writings 240

Series Preface

The chief concern of the Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (to be known as BECNT) is to provide, within the framework of informed evangelical thought, commentaries that blend scholarly depth with readability, exegetical detail with sensitivity to the whole, attention to critical problems with theological awareness. We hope thereby to attract the interest of a fairly wide audience, from the scholar who is looking for a thoughtful and independent examination of the text to the motivated lay Christian who craves for a solid but accessible exposition.

Nevertheless, a major purpose is to address the needs of pastors and others who are involved in the preaching and exposition of the Scriptures as the uniquely inspired Word of God. This consideration affects directly the parameters of the series. For example, serious biblical expositors cannot afford to depend on a superficial treatment that avoids the difficult questions, but neither are they interested in encyclopedic commentaries that seek to cover every conceivable issue that may arise. Our aim, therefore, is to focus on those problems that have a direct bearing on the meaning of the text (although selected technical details are usually treated in the additional notes).

Similarly, a special effort is made to avoid treating exegetical questions for their own sake, that is, in relative isolation from the thrust of the argument as a whole. This effort may involve (at the discretion of the individual contributors) abandoning the verse-by-verse approach in favor of an exposition that focuses on the paragraph as the main unit of thought. In all cases, however, the commentaries will stress the development of the argument and explicitly relate each passage to what precedes and follows it so as to identify its function in context as clearly as possible.

We believe, moreover, that a responsible exegetical commentary must take fully into account the latest scholarly research, regardless of its source. The attempt to do this in the context of a conservative theological tradition presents certain challenges, and in the past the results have not always been commendable. In some cases, evangelicals appear to make use of critical scholarship not for the purpose of genuine interaction but only to dismiss it. In other cases, the interaction glides over into

assimilation, theological distinctives are ignored or suppressed, and the end product cannot be differentiated from works that arise from a fundamentally different starting point.

The contributors to this series attempt to avoid these two pitfalls. They do not consider traditional opinions to be sacrosanct, and they are certainly committed to do justice to the biblical text whether or not it supports such opinions. On the other hand, they will not quickly abandon a long-standing view, if there is persuasive evidence in its favor, for the sake of fashionable theories. What is more important, the contributors share a belief in the trustworthiness and essential unity of Scripture. They also consider that the historic formulations of Christian doctrine, such as the ecumenical creeds and many of the documents originating in the sixteenth-century Reformation, arise from a legitimate reading of Scripture, thus providing a proper framework for its further interpretation. No doubt, the use of such a starting point sometimes results in the imposition of a foreign construct on the text, but we deny that it must necessarily do so or that the writers who claim to approach the text without prejudices are invulnerable to the same danger.

Accordingly, we do not consider theological assumptions—from which, in any case, no commentator is free—to be obstacles for biblical interpretation. On the contrary, an exegete who hopes to understand the apostle Paul in a theological vacuum might just as easily try to interpret Aristotle without regard for the philosophical framework of his whole work or without having recourse to those subsequent philosophical categories that make possible a meaningful contextualization of his thought. It must be emphasized, however, that the contributors to the present series come from a variety of theological traditions and that they do not all have identical views with regard to the proper implementation of these general principles. In the end, all that really matters is whether the series succeeds in representing the original text accurately, clearly, and meaningfully to the contemporary reader.

Shading has been used to assist the reader in locating the introductory comments for each section. Textual variants in the Greek text are signaled in the author's translation by means of half-brackets around the relevant word or phrase (e.g., 「Gerasenes"), thereby alerting the reader to turn to the additional notes at the end of each exegetical unit for a discussion of the textual problem. The documentation uses the author-date method, in which the basic reference consists of author's surname + year + page number(s) (e.g., Fitzmyer 1981: 297). The only exceptions to this system are well-known reference works (e.g., BDAG, LSJ, *TDNT*). Full publication data and a complete set of indexes can be found at the end of the volume.

Robert Yarbrough Robert H. Stein

Author's Preface to the Second Edition

The present commentary first appeared, at the end of 1988, as part of the Wycliffe Exegetical Commentary series. It was then reprinted in 1992, with minor corrections, as the initial volume of the BECNT series, which has since adopted some changes (e.g., the use of the author-date system). The opportunity to revise the commentary has made it possible not only to bring its structure and formatting into consistency with more recent volumes in the series but also to update the material by taking into account works published during the last fifteen years. My Philippians bibliography for that period, however, contains almost two hundred new items, most of which make a genuine contribution to our understanding of the letter. How to integrate so much new research is a challenging problem.

The initial publication of the commentary had a very positive reception, but I was particularly gratified by comments from a number of pastors who found it especially helpful in their study and preaching. It thus seemed advisable not to change its character by overloading the exposition with scholarly suggestions. Indeed, readers of this commentary are best served by having their attention drawn to selected works only (even so, close to one hundred new titles receive mention). The introductory chapter contains two addenda that summarize recent publications (these will be found at the end of the sections titled "Literary Structure" and "Exegetical History"). Otherwise, interaction with newer scholarship is mostly relegated to the footnotes.

This approach means that the exposition itself remains largely unaltered. While numerous stylistic improvements have been made (mainly for the sake of greater clarity), these are usually of minor significance. At a few points a different interpretation has been adopted (e.g., see the second additional note on 2:1), and in a few other places I feel less certain than I previously did; but my understanding of major issues, and of the letter as a whole, has not changed. The many additions in the footnotes, however, should allow readers to use the material with greater awareness of alternate options.

I am deeply indebted to my former research assistant, David L. Palmer, for compiling an extensive list of items that required attention, based

on his careful reading of the first edition and on a detailed comparison with the commentaries by O'Brien and Fee.

As I complete this revision, my sense of inadequacy in seeking to expound the text of Philippians is even more acute than it was fifteen years ago. To the extent that any readers find help in this work, the effort will be amply rewarded.

Author's Preface to the First Edition

The distinctive features of the Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament have made it possible for me to put into practice a few ideas about commentary writing that I have entertained for some time. Traditionally, exegetical commentaries have been treated primarily as reference works, to be consulted for information on a few verses or even on isolated words and phrases. Since no commentator can anticipate all of the questions that may occur to Bible readers, students often experience disappointment that the commentaries do not address these questions specifically. More seriously, the verse-by-verse approach of the typical commentary, in spite of its obvious advantages, can become a hindrance to faithful exposition whenever it leads to an atomistic handling of the text—treating problems in relative isolation from each other at the expense of the main teaching of the passage.

My attempt in this volume has been to focus exclusively on the thrust of the text itself, to ask continually what is *distinctive* to Philippians, to determine how each passage contributes to the argument of the letter as a whole, to avoid being distracted by extraneous problems, and to communicate clearly the results of my research by means of uncluttered exposition. Others will have to evaluate to what extent I have been successful in this endeavor, but at least they will know what are the criteria that have guided my work. According to the guidelines for the series, each section of the commentary consists of the following three parts:

Translation. Because of the widespread use of the NASB and the NIV in evangelical circles, I have assumed that users of this commentary have access to both. My translation of Philippians does not attempt to compete with them—it certainly makes no claim to being either literal (for which the NASB is valuable) or literate (a fine NIV quality). Instead, I have attempted a full rendering, largely a paraphrase, that seeks to summarize the results of the exegesis. I have used brackets generously to include interpretive material.

Exegesis and Exposition. Hoping to meet the goals mentioned above, I have chosen to write "exegetical essays" on carefully defined units of thought. These essays, of course, do not overlook detailed problems of text, language, and interpretation; it is simply that the problems are discussed only to the extent that they have a bearing on the thrust of the

passage being considered. The exposition, therefore, is not designed to provide quick answers; rather, it is designed to be read in blocks—the larger the block, the better. Some hardy souls may even wish to read through the whole exposition and thus benefit the most from the distinctive concerns of the commentary. In any case, the reader is strongly encouraged to look carefully at the introductory comments of a section before attempting to evaluate the interpretation of a particular word or clause.

Additional Notes. This section preserves some of the benefits of verse-by-verse exegesis, namely, ease of reference and attention to details that are of lesser importance for understanding the passage. Sometimes, however, these notes include discussions that, while hardly unimportant, would have unnecessarily cluttered the exposition. In these cases, the essays contain a summary of the argumentation and a reference to the additional material.

I am grateful to Kenneth L. Barker and John S. Feinberg for reading through an early draft of the commentary and giving useful advice. Richard B. Gaffin Jr., from whom I learned to regard the apostle Paul as theologian, also read and evaluated the typescript; his encouragement is greatly appreciated.

Billie Goodenough and Dorothy Krieke initially transcribed this commentary from a hopeless handwritten draft; their faithful and careful work made much easier the process of revision. Dan G. McCartney ran a few GRAMCORD programs related to the text of Philippians; I also benefited from his advice on several exegetical problems. My student assistant Christopher N. Mount offered invaluable help in the last stages of the project.

Finally, I feel I must offer my apologies to my wife and children—especially to John, who often had to give up playing his drums so that his dad could work on the computer—for bearing the brunt of this long undertaking.

Writing a biblical commentary can be a humbling experience, and doubly so when the text being commented upon touches as intensely as Philippians does on the doctrine of sanctification (manifested especially by humility!). Who is sufficient for these things?

Abbreviations

Bibliographic and General

BDAG

A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early
Christian Literature, by W. Bauer, F. W. Danker, W. F. Arndt, and F. W.
Gingrich, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000)

BDF

A Greek Grammar of the New Testament and Other Early Christian
Literature, by F. Blass, A. Debrunner, and R. W. Funk (Chicago:
University of Chicago Press, 1961)

BDR Grammatik des neutestamentlichen Griechisch, by F. Blass, A. Debrunner, and F. Rehkopf, 16th ed. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1984)

GNB Good News Bible/Today's English Version

HDB A Dictionary of the Bible, edited by J. Hastings, 5 vols. (New York: Scribner, 1902–4)

HF The Greek New Testament according to the Majority Text, edited by Zane C. Hodges and Arthur L. Farstad (Nashville: Nelson, 1982)

KJV King James Version LCL Loeb Classical Library

LSJ A Greek-English Lexicon, by H. G. Liddell, R. Scott, and H. S. Jones (Oxford: Clarendon, 1968)

LXX Septuagint

MM The Vocabulary of the Greek Testament: Illustrated from the Papyri and Other Non-literary Sources, by J. H. Moulton and G. Milligan (reprinted Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1976)

MT Masoretic Text

NA²⁷ Novum Testamentum Graece, edited by [E. and E. Nestle], B. and K. Aland, J. Karavidopoulos, C. M. Martini, and B. M. Metzger, 27th rev. ed. (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1993)

NASB New American Standard Bible

NBE Nueva Biblia Española NEB New English Bible

NIDNTT The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology, edited by L. Coenen, E. Beyreuther, and H. Bietenhard; English translation edited by C. Brown, 4 vols. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1975–86)

NIV New International Version
NJB New Jerusalem Bible
NKJV New King James Version

NPNF A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church, edited by Philip Schaff, 1st series (reprinted Grand Rapids:

Eerdmans, 1979)

NRSV New Revised Standard Version

NT New Testament

OCD	The Oxford Classical Dictionary, edited by S. Hornblower and A. Spawforth, 3rd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996)
OT	Old Testament
OTP	The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha, edited by J. H. Charlesworth, 2 vols. (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1983–85)
PG	Patrologiae cursus completus: Series graeca, edited by JP. Migne, 161 vols. (Paris, 1857–66)
PL	Patrologiae cursus completus: Series latina, edited by JP. Migne, 221 vols. (Paris, 1844–64)
s.v.	sub voce (under the word)
TDNT	Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, edited by G. Kittel and G. Friedrich; translated and edited by G. W. Bromiley, 10 vols. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964–76)
UBS ⁴	The Greek New Testament, edited by B. Aland, K. Aland, J. Karavidopoulos, C. M. Martini, and B. M. Metzger, 4th rev. ed., 2nd printing (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1994)
v.l.	varia lectio (variant reading)
WW	Novum Testamentum Domini Nostri Iesu Christi Latine: Secundum editionem Sancti Hieronymi, edited by J. Wordsworth, H. J. White, et al., 3 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon, 1889–1954)

Hebrew Bible

Gen.	Genesis	2 Chron.	2 Chronicles	Dan.	Daniel
Exod.	Exodus	Ezra	Ezra	Hos.	Hosea
Lev.	Leviticus	Neh.	Nehemiah	Joel	Joel
Num.	Numbers	Esth.	Esther	Amos	Amos
Deut.	Deuteronomy	Job	Job	Obad.	Obadiah
Josh.	Joshua	Ps.	Psalms	Jon.	Jonah
Judg.	Judges	Prov.	Proverbs	Mic.	Micah
Ruth	Ruth	Eccles.	Ecclesiastes	Nah.	Nahum
1 Sam.	1 Samuel	Song	Song of Songs	Hab.	Habakkuk
2 Sam.	2 Samuel	Isa.	Isaiah	Zeph.	Zephaniah
1 Kings	1 Kings	Jer.	Jeremiah	Hag.	Haggai
2 Kings	2 Kings	Lam.	Lamentations	Zech.	Zechariah
1 Chron.	1 Chronicles	Ezek.	Ezekiel	Mal.	Malachi

Greek Testament

Matt.	Matthew	Eph.	Ephesians	Heb.	Hebrews
Mark	Mark	Phil.	Philippians	James	James
Luke	Luke	Col.	Colossians	1 Pet.	1 Peter
John	John	1 Thess.	1 Thessalonians	2 Pet.	2 Peter
Acts	Acts	2 Thess.	2 Thessalonians	1 John	1 John
Rom.	Romans	1 Tim.	1 Timothy	2 John	2 John
1 Cor.	1 Corinthians	2 Tim.	2 Timothy	3 John	3 John
2 Cor.	2 Corinthians	Titus	Titus	Jude	Jude
Gal.	Galatians	Philem.	Philemon	Rev.	Revelation

Other Jewish and Christian Writings

Ag. Ap. Josephus, Against Apion Apoc. Mos. Apocalypse of Moses

1 Clem. 1 Clement

2 Clem. 2 Clement

Conf. Tong. Philo, On the Confusion of Tongues

Diogn. Diognetus

Gaius Philo, On the Embassy to Gaius Herm. Sim. Shepherd of Hermas, Similitude

Hist. eccl. Eusebius, Historia ecclesiastica (Ecclesiastical History)

Ign. Phld. Ignatius, Letter to the Philadelphians
Ign. Rom. Ignatius, Letter to the Romans
Ign. Smyrn. Ignatius, Letter to the Smyrnaeans
m. Yebam. Mishnah tractate, Yebamot

Sir. Sirach (Ecclesiasticus)

Strom. Clement of Alexandria, Stromata (Miscellanies)

T. Sim. Testament of SimeonWis. Wisdom of Solomon

Classical Writers

Bibl. hist. Diodorus Siculus, Bibliotheca historica

Disc. Epictetus, Discourses
Hermot. Lucian, Hermotimus
Hist. various authors, Histories

Greek Transliteration

α	a	ζ	Z	λ	1	π	р	φ	ph
β		η		ш	m	ρ	•	•	ch
•	g (n)	٠.	th	ν		σς			ps
δ			i	ع		τ		ω	-
5		κ		0			v (11)		h

Notes on the transliteration of Greek

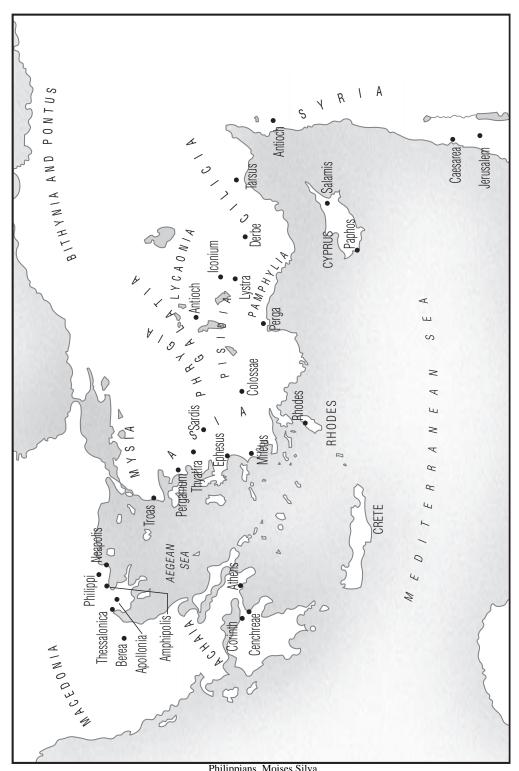
- Accents, lenis (smooth breathing), and *iota* subscript are not shown in transliteration.
- 2. The transliteration of asper (rough breathing) precedes a vowel or diphthong (e.g., $\dot{\alpha} = ha$; $\alpha \dot{i} = hai$) and follows ρ (i.e., $\dot{\rho} = rh$).
- 3. *Gamma* is transliterated n only when it precedes γ , κ , ξ , or χ .
- 4. *Upsilon* is transliterated u only when it is part of a diphthong (i.e., αv , εv , o v, $v \iota$).

Hebrew Transliteration

8)	Ę	ā	qāmeṣ
コ	b	Ē	a	pataḥ
ړ	g	ក្	a	furtive pataḥ
٦	d	Ş	e	sĕgôl
П	h	⊒	ē	ṣērê
٦	w	Ę	i	short ḥîreq
7	Z	Ę	ī	long ḥîreq written defectively
П	ķ	Ţ	o	qāmeṣ ḥāṭûp
ದ	ţ	in	ô	ḥôlem written fully
,	y	Ė	ō	hôlem written defectively
7 ⊃	k	בוּ	û	šûreq
Ż	1	Ź	u	short qibbûş
מם	m	Ź	ū	long qibbûş written defectively
נן	n	Ęπ	â	final qāmeṣ hē' (쥐킂 = āh)
D	s	ڎ۪ڒ	ê	sĕgôl yôd (' $=$ êy)
ע	c	בֵי	ê	$ \sin^2 y \cos y \cos y = \sin^2 y $
F E	p	בִי	î	hîreq yôd (' $=$ îy)
צץ	ș	<u> </u>	ă	ḥāṭēp pataḥ
P	q		ĕ	ḥāṭēp sĕgôl
٦	r	Ţ	ŏ	ḥāṭēp qāmeṣ
Ü	ś	コード マー・ティー・ティー・ティー・ティー・ティー・ティー・ティー・ティー・ティー・ティ	ĕ	vocal šĕwā [,]
ಶ	š	۲	-	silent šĕwā [,]
П	t			

Notes on the transliteration of Hebrew

- 1. Accents are not shown in transliteration.
- 2. Silent $\check{s}\check{e}w\bar{a}$, is not indicated in transliteration.
- 3. The unaspirated forms of $\square \ \square \ \square \ \square \ \square \ \square$ are not specially indicated in transliteration.
- 4. *Dāgeš forte* is indicated by doubling the consonant. *Dāgeš* present for euphonious reasons is not indicated in transliteration.
- 5. *Magqep* is represented by a hyphen.



Philippians, Moises Silva Baker Academic, a division of Baker Publishing Group, © 1992, 2005 Used by permission.

Introduction to Philippians

The primary purpose of this introductory chapter is to help the reader approach exegetical problems in the Epistle to the Philippians by providing a broad interpretive framework. No textual detail ought to be interpreted in isolation from the larger context of which it is a part, yet it would be tiresome and impractical to review such broader concerns at every relevant point in the commentary. *This chapter should thus be regarded as an intrinsic part of the exposition*.

On the other hand, this material represents, for the most part, conclusions drawn from the exegesis. The summary that follows, therefore, is deliberately brief and seldom accompanied by substantive argumentation. The reader is referred to the relevant sections in the commentary itself for further detail.

Historical Context

When we insist that exegesis, to be valid, must pay attention to the context, we usually mean the literary context—and, in particular, the material that immediately precedes and follows the passage in question. We are seldom aware, however, that the life-setting of the document is just as important for proper interpretation.¹ The Epistle to the Philippians did not appear out of a time-space vacuum; it was written by a historical person to a historical church in a particular historical period, and every effort must be made to identify those historical features as precisely as possible.

A number of those features are not in dispute. The document was certainly written by Paul of Tarsus² to a Christian church in the city of Philippi, province of Macedonia. This church had been founded by Paul himself in the early 50s of the first century (Acts 16). At the time of writing, in the late 50s or early 60s, Paul was in prison, and he had

- 1. Cf. Silva 1994: ch. 6, esp. 144–47. This book, incidentally, formulates and defends several principles and methods that have played an important part in the writing of the present commentary. Rather than repeat the argumentation, I shall refer to the book when appropriate.
- 2. There have been sporadic, but completely unsuccessful, attempts at disproving the authenticity of this letter. See especially Baur 1875: ch. 5. It is sobering to see this brilliant scholar arguing with great power and erudition for a viewpoint that the vast majority of subsequent writers (including some otherwise regarded as "radical") consider to have no foundation whatever.

just received a monetary gift from the Philippians through their emissary, Epaphroditus.

These facts, though important, are few. Beyond them, there is wide disagreement among students of the epistle. Before we consider the areas of dispute, however, it may be helpful to summarize the viewpoint that serves, tentatively, as the basis for this commentary.

Reconstruction of Events

In AD 51 Paul, in obedience to a vision, made the momentous decision of leaving the Middle Eastern setting of Asia Minor. With Silas, Timothy, and Luke, he set sail for what we now call Europe. His first stop was the Roman colony of Philippi, a city of considerable importance in the ancient world.³ Meeting a group of faithful Jewish women, he proclaimed the Christian gospel, found a receptive audience, and established his first Christian congregation in Europe. (See Acts 16:1–15).

Young Timothy appears to have played a significant role in this work, and a natural bond was created between him and the Philippians. Among the first believers who struggled along with Paul in his ministry were several women—Lydia, Euodia, and Syntyche—along with an important figure named Clement, and other laborers. Paul's experiences in that city were not all pleasant; they included conflict and imprisonment. Even his jailer was converted, however, and presumably joined the congregation (Acts 16:16–34; Phil. 2:19–22; 4:2–3).

Having been asked by the authorities to go away, Paul left Luke in charge of the congregation and headed west toward Thessalonica. During the three weeks of difficult ministry in this city, Paul several times received material assistance and thus spiritual encouragement from the believers in Philippi. Forced to flee, Paul went on to Berea, then to Athens, and finally to Corinth, where he stayed for a full eighteen months before returning to Antioch. During his prolonged stay in Corinth he again received assistance from the Philippian church (Acts 16:35–18:22; 2 Cor. 11:7–9; Phil. 4:15–16).

Eventually, perhaps a year later, Paul set out on another trip (the so-called third missionary journey), a major purpose of which was the raising of money from among his Gentile churches to meet the needs of the poor Jewish church in Jerusalem and Judea (Acts 18:23; Rom. 15:25–26; 1 Cor. 16:1–4; 2 Cor. 9:1–2, 12–23). There was a theological as well as a practical reason behind this effort. Paul's emphasis on the gospel of grace entailed accepting Christian Gentiles without their being required to fulfill any Jewish ceremonies (cf. Gal. 5:2–6). This approach raised a few eyebrows in some Jewish circles, created serious tensions

^{3.} For a historical discussion of Philippi, see Bakirtzis and Koester 1998. More detailed are Bormann 1995 and especially Pilhofer 1995; 2000.

even among moderate groups, and provoked furious opposition elsewhere (cf. Acts 15:1–5; Gal. 2:1–16).

The Judaizers—as members of this last group are usually referred to—began a campaign of their own, designed to lead Paul's converts to accept circumcision and the law as essential complements to their Christian confession (e.g., Gal. 1:6–9; 3:1–5; 5:7–10; 6:12–13). Because many perceived Paul's missionary work to be an abandonment of his Jewish heritage, the apostle felt constrained to clarify his position. The bringing in of the Gentiles through faith apart from works was not a contradiction but a fulfillment of the Scriptures (e.g., Rom. 3:21, 29–31; 4:9–16). To show in a very concrete way that his work did not entail separation from the Jewish Christian church, Paul determined to raise a significant contribution motivated by love; after all, the Gentile churches owed at least this much to the Jews (Rom. 15:26–27).

As Paul traveled through Macedonia during his third journey (Acts 20:1–2), he would surely have warned the Philippians of the Judaizing threat (cf. below, the exegesis of Phil. 3:1), which had created havoc in Galatia and would no doubt spread to Philippians. Because the Philippians were in financial straits, and because they had already shown great generosity on several occasions, Paul was not intending to request that they contribute to this present project. As soon as they heard of it, however, they insisted on having a share; indeed, their poverty welled up in magnanimity (2 Cor. 8:1–5).

Paul completed his project and eventually brought the offering to Jerusalem (Acts 21:17–19; Rom. 15:25–32). Jewish opponents, however, managed to get him imprisoned, and for two years he awaited his fate in Caesarea (Acts 21:27–24:27). During this time the Philippians felt a responsibility to help Paul, but their own difficult circumstances, along with uncertainty about Paul's status, prevented them from sending any assistance (Phil. 4:10). At last the apostle appealed to the emperor himself, and in the year 59 or 60, under guard, he sailed for Rome (Acts 25:10–12; 27:1). Word of this turn of events must have spread quickly through the Gentile churches, and the Philippians determined to have a share in Paul's struggles as soon as they had the necessary information.

The apostle's experience in Rome was mixed. He found opportunities to proclaim and defend the gospel among Jews, and his message spread through the praetorian guard and beyond; moreover, his boldness encouraged many Roman Christians to speak God's word (Acts 28:16–31; Phil. 1:12–14). But his imprisonment was also a time of affliction, filled with uncertainties, needs, and discouragement. Adding to his anguish was the presence of Jewish Christians who sympathized with many of the Judaizers' concerns. Rejecting the distinctive elements of Paul's preaching, these men were engaged in the proclamation of the gospel. Though they did not embrace the more objectionable elements of the Galatian heresy, their motivation was not pure; they aimed to undermine

the work of the apostle for the sake of their own advancement (see the exegesis of Phil. 1:15–17).

Within a few months of Paul's arrival in Rome, the Philippians had become aware of his worsened situation. They therefore mounted their efforts and raised a large monetary gift (Phil. 4:18). The Philippians themselves, however, were undergoing some serious difficulties. Opponents of the Christian community were causing great alarm in the congregation, and the Judaizing threat was beginning to make itself felt (Phil. 1:27–30; 3:2, 18–19). Physical needs were producing anxiety among the members, who had begun to wonder whether their Christian faith was capable of sustaining them (Phil. 4:6, 19). All of those factors combined to create disagreements, distrust, and a poisonous spirit of self-seeking (Phil. 2:1–4). The leadership of the church, particularly in the persons of Euodia and Syntyche, had fallen into the sin of dissension, and the general health of the church had deteriorated considerably (Phil. 2:14–16; 4:2–3).

Conscious of how much they were in need of spiritual help and guidance, they dispatched Epaphroditus with the gift and asked Paul to keep him as his assistant but to send their beloved Timothy back to Philippi. On the way to Rome, Epaphroditus fell gravely ill and was unable to fulfill his mission speedily. A report of this setback reached Philippi, causing great consternation. Eventually, however, God spared Epaphroditus, who, at the risk of his life, continued on to Rome. By the time Epaphroditus reached Rome, Paul had been in prison perhaps for one year. The Philippians' offering therefore was truly a God-given blessing, and the apostle was at a loss how to express his thanks to a church that had given so sacrificially. The news of the problems in Philippi required immediate attention, but their request that Timothy be sent to them could not be granted. More and more people had deserted Paul, and Timothy alone could minister to him in this dark hour (Phil. 2:19–30).

Aware that the Philippians would be deeply disappointed to see Epaphroditus rather than Timothy return, Paul was faced with a serious challenge. How would he cushion this inevitable disappointment? Might Epaphroditus become the object of undeserved criticism? How could he convey his great joy for the church's continual participation in his apostolic ministry while at the same time rebuking them unambiguously for their grave lapse in sanctification? Would he be able to express his heartfelt thanks for their costly offering and yet discourage them from doing it again? And how would he report truthfully his own troubles without intensifying their spirit of discontent? How to help them in this great hour of their need!

The very difficulty of the task that was before the apostle would draw from him, under divine inspiration, a message full of comfort and joy, rebuke and encouragement, doctrine and exhortation. Quite beyond Paul's own powers of anticipation, the letter he was about to dictate would speak to the hearts of countless believers for many centuries to come.

For a discussion of the details in this reconstruction, the reader is referred to the relevant sections of the commentary. Two topics, however, require attention here: the provenance of the letter and the opponents faced by the apostle.

Provenance

The most controversial element in our summary is, no doubt, the place of writing. That Paul was in Rome when he wrote Philippians is the traditional view, but in modern times strong arguments have been set forth in favor of Caesarea and Ephesus (less commonly Corinth). This is a matter of some consequence for exegesis. A different geographical (and therefore chronological) setting will, for example, affect our identification of Paul's opponents, and hardly anything is more important to understand a polemical passage than to know what the writer is polemicizing against.

One important factor supporting the traditional view is precisely the fact that it is the only tradition that has survived. Whereas every other argument consists of inferences drawn from internal evidence, early tradition provides external attestation—presumably less ambiguous and therefore more "objective." Most scholars would probably recognize, in principle, the wisdom of an old rule-of-thumb: go along with the external evidence if internal considerations are at least compatible with it. (To put it differently, we should not dismiss external attestation unless the internal evidence against it is very clear and persuasive.)

Unfortunately, the external evidence in favor of a Roman provenance is not all that strong. We cannot even be sure that it really qualifies as "external" evidence, because the earliest statements may themselves have been inferences drawn from the text of Philippians! Given these circumstances, it is not fair to demand that alternate theories be supported by *conclusive* arguments; internal considerations that merely tip the scales may be sufficient reason to adopt a different view.

A common argument against the traditional view stresses the geographical distance between Rome and Philippi. Since the epistle assumes that several communications have already taken place between Paul and the Philippians, many scholars argue that the evidence does not allow for all the time required to complete the necessary travels.⁵ If, on the other hand, Paul wrote this letter from Ephesus during the third mis-

- 4. The tradition in question can be traced as far back as the second century (in the Marcionite Prologues attached to Vulgate manuscripts), but the basis for that tradition cannot be ascertained.
- 5. See especially Duncan 1929: 80-82, building on Adolf Deissmann's work. Our best estimates are that a trip between Philippi and Rome would have taken four to seven weeks

sionary journey, the length of travel could be dramatically reduced. In my opinion, commentators have greatly overestimated the weight that can be placed on this argument. The reconstruction suggested above makes clear that only three communications are required:

- 1. The Philippians hear that Paul is imprisoned in Rome. (It may well be, however, that the Philippians became aware of the circumstances even before Paul actually reached Rome.)
- 2. Paul receives a gift through Epaphroditus.
- 3. The Philippians receive news that Epaphroditus has fallen ill. (However, if this incident took place during the journey, the distance involved would be reduced considerably.)⁶

It is quite possible to fit those three journeys into a period of four to six months. But even if we allow a very generous two months for *each* of these journeys, far less than a year is necessary to account for them (and nothing in the data requires us to say that less than a year must have elapsed from Paul's arrival in Rome to his writing of Philippians). It is very difficult to understand why this argument against a Roman origin continues to be taken seriously. The matter should be dropped from consideration. If we do so, however, then the *only* clear argument against the traditional view disappears. In other words, all other available internal evidence is at the very least *compatible* with a Roman imprisonment as the context for Philippians.

This conclusion affects how we evaluate alternate views. A competing theory, even though it may be plausible, can hardly be accepted simply on the grounds that the traditional position is deficient; rather, a persuasive *positive* case must be made for the new one. The case for an *Ephesian* origin rests on the relative geographical proximity of Ephesus to Philippi, but we have already suggested that the issue of distance is

⁽though one must also allow for the time necessary to find an adequate envoy). For the evidence, see Lightfoot (1868: 38), who argued that it probably took one month. William M. Ramsay, whose mastery of these details was second to none, wrote the article "Roads and Travels (in NT)" for *HDB* (5:375–402, esp. 387). According to his data, in addition to the two days required to cross the Adriatic, the trip entailed some 740 miles. Traveling on foot, a courier could be expected to cover 15–20 miles per day. At the slower rate, therefore, the trip would require a total of 52 days; at the faster rate, 39 days. One must leave open the possibility, however, that at least part of the journey might have been covered by carriage, which could halve the time. Imperial couriers averaged 50 miles per day (see *OCD* 1234; for additional information on the ancient postal system, see Llewelyn 1995).

^{6.} Some would argue, on the basis of Phil. 2:26, that a fourth communication is required for Epaphroditus to know that the Philippians were worried about him. As several writers have pointed out, however, 2:26 may simply reflect a natural inference on Epaphroditus's part (see now Brucker 1997: 285). If a fourth communication is thought to be necessary, we should allow for the possibility that it might have reached Epaphroditus long before he arrived in Rome.

a pseudo-problem. The Ephesian theory, in any case, labors under two serious disadvantages: we have no positive evidence either for an imprisonment of Paul in Ephesus or for the presence of a praetorian guard in a senatorial province (see the second additional note on 1:13). To be sure, no one disputes the likelihood that Paul may have been imprisoned during his lengthy stay in that city; and the possibility that a praetorian guard could have been stationed in Ephesus must be left open. One must wonder, however, how much weight can be placed on a theory that builds possibility upon likelihood.⁷

Some other scholars—uncomfortable with both the Roman and the Ephesian theory—opt for a *Caesarean* origin. This theory cannot appeal to the long distance separating Rome from Philippi, since Caesarea is not any closer; it can, however, build on the unquestioned fact that Paul spent two years imprisoned in this Palestinian port city. Moreover, one can argue with some plausibility that the presence of an imperial palace in Caesarea accounts for Paul's reference to the praetorian guard. The question is then whether we can identify any positive evidence that would lead us to *favor* this theory over that of a Roman origin. No such evidence is forthcoming. The argument rests completely on the ability of some scholars to construct a Caesarean setting that makes sense out of the data in Philippians.⁸ The line of reasoning is plausible and may be correct—it certainly cannot be disproved. But it cannot be said to hold a *higher* status of credibility than the Roman theory.

In short, a Roman setting fits the data at least as well as competing views, and it has the added (though admittedly weak) advantage of being supported by some early tradition. Since alternative theories are based on plausible, but not compelling, arguments, we are left without a reason to abandon the traditional view. I shall, therefore, in this commentary assume a Roman origin for Philippians and allow it to serve us as a *tentative* framework for the discussion of exegetical problems, such as the identification of Paul's opponents. On the other hand, it remains little more than a theory, and any exegetical conclusions that lean heavily on it must be regarded as methodologically weak or even invalid.

^{7.} In addition to the issues discussed here, many secondary arguments for and against the various options can be advanced. Hawthorne (1983: xxxvi–xliv) and O'Brien (1991: 19–26) can be profitably consulted for these. Note also Moda 1985, who pays special attention to the Corinthian theory set forth by Dockx 1973. In a recent and wide-ranging defense of the Ephesian theory, U. Müller (1999) contrasts Philippians with Romans (e.g., Phil. 3:2 versus Rom. 3:2; 9:6) and maintains that Paul's argument in Phil. 3 is plausible only if this letter (like Galatians) was written prior to Romans (see esp. U. Müller 1999: 150, 171).

^{8.} This view, which goes back to the eighteenth century, has been adopted by, among others, Lohmeyer and Hawthorne. For an extensive defense, see Gunther 1972: 98–107, although his discussion depends heavily on arguments from silence.

Paul's Opponents

Apart from the question of the place of origin, other debatable issues regarding the historical context of Philippians are best treated as they come up in the text itself, since the exegesis of the text is our primary tool for resolving such problems. Only one additional question requires preliminary discussion at this point, and that is the identification of the opponents to whom Paul alludes in the letter. The relevant passages are 1:15–17; 1:27–28; 3:2; and 3:18–19 (though we also detect hints of this problem in 2:14–16 and 3:12–16).

It would be possible to see a distinct group of opponents in each of those four passages. Only the first one refers specifically to individuals with whom Paul himself was having to deal while he was in prison: they were "brethren" who preached the gospel with the impure motive of harming the apostle. The warning in 1:27–28 could reflect opposition from Gentiles. The reference in 3:2 is clearly to legalists, whether we regard them as unbelieving Jews or as Christian Judaizers. Finally, the "enemies of the cross" described in 3:18–19 sound like morally loose teachers (libertines or, more specifically, antinomians).

Such a wide diversity of references is unlikely, and most scholars detect no more than two or three distinct groups. The present commentary is rather unusual (though hardly unique) in arguing that all of the passages in question refer to groups that shared some fundamental concerns. Although it is obvious that Paul's attitude as he writes 1:15–17 is quite different from that which he reflects in 3:2, and that therefore the two groups must certainly be distinguished in *some* way, there is much to be said for the view that both groups objected to Paul on the same or very similar grounds. My thesis is

- that 3:2 describes Judaizers such as are explicitly opposed in Galatians;
- that just as the Judaizing heresy, strange as it may sound, led to antinomianism and perfectionism in Galatia (cf. Gal. 5:13–21; 6:1?), so it may have happened in Philippi;⁹
- that such a front of opposition may account for the words in 1:28–29 and so there is no need to postulate yet another group (though nothing prevents us from thinking that the Philippian believers did suffer persecution from Gentiles);
- that the conduct of the "brethren" described in 1:15–17 cannot be accounted for satisfactorily unless they had some disagreements of *substance* with the apostle, and our knowledge of conflicts in the

 $^{9.\} I$ argue at 3:18-19, however, that this passage need not be interpreted as a description of antinomianism.

early church suggests strongly that they may have objected to some of the distinctive features of Paul's preaching to the Gentiles.

Scholars rarely point out that among Jewish Christians in the early church one surely could have found the whole range of possible responses to Paul's preaching—from full sympathy to minor reservations, then on to explicit opposition and even vicious hostility. The reservations, whether minor or major, would have focused on where the line was to be drawn regarding the status of, and requirements for, Gentile Christians. The desire to draw that line tightly would often, but not always, reflect theological opposition to the gospel of grace. It is not difficult to imagine how, in any early Christian community, unworthy and jealous leaders might have capitalized on these conflicts. Without *necessarily* preaching a message of works righteousness, they may have simply hoped to advance their own cause at the expense of Paul's reputation.

A Roman setting is naturally compatible with this description. The Epistle to the Romans makes clear that Christians in Rome were aware of and concerned about the Judaizers' attacks on the integrity of Paul's gospel. Some of those believers may indeed have been disposed to raise the very objections that Paul addresses in Romans (e.g., 3:1, 5; 6:1, 15; 9:6, 19). On the other hand, we have no evidence that the full-blown Judaizing heresy had yet manifested itself in the capital of the empire; Paul therefore, as he described his opponents in Rome (Phil. 1:15–17), would have seen no need to utter the anathema of Gal. 1:8–9.

On the other hand, an extreme form of Jewish Christianity was very likely making its presence felt in Macedonia by the late 50s. Most commentators, quite rightly in my opinion, see this heresy reflected in Phil. 3:2. What is not so clear is whether the same or a very different kind of opposition forms the background for the second part of that chapter. The evidence is ambiguous, and I refer the reader to the exegesis of 3:12 and 3:17–19 for the details. While a definitive conclusion is not within our reach, I shall argue that chapter 3 of Philippians is a coherent passage and that there are no insuperable objections to identifying "the enemies of the cross" (3:18) as heterodox Jewish Christians or their disciples.¹⁰

Literary Context

In the broadest sense, the literary context of Philippians consists of the whole range of ancient literature that is part of Paul's cultural milieu. Different scholars, depending on their interests and expertise, may legitimately appeal to a wide variety of parallels in expounding this epistle. Naturally, those writings closest to the thought of the apostle

10. In an unusual twist, Bateman 1998 proposes that all the relevant passages in Philippians refer to the same opponents but that they were local *Gentiles* who sympathized with Jewish rituals.

(contemporary Christian documents, that is, the NT) are bound to be particularly helpful. Our primary source, however, is the Pauline corpus itself. And while one runs the danger of blunting the distinctiveness of Philippians by appealing to the rest of the epistles, it would be a grave mistake to treat this letter in isolation from the rest. Accordingly, the present commentary makes abundant use of parallels in the Pauline writings to interpret the Philippians text.

In the present section, of course, we cannot attempt to summarize the Pauline corpus. Our purpose here is rather to look at the text of Philippians as a whole with a view to identifying patterns and distinctive emphases in the letter. I am, therefore, using the term *literary* to include not only the narrower concerns of literary criticism but also linguistic traits, argumentation, and even the distinctive theological teaching of Philippians.

Language and Style

The easiest, but also the most superficial, method of profiling the linguistic character of a writing is by presenting statistics based on the writer's vocabulary. We can very quickly, for example, count those words that are unique to Philippians (my statistics come from Aland 1978–83). The total comes to forty different words, a proportionately higher number than average: Galatians and Ephesians, which are longer, contain thirty-one and thirty-five, respectively. Four of these *hapax legomena*, however, are proper names (Euodia, Clement, Syntyche, Philippians), and many others are derivatives of otherwise common terms.¹¹

We learn a little more about the lexical distinctiveness of Philippians, however, by noticing certain terms, not uncommon in themselves, that appear with disproportionate frequency in this letter. The term δέσμιος (desmios, prisoner) occurs four times in Philippians; otherwise in Paul only once in Colossians and once in 2 Timothy. The verb ἡγέομαι (hēgeomai, regard, consider) occurs six times; otherwise only once in 2 Corinthians, 1 Thessalonians, 2 Thessalonians, twice in 1 Timothy. Very noticeable is the frequency of "joy" terminology, namely, the verb χαίρω (chairō) and the noun χαρά (chara): these terms occur fourteen times (3.5 times per chapter) in Philippians, while the total for the rest of Paul's letters is thirty-six times (less than 0.5 times per chapter). Most significant of all are the ten occurrences of φρονέω (phroneō, think), otherwise used only thirteen times in Paul, nine times in Romans; this striking characteristic will come up for discussion below under "Distinctive Teaching."

11. E.g., ἀγνῶς, ἐξανάστασις, ὀκταήμερος, συμμιμητής. Some significant hapax legomena are found in the christological poem of 2:6–11: ἀρπαγμός, καταχθόνιος, ὑπερυψόω. Also interesting are such terms as πολίτευμα (see comments on 3:20), μυέομαι (4:12), κατατομή (3:2), παραβολεύομαι (2:30), σκύβαλον (3:8). The word ἔπαινος is hardly a hapax, yet it appears to be used in a unique sense in 4:8.

One question that arises generally in the Pauline corpus, but pointedly in Philippians, is whether the apostle intends clear semantic distinctions when similar terms are grouped together. ¹² Many commentators, persuaded that Paul could not be guilty of redundancy, look for these distinctions and emphasize them. It is unfortunate, however, that the term *redundancy* continues to be viewed in a purely negative light. Linguists, drawing on the work of communication engineers, have long recognized that redundancy is a built-in feature of every language and that it aids, rather than hinders, the process of communication.

Though Paul is certainly not thoughtless in his choice of vocabulary, this commentary will argue that lexical distinctions are often neutralized in specific contexts and that many variations result from a need for stylistic reinforcement rather than from a desire to make an additional substantive point. Even some of the controversial terms in the Christhymn, I believe, are better understood if we resist sharp distinctions among them (see comments on 2:6–8). What is true of individual lexical items may also be reflected in longer linguistic units, such as the emotive phrases in 2:1, which Lightfoot (1868: 67) perceptively described as a "tautology of earnestness."

Syntactical questions too must be treated in accordance with the common functions of natural languages. The assumption that Paul's syntax must always be rigorously logical contradicts this principle, and it comes to grief at a few points in this letter (see additional notes on 1:27). Grammatical irregularities are exceptional, however, and we dare not use them to justify a sloppy approach to the text.

One specific syntactical question that requires comment is that of tense (or better, *aspectual*) distinctions. The viewpoint adopted in this commentary is that the significance of such distinctions for biblical interpretation has been greatly overestimated by most commentators, particularly conservative writers. Aspectual choices are usually restricted by factors of a grammatical or contextual nature, and so only seldom do they reflect a conscious semantic motivation (so probably 3:7–8, though even this passage is controverted). In short, no reasonable Greek author, when wishing to make a substantive point, is likely to have depended on his readers' ability to interpret subtle syntactical distinctions. ¹³ Decisions regarding the use of verbal aspect in Philippians sometimes involve

^{12.} E.g., εὐχαριστέω, μνεία, δέησις (two times) in 1:3–4; ἄμεμπτοι, ἀκέραιοι, ἄμωμα in 2:15; λαμβάνω, καταλαμβάνω, τελειόω (passive) in 3:12. For further comments, see Silva 1994: 151–56. One of the distinctive and valuable traits of Schenk's (1984) commentary is his recognition that "contextual synonymy" is found time and time again in the text of Philippians. We should keep in mind that ambiguity is a regular (and even necessary) feature of human language, and that the historical doctrine of biblical inspiration does not at all require us to interpret the biblical language in an unnatural way (e.g., by attributing to it artificial precision).

^{13.} For a defense of this approach, see Silva 1990 (esp. introduction and ch. 6).

textual variants (as in 1:9), but they also come up elsewhere (e.g., see additional note on 1:21).

The description of an author's style cannot be limited to the level of words and sentences, and in recent decades linguists have given increasing attention to the paragraph as a basic unit of language. This new approach, usually referred to as *discourse analysis*, has led to a renewed concern for the textual coherence of biblical writings. Such a concern, however, overlaps with the task of identifying the structure of a writer's argument (see "Literary Structure" below). In the case of Philippians, that task is complicated by challenges to the literary unity of the letter, a question to which we must first turn our attention.

Literary Integrity

Our discussion of the historical context of Philippians assumed that the letter is an integral whole and that therefore our reconstructed occasion applies to it in its totality. Many important commentators, however, believe that the tone of chapter 3 is incompatible with the rest of the epistle; this section (including perhaps the opening verses of ch. 4) is widely regarded as a separate letter written to the Philippians specifically to combat the heretical forces they were facing. Some of those scholars also find it difficult to believe that Paul would wait till the end of his letter (4:10–20) to thank the Philippians for their gift; thus it is thought that this passage represents yet a third missive (chronologically the first?) occasioned simply by the arrival of that offering.

In spite of its relative popularity,¹⁴ this literary reconstruction labors under enormous difficulties. In the first place, no external textual evidence can be adduced in its favor. The textual attestation for Philippians is rich and early. One document, \mathfrak{P}^{46} , brings us to the early third or even late second century, yet neither this nor any other manuscript, to say nothing of early patristic allusions, gives any indication that the letter ever circulated in a different form from that which we have.¹⁵ One can argue, of course, that someone simply brought these three letters together prior to their being circulated. Anything is possible. But we must ask whether it is *likely* that absolutely no trace of such a process would have been preserved.

In the second place, proponents of this view need to provide a motive that would have led to such a literary process. Here again we cannot be satisfied with speculating what possibly may have led someone to edit

- 14. A partition theory for Philippians was first proposed (in a different form) early in the nineteenth century (Koperski 1993), but such an approach did not gain wide acceptance until well into the twentieth.
- 15. When writing to the Philippians in the second century, Polycarp tells them that Paul "wrote letters [ἐπιστολάς]" to them (*To the Philippians* 3.2). A few scholars, without success, have tried to use this passage as evidence against the integrity of Philippians. Lightfoot's discussion (1868: 138–42) adequately deals with this question.

three separate letters of Paul into one. If we are expected to accept a literary reconstruction for which no external evidence exists, we may rightfully ask for a demonstration of *probability*. For example, do we know (say, from statements by the church fathers) that any early Christian attempted to merge separate apostolic writings into one, or even that anyone thought such an attempt would be useful?

In the third place, the theory is unable to account for the alleged redactor's method of working. The strongest evidence for the theory is the abruptness of 3:1–2, but this is a two-edged sword: What would lead an editor to incorporate a separate document at such an awkward point? Again, why would a redactor append the note of thanks at the end, where it seems to be out of place? Editorial revisions are normally undertaken with a view to attenuating, not aggravating, literary problems and inconsistencies. (See also the introduction to §IV.)

Supporting the literary integrity of the letter are some interesting features, such as the striking verbal parallels between chapter 3 and earlier sections (cf. esp. 2:6–11 with 3:7–11). Particularly significant is the coherence achieved by beginning and ending the main body of the epistle with similar phraseology (see comments at 1:27–28 and 3:20–4:1). These and many other traits have caught the attention of recent scholars interested in discourse analysis and rhetorical criticism, disciplines that focus on the question of literary consistency.

The most important contribution in this field is a very fine article by Garland (1985) that has, in my opinion, changed the complexion of the contemporary discussion. Though various aspects of his literary interpretation are debatable, he has clearly demonstrated, by the use of internal evidence, that the unity of the letter is on a sure footing and, more important, that such evidence is *incompatible* with any view of literary fragmentation. Further details are best discussed at the relevant points in the commentary itself. What needs to be stressed here is that the only kind of evidence brought forth against the unity of Philippians is now being proved to be not merely ambiguous—which would be sufficient reason to reject the theory in the absence of other evidence—but rather clearly supportive of the opposite viewpoint.

At any rate, the letter deserves to be understood in the only form in which it has come down to us. This principle affects not only the question of literary unity but also the way we approach 2:6–11 and 3:20–21, which are often thought to reflect Paul's use of preexisting materials. As will be

16. Since the late 1970s, many other comparable works began to appear, such as Dalton 1979, Russell 1982, and Swift 1984. And since the first edition of the present work, almost all commentaries and monographs on Philippians have taken a firm position in favor of the letter's integrity (one striking exception is Edart 2002, who argues that Phil. 3:2–16 is a separate letter with editorial additions that may come from Luke). There are still occasional articles that argue for partition (e.g., Schenk 1994; Harnisch 1999), but many more that take the opposite viewpoint (e.g., Koperski 1992b; Black 1995; Reed 1996).

argued in the exegesis of those two passages, the primary responsibility of a commentator is to make sense of the text in the context in which it is found, not on the basis of a setting that is no longer extant.

Literary Structure

The arguments that support the unity of Philippians also provide a basis for understanding its structure. Admittedly, the epistle is not easy to outline, and commentators have failed to reach a consensus. It is essential, however, to trace the flow of the argument as carefully as possible. Exegesis depends heavily on contextual information, since the meaning of a particular proposition is largely determined by its place in the larger argument: What has led to this proposition? How does it advance the argument? What does it lead to? An outline, therefore, should be no mere table of contents, but an interpretive summary of the document. And while the effort should be made to approximate the original author's conception (assuming he had self-consciously constructed an outline), the success of an outline is to be gauged primarily by whether or not it communicates clearly *the interpreter's* understanding of the letter.

Certain portions of Philippians can be clearly identified as discrete sections. For example, no one doubts that the first two verses constitute the salutation and that verses 3–11 conform to the Pauline pattern of opening a letter with a thanksgiving. There is also wide agreement that the section that begins at 1:12 concludes at 1:26, a view supported by the likelihood that Paul uses the rhetorical technique of *inclusio* (or inclusion), that is, the bracketing of the passage by beginning and ending it with the same term, in this case $\pi \rho o \kappa o \pi \eta$ (*prokopē*, progress [found nowhere else in the NT]). Other clear units are 2:5–11; 2:19–30; 3:1–4:1 (though here the precise beginning and end are disputed); and 4:10–20. But are we able to relate these units to one another as parts of larger sections?

To begin with, we could point out that the body of the letter (as distinct from its opening and closing) extends from 1:12 to 4:20. More interesting and significant is the possibility of *inclusio* bracketing the section from 1:27 to 4:3.¹⁷ If so, that material could be viewed as the true body of the letter, in which the Philippians are exhorted to stand and struggle together as they exercise their Christian citizenship. While there is no doubt some validity in this approach, a different analysis is needed if we wish to bring out the diversity of material in that large section.

17. Notice the triad πολιτεύεσθε . . . στήκετε . . . συναθλοῦντες in 1:27 reflected in πολίτευμα . . . στήκετε . . . συνήθλησαν in 3:20; 4:1, 3. In my opinion, however, 4:2 begins a new section that consists of specific exhortations. Moreover, stressing the conceptual unity of 1:27–4:3 obscures the abruptness of chap. 3; as will be argued in the commentary, a concern to preserve the integrity of the epistle should not lead to a minimizing of this feature.

One important clue is the distinctive character of 1:12–26. This passage is unusual in that Paul does not normally give details about his personal circumstances at this early point in the letter (the closest parallel is 2 Cor. 1:8–11, 15–17; cf. Rom. 1:13–15). I shall argue in the commentary that the peculiar relationship between Paul and the Philippians, and in particular their support of his missionary work, made it appropriate for the apostle to give an account of his present conditions at the very beginning of the letter. The section ends with a vague allusion to his plans, a topic that he takes up again and develops in 2:19–30. A useful outline should in some way indicate the connection between these two passages.

Now while a new section begins at 1:27, commentators are unable to agree beyond that point. Since 1:30 seems to mark the end of a paragraph, should we begin a completely new section with 2:1? Or does the new section begin with verse 5? Or verse 12? Or verse 19? One of the most important structural points made in this commentary is that all of that material, from 1:27 to 2:18, belongs together and constitutes the heart of the epistle. It would be a mistake, however, to draw too sharp a line between this section and the one that follows. Indeed, 2:19–30 fulfills a double purpose: it resumes the report of 1:12–26, but it also, more subtly, reinforces the exhortations of 1:27–2:8 by setting up Timothy and Epaphroditus as examples to be followed. I have therefore treated 1:27–2:30 as a self-contained major section while making clear that its last subsection (2:19–30) has a different character from what precedes it.

As for chapter 3, we must leave open the possibility that Paul had not intended, initially, to deal with the matters covered there—after all, it would have meant repeating instructions that the Philippians were familiar with (see introduction to §IV). The seriousness of the Judaizing threat, however, suggested that he should take nothing for granted, and so he decided to extend the letter. This is a possible, though admittedly speculative, explanation for the abruptness of the passage. At any rate, 3:1 (or possibly 3:2) begins a wholly new section that ends at 4:1 (possibly 4:3). With 4:2 the concluding exhortations begin. Then at verse 10, for reasons discussed fully in the commentary, Paul finally gets around to thanking the Philippians for the offering they sent with Epaphroditus.

The resulting outline, on the basis of which the chapters of the commentary have been divided, is as follows:

I. Opening (1:1-11)

- A. Salutation (1:1-2)
- B. Thanksgiving (1:3–8)
 - 1. Initial statement (1:3–5)
 - 2. Expansion (1:6-8)
- C. Prayer (1:9-11)

II. Paul's missionary report (1:12-26)

- A. Paul's circumstances (1:12–17)
 - 1. The unfettered progress of the gospel (1:12–14)
 - 2. Blessing mixed with adversity (1:15–17)
- B. Paul's attitude (1:18–26)
 - 1. Joy in salvation (1:18–20)
 - 2. Death no threat (1:21-24)
 - 3. A word of reassurance (1:25–26)

III. A call to sanctification (1:27–2:30)

- A. Christian citizenship (1:27–2:4)
 - 1. Tenacity (1:27–28)
 - 2. Suffering (1:29-30)
 - 3. Unity (2:1–4)
- B. Christian humility (2:5–11)
 - 1. Paul's exhortation (2:5)
 - 2. Christ's humiliation (2:6–8)
 - 3. Christ's exaltation (2:9–11)
- C. Christian obedience (2:12-18)
 - 1. The believer's work (2:12–13)
 - 2. Blameless children (2:14–16)
 - 3. A personal appeal (2:17–18)
- D. Resumption of Paul's missionary report (2:19–30)
 - 1. Timothy (2:19-24)
 - 2. Epaphroditus (2:25–30)

IV. Doctrinal polemics (3:1–4:1)

- A. Judaizers as the context for theology (3:1–6)
 - 1. Paul on the offensive (3:1–3)
 - 2. Mock boasting (3:4–6)
- B. The essence of Pauline theology (3:7–11)
 - 1. Spiritual bankruptcy (3:7–8)
 - 2. Spiritual wealth (3:9–11)
- C. Practical theology (3:12–4:1)
 - 1. Frustration and hope (3:12–14)
 - 2. Growth through obedience (3:15–16)
 - 3. Patterns of behavior (3:17–19)
 - 4. Heavenly citizenship (3:20-4:1)

V. Final concerns (4:2-23)

- A. Exhortations (4:2–9)
 - 1. Final call for unity (4:2–3)
 - 2. Joy and anxiety (4:4–7)
 - 3. Obedience and peace (4:8–9)
- B. A word of thanks (4:10–20)
 - 1. Need and contentment (4:10–14)
 - 2. A theology of Christian giving (4:15–20)
- C. Closing (4:21–23)

Addendum. The years since the first edition of this commentary have seen a remarkable spate of articles and monographs dealing with the literary structure of Philippians. The tools used for this purpose include discourse analysis (or text linguistics), rhetorical criticism (the classical art of persuasion), and epistolary analysis (the genre and form of ancient letters).¹⁸

- 1. The most detailed and impressive application of discourse analysis to Philippians is by Jeffrey T. Reed (1997). Although I have elsewhere expressed reservations about the value of this discipline as usually practiced (see Silva 1995; cf. also Bockmuehl 1998: 23–24), it can hardly be doubted that Reed's careful attention to matters of structure and "texture" shed light both on the character of the letter and on Paul's method of argumentation. A more narrowly conceived approach—and for that very reason useful—is the analysis of transitional markers by Jonas Holmstrand (1997). Note also the essays by G. H. Guthrie, S. H. Levinsohn, S. E. Porter, and J. T. Reed brought together in Porter and Carson (1995).
- 2. A tour de force in rhetorical criticism is a monograph by Peter Wick (1994) in which the author points out that there are striking parallels and similarities between five pairs of passages in Philippians: A = 1:12–26 and 3:1–16; B = 1:27–30 and 3:17–21; C = 2:1–11 and 4:1–3; D = 2:12–18 and 4:4–9; E = 2:19–30 and 4:10–20. Wick further detects broad structural links among these five double sections, with the Christ-hymn at the center of the schema, and attempts to show how this structure relates to the contents of the letter. The author argues that Philippians is a work of high literary quality that was possible both because Paul had a relaxed and friendly relationship with the Philippian Christians and because during his home-imprisonment in Rome he had the rest and time necessary to concentrate (Wick 1994: 11, 187, 191).

My summary of Wick's theory does not begin to do justice to its complexity. It is difficult to read this work carefully without being impressed by the force of the evidence. By the same token, it is just as difficult to believe that Paul would have expended such extraordinary effort in constructing an edifice that, as far as we can tell, nobody noticed until the end of the twentieth century. Even if one is unpersuaded by Wick's proposal, however, there is no denying that many, indeed, probably the majority, of the rhetorical features he has uncovered are really there in the text. Stylistic arguments against the unity of the letter thus appear less and less plausible.

18. The overlap among these three disciplines (and especially between the last two) is significant. An early and helpful application of discourse analysis to the NT is Louw 1982 (esp. ch. 10). On the significance of classical Greek rhetoric for NT interpretation, see G. Kennedy 1984. For the place of the NT epistles in the context of ancient letter writing, see the survey in White 1986.

Not as complex, but also careful and instructive, is the use of "oral biblical criticism" by C. W. Davis (1999). The author argues for a concentric structure in Philippians, according to which the beginning and concluding sections (1:3–26 and 4:10–20) provide examples of Christian unity, while the two inner sections (1:27–2:18 and 3:1–4:9) consist of commands; the central section (2:19–30) provides an exemplification of the theme of unity by describing Timothy and Epaphroditus. (In an appendix, Davis includes a helpful list that details instances of synonymy in Philippians.)

In a monograph that ostensibly focuses on the Christ-hymn (arguing that it is not poetic but rather epideictic prose composed by Paul), Ralph Brucker (1997) in fact discusses the rhetorical features of Philippians as a whole. The author gives an analysis of various ancient writings that provide examples of epideictic literature—documents that are laudatory in character but that sometimes include rebuke (Brucker 1997: 278). Philippians may be viewed against such a background. Brucker (1997: 286–90) gives detailed evidence of keyword combinations in the letter that are not compatible with theories of partition.

Most of these works (as well as others mentioned elsewhere in this introduction) include proposed outlines based on ancient epistolography and rhetorical textbooks. For example, Watson (1988) sees Philippians as consisting of exordium (introduction, 1:3–26), narratio (narrative, 1:27–30), probatio (demonstration, 2:1–3:21), and peroratio (closing, 4:1–20). Witherington (1994) limits the exordium to 1:3–11, identifies the narratio as 1:12–26, and regards 1:27–30 as the propositio that introduces the demonstration. Black (1995) uses the term argumentatio for 1:27 to 3:1, which he subdivides into propositio (1:27–30), probatio (2:1–30), and refutatio (3:1–21); he further identifies the peroratio as 4:1–9, with an additional narratio at 4:10-20. A number of other variations are possible (cf. Williams 2002: 88-90). It is debatable whether the use of these technical terms sheds genuine light on what Paul was intending to do or whether it imposes an artificial scheme on the text (cf. Silva 2001: 92–95). Nevertheless, it is helpful to have competing outlines, none of which can lay claim to being exclusively right. Alternate ways of structuring the material can provide new insights into the flow of the argument and the connections between its parts. (Less persuasive are attempts to view the whole letter as a large chiasm; cf. Luter and Lee 1995 and the rebuttal by Porter and Reed 1998.)

3. Efforts to identify the specific genre of Philippians within the context of ancient letters (a primary concern of epistolary analysis) have proven ambiguous. As already noted, a detailed analysis of rhetorical features has led at least one scholar (Brucker 1997) to view this letter against the background of epideictic literature. More influential has been an important study by Loveday Alexander (1989) showing that Philippians shares a number of formal patterns with ancient family

letters. This evidence has given new impetus to the view that the basic Greco-Roman "letter of friendship" provides the most appropriate category within which to understand Philippians.

Ben Witherington, for example, has written a whole monograph on *Friendship and Finances in Philippi* (1994). Gordon Fee's (1995: 12) commentary identifies Philippians as a Christian hortatory letter of friendship and uses that concept especially in the exposition of chapter 4 (it may be noteworthy, however, that outside of this chapter Fee hardly ever refers to it). An anthology on the subject of ancient friendship (Fitzgerald 1996) includes four essays on Philippians (by John Reumann, Ken L. Berry, Abraham J. Marlherbe, and John T. Fitzgerald). Among periodical articles that make use of the theme, note the study of Phil. 1:21–26 by J. L. Jaquette (1994), of 2:6–11 by M. I. Wegener (1998), and of 2:25–30 by R. Metzner (2002).

A general question that plagues any such attempts to identify the precise (sub)genre of Philippians (or any other Pauline letter) is whether Paul was consciously following a literary model. Even if he was not, of course, there is something to be gained by recognizing his use of (or, more important, his deviations from) conventional letter-writing traditions. Nevertheless, *how we interpret those correspondences* does depend significantly on whether or not the apostle was making deliberate choices (and whether or not the readers may have been expected to perceive them). Unfortunately, modern expositors seldom address that issue directly.

In addition, we are faced by the more specific problem that nowhere in Philippians does Paul make explicit reference (or unambiguous allusion) to the Greco-Roman concept of friendship and that the main body of the letter (from 1:12 to the end of ch. 3) provides very little evidence, if any, in support of this view. Indeed, if the letter had not included the material in chapter 4 (and especially vv. 10–20), it seems unlikely that anyone would have thought of calling Philippians a letter of friendship. "Philippians certainly manifests many informal aspects of a warm human friendship. . . . That recognition alone, however, does not suffice to confirm the requisite social and epistolary conventions of Graeco-Roman *philia*" (Bockmuehl 1998: 35).

Perhaps more productive might be the approach followed by Paul Holloway (2001) in an unusually interesting monograph on the subject of consolation. The author argues that Philippians should be viewed in the light of ancient consolers, who "understood their primary task to be not one of sharing in the grief of others, but one of removing that grief by rational argument and frank exhortation" (Holloway 2001: 1). Although at first Holloway seems to identify Philippians formally as an "epistle of consolation," his focus is properly on function and content: Paul writes primarily to console the Philippians, and the letter can thus be compared helpfully with other documents written for similar purposes (Holloway

2001: 2). From this perspective, Holloway provides valuable insights throughout the monograph, such as the suggestion that the Philippians' basic problem was one of discouragement (Holloway 2001: 47; note also his original handling of 1:22–26 and 2:25–30 on pp. 53–54).

Distinctive Teaching

Considerations of a document's literary context cannot be limited to formal questions such as style and structure. While these are not merely preliminaries to "the real thing" (they are very much part of the whole substance), our primary interest is of course the content communicated through them. The discussion of structure has already, and necessarily, touched on the content of Philippians, but we need to identify more directly the letter's teaching (the whole), against which we can more accurately interpret its individual propositions (the parts). Inevitably, the discussion becomes a theological exercise.

Now in our attempt to interpret a biblical book, hardly any issue is more important than that of its *distinctiveness*. For believers who take seriously the divine inspiration—and therefore the unity—of Scripture, biblical study should focus very sharply on this basic question: Why did God see fit to include this or that document in the NT canon? Let us consider then what it is that Philippians contributes to our understanding of the gospel. What is its specific "canonical function"?

Two factors, unfortunately, have hindered students in this endeavor. In the first place, the strong emphasis of the epistle on the subject of rejoicing, along with the obvious affection that united the apostle with the Philippian church, has led many readers to think of that church as a model congregation with relatively few and minor problems. This feature also lends a very practical and personal tone to the letter, so that we tend to downplay its doctrinal content. The influential commentator J. B. Lightfoot, in fact, argued that it was precisely that feature that distinguishes Philippians from the theologically charged letter of Paul to the Galatians.¹⁹

The second factor pulls in quite a different direction. I refer here to the *Carmen Christi* (2:6–11). While no one is likely to deny the very great importance of this passage, perhaps we need to ask if excessive attention has been paid to it at the expense of obscuring some other important features of the letter. This matter has been complicated, of course, by the tendency in contemporary scholarship to focus primarily on the (pre-Pauline) origins of this hymn, with the result that the passage has been isolated from its literary context. In any case, many of us

19. "As we lay down the Epistle to the Galatians and take up the Epistle to the Philippians, we cannot fail to be struck by the contrast. We have passed at once from the most dogmatic to the least dogmatic of the Apostle's letters, and the transition is instructive" (from Lightfoot's preface). See also "Exegetical History" below.

have been conditioned to think of Christology as the primary teaching of Philippians, even though this doctrine is quite secondary to Paul's main concern.

As the outline delineated above makes clear, 2:6–11 is but one paragraph in a larger section that may be considered the heart of the epistle. The pervasive theme in this section is Christian sanctification, as reflected in the commands to behave in a manner worthy of the gospel (1:27), to obey (2:12), to become blameless (2:15). More specifically, Paul focuses on the need for Christian unity, which in turn calls for selflessness and humility (1:27; 2:1–4). Right in the middle of this discussion Paul appeals to the selfless act of Jesus Christ, who made himself nothing, but who was then exalted by the Father. And so the point of the *Carmen Christi* is not primarily to make a statement regarding the nature of Christ's person (ontology), but to impress on the Philippians the pattern to which they must be conformed.

Now the Christian's duty to grow in holiness requires the right attitude, singleness of purpose, and mental concentration. Paul's concern with this matter is reflected in the striking frequency of the verb ϕ pové ω (phrone \bar{o} , lit. "think") in Philippians. This peculiarity has often been mentioned by commentators but seldom developed (see, however, the important monograph by Heriban 1983). Moreover, the English reader can easily miss it because the verb, which can be used in a variety of contexts, requires more than one rendering.

As early as 1:7, for example, Paul sets the tone by telling the Philippians that he, as their model (cf. 3:17; 4:9), "thinks rightly" about them, that is, has the proper frame of mind or attitude toward them. The verb is used twice in 2:2 (also in 4:2) to stress the unity of mind that should characterize the congregation, and then again in verse 5 to exhort them to imitate Jesus's own attitude. In chapter 3, proper thinking (v. 15, two times) is set against the earthly thinking of the enemies of the cross (v. 19). In 4:10, finally, Paul uses the verb twice to encourage the Philippians by acknowledging that they already have shown a commendable attitude.

That these facts are significant is further impressed on the reader by other comparable terminology, such as ἡγέομαι (hēgeomai, consider, regard; which appears in the important contexts of 2:3, 6 and 3:8), σκοπέω (skopeō, notice, consider; 2:4; 3:17), and λογίζομαι (logizomai, reckon, consider; 3:13; 4:8). Moreover, we find in Philippians an abundance of "knowledge" terminology, especially in 1:9–11 and 3:8–10. All of these references include, but are not restricted to, purely intellectual concerns. The main point is expressed by Paul elsewhere with military and athletic imagery (1:27, 30; 3:12–14; 4:1, 3). The focus on the mind, therefore, has much to do with mental determination.

As suggested in the discussion of the letter's historical context, the Philippians were facing great adversity, had lost their sense of Christian joy, and were tempted to abandon their struggle.²⁰ Accordingly, this letter places great weight on the need to stand fast and persevere. It is remarkable that this note of perseverance has not played a more significant role in the interpretation of Philippians. Most readers tend to view the Philippian church in the best possible light, but the text makes clear that these believers were experiencing severe spiritual problems. Many of them, apparently, had lost confidence in their ability to maintain their Christian confession. Paul encourages them to stand fast and contend (1:27–28; 4:1), to run their race without looking back (3:13–15), to take seriously their awesome responsibility of working out their salvation (2:12).

Such an emphasis on spiritual effort may appear to minimize the doctrine of grace. Remarkably, it is in Philippians more than in any other letter that Paul stresses our complete dependence on God for sanctification. That note is sounded triumphantly as early as 1:6 and is applied forcefully in 2:13, but it is also reflected throughout the letter (see comments on 1:19–20; 3:12; 4:13, 19). The twin truths of human responsibility and divine sovereignty thus turn out to provide the theological underpinnings for the teaching of Philippians.²¹

Transmission

Though we normally use the term *context* in reference only to the original setting of an author and of the immediate readers, responsible exegetes understand that we have no direct access to that setting. The documents we study have acquired, so to speak, many new settings in the course of history, including our own contemporary context.²² Consciously or not, we all read Philippians through the spectacles provided by that history. Only by paying some attention to the transmission of the letter can we determine to what extent those spectacles have clarified or distorted the text.

Textual History

Understandably, the study of textual criticism focuses on the original form of a document.²³ The student must remember, however, that textual variants are not to be regarded as isolated options contemporary

- 20. On the importance of determining the situation of the Philippian church for proper interpretation, see especially Mengel 1982, who surveys the history of research on this question (with emphasis on the work of W. H. Schinz) and relates it to the issue of the letter's integrity.
- 21. Most contemporary commentators would dispute my theological reading of Philippians. The matter will be treated at the appropriate points in the exegesis.
- 22. Cf. Silva 1994: 147–48. I have elsewhere (Silva 1987: ch. 5) also touched briefly on some of the problems connected with the notion of contextualization.
- 23. Since text-critical discussions are of value primarily to readers familiar with the Greek language, this section dispenses with the use of transliteration.

with the document. On the contrary, their proper evaluation depends on our ability to understand their place in the historical transmission of the text.²⁴ Moreover, that transmission has its own independent value, even when it does not aid us in establishing the original form. Textual changes often reflect patterns of interpretation; textual history thus flows over into exegetical history.

From the point of view of an exegetical commentary, the need for a coherent summary of textual transmission becomes especially pressing. The additional notes sections in this volume comment on some forty variants.²⁵ Unfortunately, the treatment of textual problems as they come up in the text means that the variants tend to be treated in isolation from each other. The user of this commentary will be in a much better position to assess individual variants if we can summarize the nature of the variations as a whole.

The most accessible source for this purpose is NA²⁷, which lists many more variants than UBS⁴. Even this larger number, of course, represents only a portion of the available evidence; the editor, Kurt Aland, has had to do a great deal of preliminary sifting of the material to produce this handy text, and those students who depend on it are in effect trusting the editor's judgment for a very large number of decisions. In my opinion, Aland's principles and procedure are generally valid and well executed. The resulting work is a magnificent edition that can serve us well as a starting point.

If we exclude four conjectures (1:7; 2:1, 6, 16) and two interpretive problems (1:25 and 4:3; συνεπισκόποις in 1:1 probably belongs here as well), we come up with approximately 112 variations. ²⁶ The categories of omissions, additions, and grammatical alterations are fairly evenly divided and together constitute more than 70 of the variations. Almost 20 of the variants are simple changes of one word for another (such as θεός for κύριος, δέ for καί, etc.) and 6 or 7 are transpositions, leaving another dozen or so that are not easily classified. A list of the passages,

- 24. From a narrower perspective than I am using here, Hort pointedly formulated this principle in a well-known statement: "All trustworthy restoration of corrupted texts is founded on the study of their history" (Westcott and Hort 1881: 40). That statement is contrasted with the treatment of readings or even whole documents "independently of each other" (39).
- 25. These variants were not chosen systematically according to a strict set of criteria. Some were chosen because they affect directly the exegesis of the text; others because they shed light on the general transmission of the text; still others because of their intrinsic interest. I have assumed that the reader has access to NA^{27} (or UBS^4) and that no useful purpose is served by trying to reproduce the information found there.
- 26. The word *approximately*, even in places where I do not use it explicitly, applies to most counts, since a few variations can be interpreted in more than one way. Note also that more than one variation may be included by NA²⁷ under one sign; conversely, variations listed separately may at times be closely related (so that they could be regarded as a variation unit).

with more detailed categories, will prove helpful (question marks alert the reader to passages that could be placed in more than one category):

```
Omissions
  article—1:5, 17; 2:9; 3:10 (two times), 14
  preposition—1:7, 23, 24; 3:11; 4:16
  conjunction—1:18?, 23; 2:4, 12?; 3:7, 8, 12; 4:15
  other (may include art./prep./conj.)—1:30; 2:4, 30; 3:3, 12; 4:1
Additions
  article—1:10; 2:3, 13, 30; 3:1, 8
  preposition—none
  conjunction—1:4, 28; 2:5; 4:18
  other—1:3, 8, 15?; 2:24, 26; 3:6, 8, 12, 16, 18, 21; 4:1, 3?, 13, 23
Grammatical changes
  case etc.—1:8, 11, 28; 2:1 (three times), 4 (two times), 7, 27; 3:3,
     6, 11; 4:10, 16
  verbal endings—1:9, 22, 24, 27; 2:4, 5, 11, 14?, 15, 16; 4:19
Word substitutions
  divine name—1:3; 2:19, 30; 3:14?; 4:7 (two times)
  prep./conj.—1:18, 19, 22?; 3:13, 14
  other—1:17; 2:2, 15 (two times), 30?; 4:7
Transpositions—1:6, 16–17, 28; 2:21, 26; 3:7; 4:3?
Miscellaneous—1:11, 20, 23, 25; 2:3 (two times); 3:14 (two times),
  21; 4:21
```

Ideally, this summary of information should include the whole Pauline corpus and be more rigorously classified. Even in this limited form, however, the data can be of considerable help. Decisions on individual variants should be preceded by an examination of other variants in the same category. A reading that appears strong when evaluated in isolation may prove suspect once we discover it reflects a certain pattern of scribal activity (e.g., see the second additional note on 3:10, on the omission of the articles).

An additional consideration is that, generally speaking, individual manuscripts tend to align themselves according to certain text-types. As is well known, the reconstructed text that appears in both NA^{27} and UBS^4 corresponds very closely to the Alexandrian text-type found in such important witnesses as \mathfrak{P}^{46} and codices Vaticanus, Sinaiticus, and Alexandrinus. When all or most of these manuscripts agree on a read-

27. Based on a particular genealogical theory, Price 1987 attempts, with the aid of a computer, to assign probabilities to each variant in Philippians.

ing, NA^{27} rejects it very rarely (cf. however the addition of i $\delta\epsilon$ i ν at 2:26 and the bracketing of the articles at 3:10). How do the other text-types differ from this one?

The "Western" text, ²⁸ represented primarily by the Greek codices D, F, and G (and sometimes supported by witnesses to a different text-type), contains approximately:

```
nine omissions—1:5, 7, 17, 23; 2:4 (two times), 9; 3:12 (two times) seven additions—1:3, 4, 14; 2:5; 3:6, 12, 16 nine word substitutions—1:11, 20, 23; 2:3?, 15 (two times), 19; 3:14; 4:7
```

Other kinds of variants are found at 1:8, 11 (µot in F and G); 2:11; 4:10, 19. Not all of those, however, should be regarded as *distinctively* "Western" readings (on the other hand, NA²⁷ does not include all of the variants that may be so regarded). Worthy of note is the large proportion of variants that involve a change in the divine names (1:3, 11, 14; 2:19; 3:6, 12, 14).

The Byzantine (or Majority) text is the form found in the majority of surviving Greek manuscripts, which were produced in the Middle Ages. Distinctively Byzantine readings can sometimes be found in very ancient witnesses and may certainly be original (though the combination or pattern of readings that constitutes the Byzantine text-type is demonstrably late). The following Byzantine variants are included in NA²⁷, except for those with asterisks, which are listed in HF.

```
five omissions—1:5, 8, 18; 2:5, 9
six additions—2:13; 2:30; 3:8, 16, 21; 4:13
five word substitutions—1:17, 25; 2:15, 30; 3:14
seven transpositions—1:1*, 8, 16–17, 28; 2:21, 27*; 4:3*
```

Miscellaneous variants are found at 1:11, 27, 28; 2:4 (two times), 5, 15*; 3:6, 10*, 11; 4:19*.

In addition to the material we have surveyed so far, it is very helpful to focus on a few selected witnesses and examine them in greater detail, noting even insignificant variations that would normally not be included in a critical edition of the Greek NT. An excursus at the end of this commentary summarizes the results of my own collation of nine manuscripts plus the Majority text. Among several interesting facts, we should note

28. The term "Western" simply reflects conventional use. The geographical element is misleading, while the integrity of the text-type is questioned, especially by Aland and Aland 1989: ch. 2. Even a superficial look at the textual apparatus, however, shows clearly that there is an alignment of D with F and G, less frequently with the Latin tradition.

the patterns that emerge by distinguishing "function words" (such as conjunctions and prepositions) from nouns and verbs. On every column, except for the Majority text, the omission of function words clearly exceeds the number of insertions. Scribal mistakes in these circumstances were common. We should therefore not place too much weight on the fact that important manuscripts or text-types support minor omissions. In particular, it seems unnecessary for NA²⁷ to include brackets at such points as 1:23, 24; 2:4; 3:10 (I am less sure about 3:7, 12).

This commentary pays special attention to the readings of \mathfrak{P}^{46} . Not only is it the oldest extant manuscript of the Pauline Epistles, but the basic character of its text is widely recognized as of the greatest importance. At the same time, its scribe was not particularly careful (sloppy omissions, for example, are frequent, but these are easily recognized), and his tendencies are most instructive with regard to scribal activity.²⁹ Moreover, this document contains a number of fascinating readings that deserve careful attention (see esp. at 1:11 and 3:12).³⁰

Exegetical History

The common practice of listing commentators who side with one interpretation or another, though it has certain advantages, can be very misleading. For example, a particular commentator may have nuanced his position in a way that sets it apart from the views of others included on the same list. Even if the exegetical conclusion is the same, the various commentators have possibly reached their decision in different ways. In some cases, the conclusion does not cohere with the broader interpretive framework adopted by a particular writer (and possibly preferred by the reader) and should perhaps be rejected for that reason.

The point is that we cannot properly evaluate a writer's position on some individual exegetical question if we are ignorant of that writer's own context. In other words, commentators have themselves become part of the exegetical tradition that needs to be interpreted. What follows is a very modest attempt to minimize our problem by giving a critical summary of selected commentators who have been particularly influential and who are referred to with some frequency in this commentary.³¹

- 29. For an excellent analysis, see Royse 1981: ch. 3. Working on the basis of the document's singular readings, he has identified 167 instances of omissions (Royse 1981: 254–60), many of them longer than one word. On the basis of ligature forms and other scribal characteristics, Y. Kim 1988 has sought to push back the date of this document. For a response, see Metzger 1992: 265–66.
- 30. In my evaluation of the textual data I have been aided by the research of some of my previous students. H. Breidenthal, D. M. Cahill, and L. M. Ovenden provided analyses of \mathfrak{P}^{46} . W. Arndt examined the text used by Origen. I was particularly helped by a very thorough analysis of the Vulgate (and related Latin witnesses) prepared by T. Uehara.
- 31. It should be clear from these introductory comments that I am not offering here a history of the interpretation of Philippians. In the first place, such a history would require

Chrysostom. References to Philippians abound in the writings of the fathers.³² Expositions of the whole epistle, however, are not numerous, and most of these (including those by Theodore of Mopsuestia, Theodoret, Ambrosiaster, and Pelagius) consist of rather brief comments on the text. Chrysostom's homilies on Philippians, though not precisely in commentary form, constitute the most significant patristic exposition of this letter. Some of the material, particularly toward the end of each homily, where he seeks to relate the exposition to the needs of his congregation, has little exegetical value.³³ At other times, as in his discussion of the *Carmen Christi*, he allows heretical opinion to set the agenda for his exposition.

In general, however, Chrysostom shows genuine sensitivity to the historical meaning of the text. He is alert to possible ambiguities in the apostle's language, for example, and knows how to deal with those and comparable problems concisely and clearly. He is also quite capable in assessing the theological import of the text, though we may want to dissent here and there, especially in his formulation of works vis-à-vis divine grace (e.g., at 1:29, where he says that if Paul ascribes virtues entirely to God, that is because "the greatest part" comes from God; a similar concern is reflected at 2:13).

Strange as it may sound, Chrysostom, along with other Greek fathers, can be particularly helpful when he does *not* offer an opinion on an exegetical problem. As a native Greek speaker, his innate sense of the language—but not necessarily his conscious reflection on it—provides an important bridge between the modern commentator and the Pauline writings (with the qualification that Paul's Greek was of course not identical to Chrysostom's). Educated speakers are notoriously unreliable in analyzing their own language. If Chrysostom weighs two competing interpretations, his conclusion should be valued as an important opinion and no more. If, on the other hand, he fails to address a linguistic problem because he does not appear to perceive a possible ambiguity, his silence is of the greatest value in helping us determine how Paul's first readers were likely to have interpreted the text.³⁴

the examination of numerous authors who have not necessarily written expositions of the letter but who have used it in the formulation of theology and for other purposes. Moreover, my treatment does not survey primarily the exegetical conclusions of commentators but rather their characteristic approach, their general strengths and weaknesses, and so forth. (On the related topic of "effective history" [Wirkungsgeschichte], see Bockmuehl 1995.)

^{32.} For an exhaustive listing, see *Biblia Patristica* (1975–). Cf. also, among others, Krupp 1984 and Staab 1933 (esp. 621–30, Photius). For a very fine study of Marius Victorinus, Ambrosiaster, and Pelagius (plus Jerome and Augustine, who, however, did not comment on Philippians), see Souter 1927, although he gives relatively little attention to exegetical method. Finally, note the valuable synthesis by Wiles 1967.

^{33.} Cf. the valuable discussion of Theodore and the Antiochene School in Wiles 1970.

^{34.} A good illustration of this principle is the grammatical ambiguity at 1:7. The arguments in favor of the interpretation "you have me in your heart" are powerful but not

Aquinas. Greek medieval writers, such as Theophylact and Oecumenius, were strongly influenced by Chrysostom, though their commentaries have some independent value as well. Several expositors in the Latin tradition also deserve attention, but I have chosen to comment on Aquinas for some important reasons. Although modern exegesis has little to learn from Aquinas's exposition of Philippians (it has in fact played a very small role in the writing of the present commentary), one should not infer that the exposition is of poor quality. On the contrary, it is quite excellent. To the extent that we may use the term *grammatico-historical* for works prior to the modern period, Aquinas's commentary is deserving of that adjective, because only seldom does he allow extrabiblical preoccupations to displace the meaning of the original (e.g., at 4:15, which he interprets as grounds for the pope to "take from one church to help another").

Moreover, the most characteristic feature of his approach is the abundance of biblical quotations used to throw light on the text. Aquinas's commentary, in effect, is one of the best illustrations of an exegete allowing the Bible to be its own interpreter. One might wish for a larger proportion of specifically Pauline parallels (Paul's distinctiveness tends to dissolve in the ocean of biblical quotations), but only occasionally are his citations ill-chosen. As for Aquinas's theological reflections, it would not be difficult to find disagreeable features in them, but the dominant tone is unobjectionable. In fact, building as he does on an Augustinian foundation, his emphasis on God's (predestinating) grace shows through at key points (e.g., at 1:11; 2:13; 4:3).

For anyone who views Scholasticism in a purely negative light, Aquinas's exegesis can be an excellent antidote. Given his stature and influence in the late medieval period, this brief work stands as something of a milestone in the long history of expositions on Philippians. Nevertheless, the commentary is not based on the Greek text and Aquinas is often unaware of important interpretive questions that affect our understanding of the epistle as a whole.³⁵

Calvin. We need not rehearse here the developments that took place during the Renaissance period in the critical study of ancient documents. Some writers, such as Erasmus (see Rummel 1986) and Lefèvre (see Hughes 1984), produced useful paraphrases and annotations on the Pauline Epistles that influenced the course of NT exegesis. By common

conclusive. The fact that Chrysostom (along with other Greek fathers), without any apparent awareness of a difficulty, takes the clause to mean "I have you in my heart" finally swayed me to reject the alternate view—though the decision was not easy. Incidentally, though Broadus's translation of Chrysostom in *NPNF* is dependable, consulting the original is essential when dealing with some of these issues.

³⁵. For a very thorough study of Aquinas's exegesis, see Domanyi 1979 (esp. chs. 4–5 on literary and historical method). For the medieval material more generally, consult McNally 1959 (esp. the fine introduction and the listing of Philippians commentaries on p. 112).

consent, however, it is John Calvin's commentaries that mark a new epoch in the exposition of Scripture (see Parker 1971).

Calvin combined, in an unusual way, a commitment to the humanistic study of the classics with unswerving devotion to the final authority of Scripture; but he also combined his faith in the distinctive tenets of the Protestant Reformation with a high regard for church tradition. In addition, Calvin was a student of Chrysostom, whose brevity in exposition he regarded as a model of commentary writing. All of those fine features, and more, are clearly displayed in his commentary on Philippians.

The work is not without its faults, of course. Occasionally he is distracted by his own opponents (e.g., at 2:11), and a few of his exegetical ideas, being based on the limited knowledge available in his day, are no longer tenable (e.g., in attributing an active meaning to the passive $\varepsilon\dot{\nu}\rho\varepsilon\theta\hat{\omega}$ [heurethō, be found] in 3:9). But the total effect of his commentary is consistently positive; indeed, one often wonders how a work of this character could have been written prior to the modern period. For example, Calvin's regard for Scripture might easily have led him (as it leads many even today) to press the force of Paul's language beyond what it can bear. Instead, we find him exercising commendable restraint and sensitivity when dealing with problem passages (cf. the second additional note on 1:27 below).

Like Aquinas, moreover, Calvin possessed a powerfully synthetic mind that enabled him to expound Philippians with an eye to the teaching of Scripture as a whole. Yet, it would be very unfortunate to assume that he allowed an abstract theological system to impose itself upon the text. Any fair reading of his work on Philippians must recognize that its theological richness was not imported from outside the Bible but arose from a responsible handling of the text.

Meyer. It is not possible to draw a sharp line that divides the modern, "scientific" period from everything that preceded it. We can identify a stage, however, when the intensive textual work of several generations begins to bear fruit in a dramatic way.³⁶ The commentaries of H. A. W. Meyer were not the first to exemplify a "scientific" approach to the NT text, but the erudition, finesse, and magnitude of his work made the "Meyer series" the lodestar for commentators during the second half of the nineteenth century and the early decades of the twentieth.

Meyer's greatest strength was his ability to perceive problems and to ask questions that would not occur to most of us. There is hardly a grammatical or exegetical issue that he fails to consider and carefully weigh after cataloguing the whole range of opinion on the subject. Unfortunately, this approach sometimes leads to unnecessarily com-

36. Some of the most influential works preceding that stage include the brief but incisive expositions of Bengel (1855; orig. 1742) in the eighteenth century and the early nineteenth-century commentary by van Hengel (1838), which Lightfoot valued highly.

plicated discussions, to a merciless dissection of textual details, and to a measure of overconfidence regarding the validity of his conclusions. Meyer's series is the paragon of encyclopedic commentaries that manage, unwittingly, to obscure the broad and weightier teaching of Scripture. Perhaps for that reason (and because of its age) Meyer's work is seldom quoted nowadays. That, too, is unfortunate. The serious student of the Greek NT, even today, can always learn something from this master.

Lightfoot. German scholarship, as represented primarily by Meyer, was imported to English territory by several British scholars, most notably Henry Alford (1871–75).³⁷ But the Anglo-Saxon world was to produce a master of its own. As unpretentious as Meyer was pedantic, and as lucid as Meyer was cryptic—but not one whit inferior in erudition—J. B. Lightfoot would break new ground with his extraordinary commentaries on the shorter epistles of Paul.

Lightfoot is often credited (or blamed) for helping students of Paul realize that there was more to the apostle than polemics and doctrine. In the preface to his commentary, as already pointed out (cf. n19, above), he sets Philippians over against Galatians; he further argues that Philippians reveals "the normal type of the Apostle's teaching." The substance of the gospel, he concludes, "is neither a dogmatic system nor an ethical code, but a Person and a life." We do no justice to Lightfoot if we infer from these words that he regarded doctrine as unimportant. In the same preface he states: "Dogmatic forms are the buttresses on the scaffold-pole of the building, not the building itself."

It is still true, however, that Lightfoot minimizes somewhat the theological import of Philippians. Interestingly, that factor may have something to do with the fact that his commentary on this letter is not as highly valued as his *Galatians*, even by scholars for whom theology is not a great priority. But that comment must not be misunderstood. If his commentary on Philippians is a notch lower in quality than his commentary on Galatians, it is still several notches higher than most other English commentaries on Philippians. Vincent's contribution to the International Critical Commentary series, though hardly a work to be despised, only highlights the contrast between Lightfoot and those who have followed him.

Lohmeyer. Meyer's Philippians commentary for his series went through four editions (1847–74). It was then revised by A. H. Franke in 1886, but this edition did not make an impact. A more thorough and important revision—really a new work—was produced by E. Haupt (1897 and 1902). Yet another edition was assigned to Ernst Lohmeyer, whose commentary appeared in 1930. A scholar of the highest caliber who had

37. Other important British figures include the erudite Ellicott (1865) and the more homiletical, but also scholarly, Eadie (1859).

already published a ground-breaking monograph on the *Carmen Christi*, ³⁸ Lohmeyer set a new agenda for the exegesis of Philippians.

Lohmeyer's style and approach were vastly different from those of his predecessors. Grammatical questions were relegated to the footnotes, while the commentary itself became more accessible, even to nonscholars. Most notably, Lohmeyer set himself to prove a bold thesis regarding the purpose and character of Philippians. Using the tools honed by the history-of-religions approach, he argued that the whole epistle could be understood as a tractate on martyrdom. His position is best summarized by reproducing his outline of the body of the letter:

Paul's martyrdom (1:12–26) The community's martyrdom (1:27–2:16) Helpers in martyrdom (2:17–30) Dangers in martyrdom (3:1–21) Last admonitions in martyrdom (4:1–9)

In spite of its many valuable insights, the commentary leaves the distinct impression that the text is being adjusted to fit a thesis. Accordingly, Lohmeyer's broad interpretation of the letter has not been adopted by recent exegetes.

Contemporary Works. No major German commentary on Philippians appeared for several decades. The Roman Catholic scholar J. Gnilka contributed a substantive and highly praised volume on Philippians to the Herder series (2nd ed., 1976). A novelty of this commentary is the decision to treat the text as consisting of two distinct letters of Paul. Apart from that feature, the exegesis reflects a relatively cautious approach.

Not many French works since Rilliet's in the last century (1841) have had a significant impact on scholarship. Bonnard's commentary, which appeared in 1950, was well received, but its successor in the same series has been more influential. This is the work of J.-F. Collange (1979), who distinguishes three different letters in the text of Philippians. His exposition is clear and reveals the thought of an independent mind.³⁹

The first major English commentary on the Greek text of Philippians after Vincent (1897) was the contribution to the Word Biblical Commentary series by the evangelical scholar G. F. Hawthorne. Distinguishing

^{38.} See the exegesis of 2:6–8 below. Other important German commentators prior to Lohmeyer include B. Weiss (1859; an impressive work I regret having used in only a cursory way), Ewald (1923; for the Zahn series), Lipsius (1892), Klöpper (1893), and Dibelius (1925).

^{39.} Commentaries written in other European languages have not had a significant effect on the mainstream of scholarship. We should note, however, Greijdanus's 1937 commentary, a substantive piece that regretfully I used only sporadically. Other Dutch works, written at a more popular level, are Matter 1965 and Klijn 1969.

this work are the carefully compiled bibliographies, close attention to the original language, and a refreshing balance between conservative and innovative elements. Because Hawthorne's work was the most important commentary on Philippians when the present volume was originally written, it seemed wise to engage him quite frequently, particularly where my approach presents an alternative way of dealing with the text (for a more detailed evaluation, see Silva 1984).⁴⁰

Finally, special attention needs to be given to the extraordinary commentary by W. Schenk (1984), which came into my hands after I had completed an initial draft of the first edition of the present volume. This work is the first thorough application of modern linguistics to the exegesis of a NT book. And although such an approach may sound dull to many readers, there is nothing boring about this commentary. In fact, Schenk has such a fertile mind and forceful style that any other commentary looks dull beside his. Some readers may be initially put off by the terminology, but Schenk uses a fairly limited number of technical terms and his exposition is at any rate sparklingly clear.

Schenk's penetrating discussions have at many points confirmed my judgment, usually on similar grounds (e.g., note his insistence on contextual synonymy); at many other points he has challenged my conclusions. His work no doubt deserves more attention than I have given to it. Unhappily, Schenk seems unable to keep his ideas in check. For example, while it is useful to note the correspondence between "being confident of this" (1:6) and "this I pray" (1:9), one must question the judgment of describing the two verbs as contextually identical. These and other features, however, should not keep readers from enjoying the rich exegetical fare he has to offer.

Addendum. During the past decade and a half, the vigor of Philippians scholarship has been striking. Soon after the first edition of the present work, Peter O'Brien published a commentary on the Greek text of Philippians (1991) that may be fairly characterized as monumental. O'Brien's control of the scholarly literature is enviable, and the author can always be trusted to present the views of others accurately and respectfully. Moreover, his handling of the text combines caution with conviction. Many years from now, students of Philippians will continue to be grateful for such a dependable exposition of this Pauline letter.

As if that were not enough, about the same time Gordon Fee turned his considerable skills to Philippians and produced a major commentary on this letter (1995), characterized by an emphasis on the theme of friendship (see above, p. 19). Although the series for which it was written (NICNT) is formally addressed to readers of the English Bible, Fee provides thorough discussions of the Greek, mainly in the foot-

⁴⁰. A new edition of Hawthorne's commentary, revised by Ralph P. Martin, was published in 2004.

notes. The ease with which he moves from technical details (such as text-critical problems) to matters of theological and pastoral import can only evoke admiration. Moreover, Fee manages to write in a very lively style. His enthusiasm, to be sure, has a downside. Overstatements are frequent, and in the process of making a case for his interpretations, there is a tendency to represent the views of others in less than accurate fashion.⁴¹ But for readers who learn to handle his dicta with caution, this commentary will prove to be a jewel.

Other valuable commentaries, if less ambitious, have appeared since 1988. In German, there is the concise and solid exposition by Ulrich Müller (1993). In French, Georges Gander has written a commentary that focuses on the ancient versions (1993), and Rinaldo Fabris has produced a substantive work in Italian (2000). ⁴² In English, several commentaries of a more popular character have appeared (e.g., Melick 1991; Marshall 1992; Fee 1999; Osiek 2000; Cousar 2001). Special note, however, should be made of Markus Bockmuehl's contribution to Black's New Testament Commentary (1998). Seldom does one come across so much erudition with such a light touch. Balanced and clearly written, it must be considered one of the best available commentaries on any Pauline epistle—and the first choice on Philippians for the serious English reader.

In addition to these commentaries, Philippians scholarship has been well served during the past fifteen years by the appearance of monographs that explore one or another aspect of this letter (several that focus on literary structure and discourse analysis have already been noted above under "Literary Context"). L. G. Bloomquist (1993) analyzes the theme of suffering in Philippians, while T. C. Geoffrion (1993) focuses on Paul's use of political and military imagery (esp. Phil. 1:27–30). Both Lukas Bormann (1995) and Peter Pilhofer (1995; 2000) have greatly advanced our knowledge of the city of Philippi and related the new information to our understanding of the letter (Bormann focuses on Phil. 4:10–20; Pilhofer 2000, which is over 900 pages long, provides a catalog of inscriptions from Philippi).

Davorin Peterlin makes a persuasive case for the view that disunity in the Philippian church provides "the element which thematically binds the whole letter together" (1995: 217), although he goes beyond the evidence by arguing that the tensions focused on Paul himself (see my review, Silva 1996). Veronika Koperski (1996) provides an extremely detailed exegesis of Phil. 3:7–11 and shows the value of this passage for NT theology (see my review, Silva 1998). The significance of imprisonment

^{41.} In several instances (e.g., on 2:12–13 and 3:10–11) my own position has been badly misrepresented (for a brief response, see new footnotes on those passages). It appears to me that other scholars have also not fared well, but they will need to speak for themselves.

^{42.} I regret not having been able to consult these last two items.

in Paul's rhetoric is explored by C. S. Wansink (1996). G. W. Peterman (1997) analyzes the language of "giving and receiving" and concludes that Paul seeks to correct the Philippians' Greco-Roman understanding of the gift they have sent to the apostle. On the basis of archaeological and literary evidence, Peter Oakes (2001) argues that Philippians is a call to unity in the face of (economic) suffering. Finally, D. K. Williams (2002) explores the theme of the cross as a rhetorical metaphor used by Paul to deal with a variety of topics, including his personal and apostolic integrity.

All of these works, as well as a very large number of periodical articles, have helped to advance our understanding of Philippians. Some of their specific contributions will be noted in the present commentary at the relevant points.

Commentaries

The following list, though by no means exhaustive, is intended as a fairly comprehensive guide to major commentaries on Philippians in chronological order. Asterisked items are those through which I worked systematically or which otherwise played an important role in the initial writing of this commentary; these works are normally referred to in the text by author's last name only, when the reference corresponds to the verse under discussion.

```
Ambrosiaster (4th cent.[?]; PL 17:426–44)
Marius Victorinus (4th cent.; Victorinus 1981)
Theodore of Mopsuestia (4th cent.; Swete 1880)
*John Chrysostom (4th cent.; PG 62:177–298)
Pelagius (5th cent.; Souter 1922–26)
Theodoret of Cyrrhus (5th cent.; PG 82:558–90)
Oecumenius Triccae (10th cent.; PG 118:1260–1326)
Herveus (Burgidolensis Monachus) of Maine (12th cent.; PL 181:1279–
  1314)
Theophylact (12th cent.; PG 124:1139–1204)
Thomas Aguinas (13th cent.; Aguinas 1969)
Erasmus (16th cent.; Erasmus 1962 [vol. 6, Annotations; vol. 7, Para-
  phrases])
Cornelius à Lapide (16th cent.; Lapide 1864)
*Calvin (16th cent.: Calvin 1965)
Bengel (1742; Bengel 1855)
Hengel, van (1838)
Rilliet (1841)
```

```
Wiesinger (1858)
Eadie (1859)
Weiss, B. (1859)
Ellicott (1865)
*Lightfoot (1868)
Alford (1871–75)
Johnstone (1875)
*Meyer (1885; from German 4th ed. 1847–48)
Lipsius (1892)
Klöpper (1893)
Kennedy, H. A. A. (1897-1910)
*Vincent (1897)
Haupt (1902)
Ewald (1923)
Dibelius (1925)
Michael (1928)
*Lohmeyer (1930; 9th ed. 1953)
Greijdanus (1937)
Lenski (1937)
Bonnard (1950)
Müller, J. J. (1955)
Beare (1959)
Barth, K. (1962)
Boor, de (1962)
Friedrich (1962)
Hendriksen (1962)
Matter (1965)
Turrado (1965)
Klijn (1969)
Ernst (1974)
Caird (1976)
*Gnilka (1976)
Martin (1976; not to be confused with his earlier contribution to
```

TNTC) Kent (1978) Barth, G. (1979) *Collange (1979) Bruce (1983)

*Hawthorne (1983)

Motyer (1984)

*Schenk (1984)

O'Brien (1991)

Melick (1991)

Marshall (1992)

Gander (1993)

Müller, U. B. (1993)

Fee (1995)

Bockmuehl (1998)

Fabris (2000)

Osiek (2000)

Cousar (2001)

- ➤ I. Opening (1:1–11)
 - II. Paul's Missionary Report (1:12-26)
 - III. A Call to Sanctification (1:27-2:30)
 - IV. Doctrinal Polemics (3:1-4:1)
 - V. Final Concerns (4:2-23)

I. Opening (1:1-11)

All of the NT epistles that bear Paul's name exhibit certain common structural traits, one of which is the natural inclusion of an introductory paragraph clearly set off from the body of the letter. This paragraph normally consists of a standard salutation, immediately followed by a thanksgiving.

Some variations occur. For example, Paul expands the salutations in Romans, Galatians, and Titus by the inclusion of material that anticipates important themes developed in those letters. On five occasions—2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, 1 Timothy, and Titus—he omits a thanksgiving and therefore appears to move from the salutation right into the body of the letter, though one could argue that the benedictions in 2 Cor. 1:3–7 and Eph. 1:3–14 parallel the thanksgivings in the other letters. (As for Galatians, the rebuke in 1:6–10 takes on special significance when one realizes that it corresponds structurally to the section where the reader expects a warm word of thanksgiving to God.)

It is not always pointed out, however, that Philippians and Colossians differ from the other epistles by the inclusion of a substantive prayer of intercession following the thanksgiving (Phil. 1:9–11; Col. 1:9–12). To be sure, the distinction between petition and thanksgiving should not be pressed, since Paul can move from one to the other very easily, as in Rom. 1:8–10 and Philem. 4–6 (and may not the assurance in 1 Cor. 1:8 also be understood as an expression of Paul's prayer?). Moreover, the prayer in 2 Thess. 1:11–12, though somewhat removed from the thanksgiving in verses 3–4, certainly parallels Phil. 1:9–11 and Col. 1:9–12.

In spite of these qualifications, Philippians and Colossians correspond to each other so closely, both structurally and conceptually, that the relationship deserves special attention. The exposition that follows, therefore, divides the introduction into three sections:

- A. Salutation (1:1–2)
- B. Thanksgiving (1:3–8)
 - 1. Initial statement (1:3–5)
 - 2. Expansion (1:6–8)
- C. Prayer (1:9-11)

Exegesis and Exposition

¹[From] Paul and Timothy, servants of 'Christ Jesus', to all in Philippi, including overseers and deacons, who are holy through their union with Christ Jesus: ²Grace and peace to you from God our Father and our Lord Jesus Christ.

³ I thank my God every time I remember you [*or,* for your every remembrance of me]—⁴yes, always, in every prayer of mine on behalf of all of you; and it is with joy that I make my prayer ⁵because of your participation in the work of the gospel from the beginning of your faith until this very moment.

⁶Moreover, I am confident of this truth: the one who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of ^{Christ Jesus⁷. ⁷And indeed it is right that I should feel this way about all of you—for I hold you dear in my heart [*or*, because you hold me dear in your heart], since you all have participated with me in the grace of my apostolic ministry, both when I have been in chains and when I have defended and confirmed the gospel. ⁸Truly God is ^rmy witness how I long for all of you with the intense love of Christ Jesus.}

⁹Now this is what I am praying for: that your love may <code>abound</code> more and more in knowledge and in total discernment, ¹⁰so that you may approve the things that really matter and thus show yourselves pure and blameless for the day of Christ, ¹¹that is, filled with the fruit of right conduct that comes through Jesus Christ <code>to</code> the glory and praise of God.

A. Salutation (1:1–2)

The standard opening in the letters of the Hellenistic period consisted of three words: name of sender (nominative case), name of addressee (dative case), and the infinitive $\chi\alpha$ iren (chairein, usually translated "greeting"). Variations were minor: inversion of sender and addressee, further identification of the sender, and strengthening of the greeting (e.g., by adding the infinitive èrrôsthai, good health).

Paul follows the convention in general yet imparts his own distinctiveness by changing *chairein* to the cognate χάρις (*charis*, grace), which calls attention to the very essence of the Christian message; by adding εἰρήνη (*eirēnē*, peace), a reminder of the rich themes of spiritual welfare evoked by the Hebrew equivalent, \Box ($\ddot{\delta}$) ($\ddot{\delta}$); and by specifying the true source of our well-being, "God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ." (Note that 1 and 2 Timothy add ἔλεος, *eleos*, mercy; further, Colossians and 1 Thessalonians vary slightly from this format.)

It is also instructive, however, to note certain variations that turn up when we compare the greetings in Paul's epistles. First, Paul in Philippians includes Timothy as one of the senders. This feature is also found

1. Cf. the collection by Hunt and Edgar 1932–34: 1.268–395. For a brief and clear synthesis of Greek epistolography, see Aune 1988 (esp. ch. 5 by John L. White). For a detailed study of openings and closings, see Schnider and Stenger 1987.

in 2 Corinthians, Colossians, and Philemon, while 1–2 Thessalonians include Silvanus (Silas) as well as Timothy (1 Corinthians mentions Sosthenes; Galatians has "all the brethren who are with me").

Although commentators are correct in pointing out that this feature does not indicate coauthorship, it would be a mistake to ignore or downplay its significance. Not only was Timothy actively involved in the evangelization of Macedonia and Achaia (Acts 16–18), but he also appears to have provided special support for Paul during the latter's imprisonment (Phil. 2:20–22), a factor that accounts for Timothy's inclusion in the salutations of Colossians and Philemon. There is also good reason to believe (see comments on 2:19–30) that the Philippians had a strong attachment to Timothy. This faithful minister, therefore, constituted a link that bonded the apostle with his Macedonian congregation; it would have been surprising had his name been omitted.

It should further be noted that the inclusion of Timothy's name was more than a friendly or sentimental gesture. Paul, though self-conscious of his unique apostolic authority, did not intend to monopolize the attention of his converts; and his teachings, while distinctive in emphasis ("my gospel," Rom. 2:16; 16:25; 2 Tim. 2:8), were hardly idiosyncratic in substance. We may then recognize that the apostle, by joining Timothy's name to his, calls upon his coworker as a corroborating witness of the truths he expounds. Timothy, in turn, lends his influence and authority to Paul's words, which he commends as an expression of his own thoughts.

Second, notice the omission of ἀπόστολος (apostolos, apostle). It is intriguing to find that of the four epistles in which Paul does not introduce himself as an apostle, three were addressed to Macedonian churches: Philippians and 1–2 Thessalonians (the fourth is Philemon, where the delicacy of the occasion, as seen especially in verses 17–20, accounts for this feature). In view of the early date of 1–2 Thessalonians (and assuming a later date for Galatians), we may consider the possibility that Paul had not yet found it necessary to emphasize his apostolic authority, which began to suffer systematic challenges during the third missionary journey (so also Perkin 1986: 99). On the other hand, we should note 1 Thess. 2:7–8, 17–20 and 3:1–10, passages that suggest a special and mutual affection bonding Paul with the believers in Thessalonica.

However we explain the absence of *apostolos* in 1–2 Thessalonians, its absence in Philippians is generally understood as evidence of the warm relationship existing between Paul and the saints in Philippi. Not only was there no need to remind the Philippians of Paul's authority—Paul may have even considered such a reminder inappropriate in view of the character of this epistle as, at least in part, a thank-you note.

Third, Paul identifies himself and Timothy as $\delta o \hat{v} \lambda o (douloi$, servants, slaves). This designation, although common in Paul, occurs in the salutation of only two other letters, Romans and Titus. Here it takes on

special significance precisely because it replaces *apostolos*. In view of the prominence that Philippians gives to the subject of humility, we can hardly doubt that Paul is here exploiting the word's reference to lowly service rather than suggesting the notion of privileged position.²

I find it somewhat misleading, however, to say that "the word has pejorative force here." Since "the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men" (1 Cor. 1:25), the humility that appears contemptible to unbelievers receives God's praise. Moreover, the truth that he who was rich "became poor" by taking the form of a *doulos* (2 Cor. 8:9; Phil. 2:7) injects into this word, paradoxically, an undeniable dignity. Thus, quite apart from the Hebrew OT use of קַבֶּר (*'ebed*, servant) with reference to the prophetic office, the Greek *doulos* in Christian parlance is not an insult, but the highest commendation possible.

It has often been pointed out that this passage is the only instance in the Pauline letters in which the apostle shares the title *doulos* with anyone else. Hawthorne (1983: 3–4) puts great emphasis on this fact: he calls it "a radical departure from Paul's standard procedure" and argues that Paul was here willing to share "his otherwise carefully and jealously guarded uniqueness" to teach the Philippians a lesson in humility. This remark seems to me an overstatement, since Paul clearly had no reservations about using the term $\sigma\dot{v}v\delta\sigma v\lambda\sigma (syndoulos,$ fellow-servant) with reference to Epaphras and Tychicus (Col. 1:7; 4:7; Hawthorne accepts the Pauline authorship of Colossians); but I would not wish to deny that an element of humility is indeed present here.

Fourth, we should note the unique reference to ἐπισκόποις καὶ διακόνοις (*episkopois kai diakonois*, overseers and deacons). As is well known, the Pastoral Epistles, and 1 Tim. 3 in particular, stress the importance of these two church offices, though this factor is interpreted by large segments of current scholarship as evidence of a late date. Outside the Pastorals, the word *episkopos* and the related term πρεσβύτερος (*presbyteros*, elder) do not occur at all in the Pauline corpus. Clearly, the presence of *episkopois* and *diakonois* here requires some explanation.

One suggestion is to understand these titles as functional (describing activity) rather than official in some technical sense. However, though Paul can certainly refer to church workers without specifying an office (cf. Rom. 12:8; Gal. 6:6; 1 Thess. 5:12), here he must have "in view individual"

^{2.} Contra Sass 1941 and others who emphasize the OT background of יְבֶּרְ יהוֹת ('ebed yhwh, Servant of the Lord) with its nuances of divinely given authority. Schenk (1984: 77) makes the valid point that δοῦλος occupies the same lexical field as διάκονος (with ἀπόστολος being a more specific term), but that fact is not sufficient reason to set aside the sociological nuance of "slave," much less to water down its meaning with the translation *Mitarbeiter* (colleague).

^{3.} So Collange; similarly, Best (1968: 375) calls it "the derogatory sense of ordinary speech."

members of the congregation who are unequivocally characterised by the designation. . . . Otherwise the addition has no meaning" (H. Beyer, *TDNT* 2:616). It seems clear that "at the time of the epistle there are thus two co-ordinated offices" (H. Beyer, *TDNT* 2:89).

But whether or not we accept the official status of these individuals, we must still ask why they are singled out. E. Best links the mention of these officers with the omission of *apostolos;* he assumes that a letter from Philippi to Paul had been signed with the words "from all the saints with the bishops and deacons," suggesting a distinction between believers and officers. "Paul writes back to them but in so doing he very quietly rebukes them by the omission of his own title of 'apostle" (Best 1968: 374). This view, however, is at bottom speculative; moreover, the irony suggested by Best is so subtle that the original readers (like most commentators since) would most likely have missed it altogether.

Collange argues plausibly that Paul begins by applying "gentleness and persuasion"; the titles show his regard for them and thus prepare the way for the rebukes and criticisms that occur in the body of the letter. If Collange's view should prove unsatisfactory, the best alternative is the common interpretation (as early as Chrysostom) that Paul singles out the church officers as those primarily responsible for raising the offering delivered to Paul.

B. Thanksgiving (1:3–8)

Just as in Rom. 1:8, where Paul first expresses his gratitude, giving also a briefly stated reason for it, and then proceeds to expand on that reason in verses 9–12 (including an expression of his desire to see the Roman believers), so also here in Philippians we may analyze the thanksgiving as consisting of an initial statement (1:3-5) followed by an expansion (vv. 6–8, which include an expression of his love, "I long for all of you"). Modern editions of the Greek NT, it is true, usually indicate a more significant grammatical pause between verses 6 and 7 than between verses 5 and 6, with a full pause between verses 7 and 8 (cf. also Gnilka, who believes the thanksgiving comes to an end in verse 6). In Greek, however, the distinction between clauses and sentences admits of very few hard-and-fast rules, and one need not insist that the clause of verse 7, though it is introduced by $\kappa\alpha\theta\omega\varsigma$ (*kathōs*, even as), should be regarded as more independent than the participial clause of verse 6 (see the first additional note on 1:5). At any rate, my division of this section between verses 5 and 6 depends not on syntactical or grammatical considerations but on the conceptual shift that seems to occur at that point.

1. Initial Statement (1:3-5)

The syntax of these verses is particularly difficult to unravel. Is the main verb εὐχαριστ $\hat{\omega}$ (*eucharist* \hat{o} , I thank) to be linked with the prepositional

phrase that follows immediately, ἐπὶ πάση τῆ μνείᾳ ὑμῶν (epi pasē tē mneia hymōn, lit., upon every remembrance of you)? Or should we instead link it with the prepositional phrase in verse 5, ἐπὶ τῆ κοινωνίᾳ ὑμῶν (epi tē koinōnia hymōn, because of your participation), so that the intervening words from epi in verse 3 to the end of verse 4 should be enclosed within dashes? Again, should πάντοτε (pantote, always, v. 4) be construed with what precedes or with what follows? Similarly, is μετὰ χαρᾶς (meta charas, with joy) part of the preceding or the subsequent clause? Several other questions could be asked, increasing the combined number of possibilities to a staggering total. (See the additional notes for the most likely possibilities and for a discussion of the more substantive problem regarding the syntax of epi pasē tē mneia hymōn.)

Attempting to answer all those questions can be a profitable linguistic exercise, though from Paul's perspective we should perhaps regard them as pseudo-questions. The point is that all of the syntactical combinations yield the same sense. (The only possible significant issue is whether δέησιν [deēsin, petition, prayer, v. 4] can be used with reference to thanksgiving, as would be the case if construed with what follows, or only with reference to petition. See additional notes on 1:4.) The freedom of Greek word order has the advantage of providing the writer with a great variety of expressive resources; it also has the disadvantage of creating considerable ambiguity. A Greek writer, however, could foresee the potential for equivocation and guard against it. In the present sentence the ambiguities, touching no matter of substance, probably did not even occur to Paul.

One may wish to ask how it is possible for such a sentence *not* to create a semantic problem. The simple answer is repetition. Paul makes reference to his praying in four different clauses with the words *eucharistō*, *mneia*, and *deēsis* (two times); thus, whether we construe *pantote* with one or another of these words, the force of the statement is the same. The exegetical value of this rather obvious point is that it calls attention to a distinctive element in this thanksgiving: Paul is not being thoughtlessly repetitive but deliberately emphatic (cf. introduction, "Language and Style"). While we find some ambiguity of construction in other thanksgivings (Colossians, 1 Thessalonians, Philemon), those are not nearly as complicated as the present passage. It is the intensity of Paul's emotion that accounts for the syntax; it also accounts for the fourfold recurrence of *pas* (in the forms *pasē* [two times], *pantote*, and *pantōn*), for the apparent emphasis on joy (*meta charas*), and for the forcefulness of subsequent expressions (from the first day; being persuaded).

In verse 5, however, we encounter a syntactical ambiguity of greater significance: How shall we construe "from the first day until now"? We have three basic options, each of which yields a different sense.

- 1. Most versions and commentators construe this clause with the first part of the verse, *tē koinōnia hymōn* (your participation), indicating that from the very beginning the Philippians have been participating in the work of the gospel.
- 2. An alternative view is to take the clause as the emphatic beginning of a new thought altogether ("I have been persuaded from the first day until now that . . ."), but Meyer correctly points out that this construction tends to shift attention away from the clear concern of the passage, namely, the Philippians' conduct.
- 3. The third option is to see a reference to Paul's own prayers: he has been thanking God from the very beginning. This interpretation, which implies a linking of the clause with the end of verse 4 (less likely with *eucharistō*, as Bengel 1855: 766 suggests), fits nicely with Paul's emphasis on the intensity of his prayer. Moreover, it could be argued that it yields a smoother syntax: if the clause were to modify $t\bar{e}$ *koinōnia*, as in the first interpretation, one would expect the repetition of the article before $\alpha\pi\delta$ (*apo*, from). In fact, however, the absence of the article before an attributive is not unusual (BDF §272).

In support of the first and common interpretation is the good rule-of-thumb that we should prefer a natural connection—such as taking together linguistic units that are close to one another—unless we have weighty reasons for doing otherwise. Most important, however, is the consideration that in verse 5 Paul has shifted attention from the *fact* of his prayer of thanksgiving to the *reason* for it. Meyer perceptively emphasizes that the constancy of the Philippians' commitment to the gospel "is the very thing which not only supplies the motive for the apostle's thankfulness, but forms also the ground of his just confidence for the future." My paraphrase above adopts this usual understanding of verse 5 and further assumes that the only necessary pause is in the middle of verse 4.

We may proceed to ask whether the present thanksgiving differs in any substantive way from those found in the other letters. Two matters come up for attention: the explicit note of joy and the reference to the Philippians' participation in the gospel.

Although the very mention of thanksgiving in his epistles is clear evidence of Paul's joy, only the introductions to Philippians and Philemon (see Philem. 7) contain the word *chara*. One might not want to make too much of this factor if we had no other indications of its significance. But we do. In fact, Paul here announces one of the most obvious themes in the epistle—joy in the midst of adversity (see introduction, "Distinctive Teaching"). Quite clearly, the Philippians are troubled by Paul's circumstances and Paul wishes at the very opening of the letter to allay their concerns by assuring them of his deep, personal contentment. Yet, we

should note that the apostle's joyful response to his adversity arises not from a consideration of personal well-being but from the recognition that his apostolic ministry is bearing fruit, as he makes clear in verse 12. (Conversely, his greatest fear consisted in the possibility that his ministry might come to naught; see comments on 2:16.)

What needs particular emphasis is that Paul's overflowing gratefulness focuses on a *concrete* expression of the Philippians' care for him as a minister of the gospel. In other thanksgiving sections (see esp. Rom. 1:18 and 1 Thess. 1:8) Paul commends believers for contributing to the advance of the faith, but the term *koinōnia* is included only here and in Philem. 6. Although the word may have the general meaning of "communion" or "fellowship" in this passage, 4 such renderings as "participation" (NASB) and "partnership" (NIV) more accurately bring out the *activity* of the Philippians in promoting the work of the gospel.

Can we be more specific as to what that activity entailed? Although G. Panikulam may be correct in stating that this expression indicates "the entire response the Philippians gave to the good news they received,"5 it seems unreasonable to deny that the Philippians' financial contributions, understood as concrete evidence of the genuineness of that response, must have been "foremost in the Apostle's mind" (Lightfoot). When speaking of the Macedonians' contribution to the Jerusalem saints (Rom. 15:26; 2 Cor. 8:4; cf. 9:13), Paul uses the same noun, *koinōnia*, with the preposition *eis*, though the construction is not exactly parallel.⁶ Moreover, Paul uses the verbal form *koinōneō* with reference to financial contribution in Rom. 12:13; Gal. 6:6; and especially Phil. 4:15, a passage strangely ignored by Panikulam and others in spite of the additional parallel to 1:5 in the phrase "from the beginning of the gospel." (Remarkably, Schenk 1984: 95 appeals to 4:15 as evidence that koinōnia must have an active meaning, yet he denies a reference to the offering. The only explanation for this move must be his conviction that 4:10–20 constitutes a different document.)

- 4. BDAG 553 (meaning 1) translates "close relationship w. the gospel." With regard to the force of εὐαγγέλιον, see O'Brien 1986, who argues that out of nine occurrences of this noun in Philippians, eight denote activity (nomen actionis = proclamation); the exception is the first instance of the word at 1:27, which has in view the content of the gospel message. It seems to me misleading to take the usage in 1:5 as a quasi-personification (O'Brien 1986: 217, following Gnilka 1976: 44).
- 5. Panikulam 1979: 85, following Gnilka 1976: 45. Referring to Lohmeyer but without any real basis, Schütz (1975: 49) thinks "it is contradictory to the tenor of the entire thanksgiving to tie it to this particular mundane transaction." Peter T. O'Brien, whose monograph *Introductory Thanksgivings in the Letters of Paul* contains one of the finest exegetical treatments of Phil. 1:3–11, argues for a reference here to the offering, but not exclusively (O'Brien 1977: 23–25). Note also his very useful article "The Fellowship Theme in Philippians" (O'Brien 1978).
- 6. I would venture to explain the construction in Phil. 1:5 as an ellipsis for ἐπὶ τῆ κοινωνία ὑμῶν τῆς διακονίας τῆς εἰς τὸ εὐαγγέλιον, in conformity with 2 Cor. 8:4.

In summary, Paul's thanksgiving in this letter is distinguished by emphatic repetitions and emotional intensity. The apostle's joyful gratitude flows from an appreciation of his converts' consistent support of his ministry and care for his needs, from the very beginnings of their Christian experience to the most recent contribution, which in effect occasioned the present letter. Yet Paul is careful to interpret their gifts, not as intended for him personally (contrast μοι, *moi*, to me, 4:15), but rather for the advance of the gospel.

2. Expansion (1:6-8)

In verse 6 Paul gives us a further, but closely related, reason for his joyful sense of gratitude—his assurance that God's work cannot be thwarted. Theologians who speak of salvation as being God's from beginning to end are not using mere rhetoric, for this is precisely Paul's conception as he addresses the Philippians regarding their share in the gospel: "Do not misunderstand my commendation; it was not you who began this work, but God, and he will complete it" (cf. the qualification in Gal. 4:9).

This paraphrase overstates the contrast between verses 5 and 6, but it helps us to focus on a point often ignored by commentators yet fundamental to this epistle, namely, the tension that exists between the believers' accountability for their own spiritual conduct and their need to rely totally on God's grace in order to meet that obligation ("the paradox of all religion," says Lightfoot; cf. also Chrysostom's suggestive comments on verse 6). Some will no doubt object to this construction as an attempt to introduce modern categories of systematic theology (human responsibility and divine sovereignty) into a Pauline statement that is motivated by different concerns. My comments on 2:12–13, however, will seek to show that no reasonable exegesis of that passage can dispense with these categories, for they are thoroughly Pauline.

Apart from a consideration of 2:12–13, it may still be asked whether we are justified in seeing these theological concerns in the passage before us. Martin (1976: 65, following Collange), for example, argues that the apostle "is supplying a theological undergirding" for his troubled readers by alluding to God's good work of creation, which will surely be brought to consummation. It is true that Paul's language here is reminiscent of Gen. 1:2 LXX (συνετέλησεν ὁ θεὸς . . . τὰ ἔργα αὐτοῦ, God finished his work), that elsewhere Paul cites God's creation of light as analogous to spiritual enlightenment (2 Cor. 4:6), and that the correspondence between creation and redemption is a fundamental biblical motif (Gnilka 1976: 46–47 in particular appeals to such passages as Isa. 41:4; 44:6; 48:12–13).

On the other hand, it should be noted that Gen. 2:2 speaks of God's having already completed his work on the sixth day, and this lack of conceptual correspondence with Paul's main point (future consum-

mation) should weigh more heavily than linguistic correspondences. Moreover, the linguistic correspondence is only partial: even the word for "good" in the LXX, $\kappa\alpha\lambda\acute{o}v$ (kalon), is missing here. Why would Paul have used the synonym $\grave{\alpha}\gamma\alpha\theta\acute{o}v$ (agathon) if he meant to refer to the Genesis description of God's good work? Finally, Paul himself elsewhere uses the contrast between beginning and completing (see passages discussed below) with regard to the activity of believers. A deliberate allusion to Genesis, therefore, is at best possible, and then only in a secondary and indirect way (Fee 1995: 87n73 goes further and regards it as "irrelevant" and "far-fetched"). Even if we accept such an allusion, that fact would hardly exclude a reference to the Philippians' Christian activity, as the following discussion should make clear.

Paul uses the verb ἐπιτελέω (epiteleō, complete) six other times. One of those speaks of the need for "perfecting holiness in the fear of God" (2 Cor. 7:1), while four of them (Rom. 15:28; 2 Cor. 8:6, 11 [twice]) occur in the context of finishing the task of raising an offering for the saints in Jerusalem (see introduction, "Historical Context").7 A closer parallel thought is Gal. 3:3, which contains the only other occurrence of ἐνάρχομαι (enarchomai, begin) in Paul: "Having begun [enarxamenoi] by means of the Spirit, are you now finishing [epiteleisthe] by means of the flesh?" The Galatians as well as the Philippians had begun their life of faith not with their own strength but with God's through the Spirit. The Galatians were in terrible danger of perverting and thereby destroying that life (Gal. 5:5) by trying to bring it to perfection with the works of the flesh. The Philippians, while not in the same precarious position, also needed to hear that their growth in sanctification, already evident through their participation in the gospel, was really God's work, and he would not fail to bring it to perfection. (Cf. Janzen 1996, who relates the believer's completion of individual tasks to God's eschatological completion.)

No sooner has Paul made clear that God is the author of their salvation than he shifts his focus again in verse 7, where he commends them (not God) for their constancy in supporting Paul whatever the circumstances. Of course, God is the only grounds of our confidence, but the apostle claims no insight into God's secret counsel. His assurance that the Philippians will persevere to the end arises from the external, visible evidence that their lives provided.⁸

^{7.} The 2 Corinthians passage is particularly intriguing because there Paul twice (vv. 6 and 10) contrasts ἐπιτελέω with προενάρχομαι (Phil. 1:6 uses ἐνάρχομαι).

^{8.} Because that evidence was frighteningly small in the case of the Galatians, Paul would not presume on the genuineness of their faith so as to exclude the possibility of their perdition (Gal. 4:11, 20; 5:4). Even in that setting, however, the apostle could express confidence that his readers would respond appropriately (5:10).

The evidence is so clear, in fact, that it would have been wrong for Paul to doubt their future: καθώς ἐστιν δίκαιον ἐμοὶ τοῦτο φρονεῖν (kathōs estin dikaion emoi touto phronein, lit., even as it is right for me to think this). A similar expression occurs in 2 Thess. 1:3 (kathōs axion estin, as it is proper), but a more striking parallel is found in Heb. 6:9–10: in that passage the author, after considering the awesome possibility of destruction (v. 8), moves on to express his confidence (<math>πεπείσμεθα, pepeismetha) in the genuineness of their salvation, a confidence based on previous evidence: "For God is not unjust [adikos] to forget your work [ergou]."

What Paul had expressed in verse 5 with the phrase *tē koinōnia hymōn eis to euangelion* takes a somewhat different form here in verse 7, συγκοινωνούς μου τῆς χάριτος (*synkoinōnous mou tēs charitos*, "partakers of grace with me," or more likely "of my grace"; cf. Lohmeyer's appeal to 4:14). What does this mean? The view that *charis* is yet one more reference to the Philippians' gift, while superficially attractive, does not yield a good sense in this verse (Paul and the Philippians were not coparticipants in their gift to him). The prevailing opinion is that the word here refers to "the absolute grace of God" (Vincent); according to Martin (1976: 66) it "carries the meaning of God's strength made available to his people in their weakness," as in 2 Cor. 12:9 (cf. also O'Brien 1991: 70).

This interpretation has the advantage of taking the construction in a natural way and may therefore be correct, but I do not find it fully convincing. In the first place, Paul characteristically uses *charis* in reference to his apostolic ministry (Rom. 1:5; cf. also 12:3; 15:15; 1 Cor. 3:10; Gal. 2:9), and it is that ministry that the present verse has in view: "the defense and confirmation of the gospel." Second, a general reference ("sharers in divine grace") does not do justice to the parallel expression in verse 5, which also has in view Paul's gospel ministry. Third, commentators have strangely ignored the clear parallel in 1 Cor. 9:23, "And I do all things on account of the gospel [*euangelion*], that I may become a partaker [*synkoinōnos*] of it."

Without suggesting that *charis* = *euangelion*, we should recognize that the connection is very close; similarly, the meaning of *synkoinōnos* here approaches that of *synergos* (fellow-worker; cf. 4:3; 1 Thess. 3:2). The apostle has in view, therefore, not divine grace in general but the Philippians' specific identification with, and support of, his gospel min-

^{9.} The connection with verse 5 was stressed by Theodore, who also interprets $\chi\acute{\alpha}\mu\iota\zeta$ with reference to Rom. 1:5. His resulting understanding of the verse, however, is different from the one presented here. In his commentary on 1 Corinthians, Fee (1987: 432n56) gives Phil. 1:7 as evidence that Paul in 1 Cor. 9:23 means the benefits rather than the work of the gospel, but in his Philippians commentary he does not refer to this parallel. Note also Schütz 1975: 52.

istry. One must stress, however, that this ministry entails suffering (cf. the verb *echaristhē* in 1:29 and the linking of *synkoinōneō* with *thlipsis*, affliction, in 4:14).

But we should also note carefully how that ministry is defined: the qualification—"both in my chains and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel"—is of special importance in grasping the reason Paul values so highly the support of the Philippians. If we take ἀπολογία καὶ βεβαιώσει (apologia kai bebaiōsei) in the technical sense, "legal defense and proof," then Paul would be referring to activity coordinate and linked with his imprisonment (so Hawthorne and many others; cf. Acts 25:16; 2 Tim. 4:16). But it seems much preferable to see a contrast between the two prepositional phrases, in which case the words in question (which, contra Vincent, may well constitute a hendiadys) would retain their general sense: "You have supported me not only during those times when I have been able to set forth openly the defense that confirms the gospel, but even during this period of confinement" (cf. Acts 22:1; 1 Cor. 9:3; 2 Cor. 7:11; 1 Pet. 3:15; see also Phil. 1:16). The Philippians, who had no way of knowing that this confinement had opened new avenues for the spread of the gospel (vv. 12–14), had shown their constancy and commitment to the apostolic ministry by supporting Paul even when, to the best of their knowledge, he was not "producing."

Finally, we may note in this passage the intensity of Paul's personal affection for the Philippian congregation. The apostle first introduces this emotional note at a point that jars the expected logical progression of the sentence: "I have good reason to be confident that God will preserve you, because I have you in my heart." The awkwardness of this connection has led some to translate, "because you have me in your heart" (see the second additional note on 1:7). This move is unnecessary, however, for both sides of this mutual affection are explicit and prominent in the passage.

Verse 8 in particular reveals the depth of Paul's feeling. Note, first, that this verse is an oath ("God is my witness"), something not altogether unusual for Paul (see Rom. 1:9; 2 Cor. 1:23; Gal. 1:20; and esp. 1 Thess. 2:5, 10, in an epistle that rivals Philippians in emotional intensity). Second, though the emphatic verb ἐπιποθέω (epipotheō, to long for) is elsewhere used by Paul with ἰδεῖν (idein, from horaō, to see) of his desire to see the recipients (Rom. 1:11; 1 Thess. 3:6; 2 Tim. 1:4), only here does he speak directly of longing for individuals (cf. 2:26 and 2 Cor. 9:14). Third, Paul uses the most expressive term available to indicate the source of human emotion, $\sigma\pi\lambdaάγχνα$ (splanchna, entrails; cf. 2:1; 2 Cor. 6:12; 7:15; Col. 3:12; and esp. Philem. 7, 12, 20), used here by metonymy of the affection itself; moreover, the use of that term with the qualifying genitive, "of Christ Jesus," is unique to this passage (but cf. Philem. 20) and adds pathos to an already powerful statement.

C. Prayer (1:9-11)

The καί (*kai*, and) of verse 9 should probably be viewed as resumptive, picking up the reference to Paul's prayer in verse 4. As already pointed out (see the beginning of the previous section), Philippians and Colossians are characterized by a substantive intercessory prayer that follows immediately upon the thanksgiving. The similarities, however, go beyond matters of structure: some striking lexical correspondences are also present, as the following chart demonstrates.

Philippians 1:9, 11	Colossians 1:9-11
proseuchomai	proseuchomenoi
I pray	praying
<i>perisseuē en epignōsei</i> abound in knowledge	auxanomenoi tē epignōsei tou theou growing in the knowledge of God
kai pasē aisthēsei and in all discernment	<i>en pasē sophia kai synesei</i> in all wisdom and understanding
<i>peplērōmenoi</i>	<i>plērōthēte</i>
being filled	you may be filled
karpon dikaiosynēs	karpophorountes
fruit of righteousness	bearing fruit
eis doxan kai epainon theou to the glory and praise of God	kata to kratos tēs doxēs autou according the power of his glory
ergon agathon (v. 6)	en panti ergō agathō
a good work	in every good work

Distinctive of Colossians, in keeping with the primary concerns of that letter, is the abundance of cognitive terms. Distinctive of the prayer for the Philippians are the following elements.

Note first its literary effect. Paul achieves a stylistic crescendo by the logical progression of these verses. Already in verse 9 the words "still more and more" (ἔτι μᾶλλον καὶ μᾶλλον, eti mallon kai mallon) indicate something of the Philippians' present yet partial enjoyment of the graces for which Paul prays on their behalf. The subsequent clauses express, with progressive significance, three goals that the apostle sets before his readers. What we may call the immediate purpose is expressed at the beginning of verse 10 by the words "so that you may test [or approve] the things that matter," while the final purpose is the believer's perfection: "in order that you may be pure and blameless for the day of Christ."

But there is a third and higher purpose, for Paul's ultimate goal focuses not on the believer but on "the glory and praise of God" (v. 11). We may notice here a fundamental correspondence with the Lord's Prayer. By making the first petition the hallowing of God's name, our Lord taught us to place every other request within the framework of our desire to glorify God. This pervasive biblical principle (cf. the prayers of

Moses and Hezekiah, Exod. 32:11–13 and 2 Kings 19:15–19) finds clear expression in Paul's theocentric view of the believer's sanctification (cf. Ridderbos 1975: 258–65).

A second distinctive of the prayer consists in the interweaving of knowledge and love. While it is generally true—and certainly true in Colossians—that Paul's use of cognitive terms has a direct ethical bearing, this aspect comes out explicitly in the prayer for the Philippians. We may already have an indication of it in Paul's actual choice of terms at the end of verse 9, ἐν ἐπιγνώσει καὶ πάση αἰσθήσει (en epignōsei kai pasē aisthēsei, in real knowledge and all discernment). Generally speaking, the English term knowledge has a broader reference than discernment insofar as the latter indicates the practical application of knowledge. The relation between the two Greek terms (i.e., semantic overlap as well as distinction) corresponds fairly closely to that of the English terms.

Is the combination of *epignōsis* and *aisthēsis* in this passage one more example of "stylistic reinforcement" (see introduction, "Language and Style")? The term *aisthēsis* (also translated "insight, experience, perception") occurs only here in the NT, and it seems unlikely that Paul would choose a term that had such a specific sense if the purpose were only stylistic. The cognate term αἰσθητήρια (*aisthētēria*) is used of the moral faculties or senses in Heb. 5:14, a conceptually parallel passage: "... solid food is for adults, who by practice have their faculties trained to discern [*pros diakrisin*] good and evil." We have good reason, then, to believe that Paul chose *aisthēsis* to specify the practical outworkings of the knowledge in view.

Immediately following his use of this term Paul gives more explicit expression to the ethical concern: εἰς τὸ δοκιμάζειν ὑμᾶς τὰ διαφέροντα (eis to dokimazein hymas ta diapheronta, so that you may approve the things that matter; see additional note on 1:10). Paul uses this very phrase (dokimazeis ta diapheronta) in Rom. 2:18 with reference to the knowledge of a Jew who has been instructed in the law yet whose life is inconsistent. The sound judgment of which Paul speaks here, therefore, even though it is a step beyond mere knowledge of facts, might still fall short of Paul's full desire for the Philippians. Yet the apostle has already precluded such an inadequate understanding by the initial statement of his prayer: "that your love may abound."

The central focus of Paul's concern is *knowledge that cultivates love*. This emphasis is surely to be related to the Philippians' struggle over the problem of unity (see introduction, "Historical Context" and "Distinctive Teaching"), and it prepares the readers for the more forceful words in 2:1–4. For the moment we should note the ease with which Paul intertwines knowledge and love. The apostle cares not for any (false) knowledge that fails to issue in love. But it is just as important to reflect that Paul does not view love as mindless. Quite the contrary: knowledge is the way of love.

A third, and major, distinctive of the prayer in Philippians is its emphasis on *moral perfection at Christ's return*. Paul's ethical concerns reach full expression in the descriptive terms εἰλικρινεῖς (*eilikrineis*, sincere), ἀπρόσκοποι (*aproskopoi*, lit., not stumbling), and πεπληρωμένοι καρπὸν δικαιοσύνης (*peplērōmenoi karpon dikaiosynēs*, filled with the fruit of righteousness). The first term, *eilikrineis*, is not used elsewhere by Paul, but the sense of moral purity is well established in extrabiblical literature (cf. also 2 Pet. 3:1).

The term *aproskopoi* is more controversial because it can be taken in either a passive or an active sense. The former ("not stumbling, not suffering damage") leads to the common translation "blameless," which is consonant with the sense of *eilikrineis* (cf. also Acts 24:16, ἀπρόσκοπον συνείδησιν, *aproskopon syneidēsin*, a clear conscience). However, the only other occurrence of this adjective in Paul's letters has the active sense, "not causing to stumble," as in 1 Cor. 10:32, "Give no offense [*aproskopoi ginesthe*] to Jews or to Greeks or to the church of God" (cf. also *proskomma* in Rom. 14:13; 1 Cor. 8:9; *proskopē* in 2 Cor. 6:3). This latter meaning is consonant with Paul's broader concern for unity among the Philippians and may be appropriate here (cf. Vincent and Hawthorne), though my subsequent comments regarding Christ's return will tend to favor the passive sense. The matter cannot be resolved with certainty.

Also ambiguous is the phrase "fruit of righteousness." The genitive *dikaiosynēs* can be understood as subjective (indicating origin: "fruit produced by righteousness"), as epexegetical ("fruit that is righteousness"), or as a Semitic-like genitive of quality ("righteous fruit"). Moreover, the word *dikaiosynē* itself may have a forensic force (justification = a legal judgment) or an ethical sense (righteous character or conduct).

In spite of these ambiguities, only two basic interpretations are likely. (1) If we take *dikaiosynē* in the forensic sense that is so characteristic of Paul, the genitive should be understood as subjective: "fruit that results from our justified state." ¹⁰ (2) If we choose the ethical meaning (cf. Rom. 6:13; 2 Cor. 6:7, 14; Eph. 5:9; several occurrences in the Pastorals), the genitive should probably be viewed as epexegetical, "the fruit that consists in right conduct" (note that there is virtually no difference between such a force and the genitive of quality, "righteous fruit").

Can we decide between these two interpretations? Paul does not use this expression elsewhere (but cf. Heb. 12:11; James 3:18; and the commentaries). Other Pauline occurrences of *karpos* with the genitive are best interpreted as subjective genitives, but these are not decisive. ¹¹ A

^{10.} Martin (1976: 70) suggests an epexegetical force ("fruit which consists of being rightly related to God"), but that makes poor sense. Schenk (1984: 122) argues that δικαιοσύνης is an authorial genitive, therefore equivalent to διὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ.

^{11.} The important difference is that in these occurrences the noun in the genitive is of quite a different character from δικαιοσύνη. In Phil. 1:22 it is ἔργου; in Gal. 5:22 it is

much better parallel is 2 Cor. 9:10, "the harvest of your righteousness" (τὰ γενήματα τῆς δικαιοσύνης ὑμῶν, ta genēmata tēs dikaiosynēs hymōn). Although the genitival construction here too is by itself ambiguous, one can hardly deny that Paul is alluding to Hos. 10:12 LXX, which clearly speaks of moral conduct.

The LXX, moreover, has other instances of *karpos dikaiosynēs* (Prov. 3:9; 11:30; Amos 6:12), in none of which a forensic notion seems to be present. These factors, combined with the specific context of Phil. 1:11, make an ethical interpretation almost certain. Furthermore, even if *dikaiosynē* here were interpreted as forensic, the ethical note would still be present in *karpos:* sanctification flowing out of justification. In short, whatever our understanding of the grammar, the fruit mentioned here must be described along the lines of the list in Gal. 5:22–23.

All told, it would appear that the object of Paul's prayer is the *total sanctification* of the Philippians; what they now have in part must be brought to full fruition εἰς ἡμέραν Χριστοῦ (*eis hēmeran Christou*). This phrase is best translated "for the day of Christ" (cf. Vincent). Rendering the preposition *eis* with "until" (so NASB and NIV, for example) might suggest that Paul is praying merely for a *continuation* of the sanctification the Philippians already enjoy, as though some Christians have arrived at their spiritual destination. Against such an inference we should note that it is not consonant with the emphasis Paul places on progression ("abound still more and more," v. 9). Moreover, we have an important parallel within the context of this passage, namely, verse 6, which speaks of "the day of Jesus Christ" as the time of perfection (*epitelesei*; on the significance of *achri*, see the fourth additional note on 1:6).

An additional consideration is the thanksgiving in 1 Corinthians.¹² Several lexical features in Philippians are shared by 1 Corinthians (e.g., *pasē gnōsei* in 1:5; *bebaioō* in 1:6, 8; *koinōnia* in 1:9; further, verse 7 contains a specific reference to Christ's return). Particularly important, however, is 1 Cor. 1:8: "who will also confirm you blameless to the end on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ." The preposition "on" (Greek *en*) unambiguously expresses what is less clear in the *eis* of Phil. 1:10. That which Paul has in view, both in 1 Corinthians and in Philippians, is the sanctified state of his readers *at* the time of the Lord's return.

Now it is generally agreed that in the introductory sections of his epistles Paul often anticipates themes that he will develop in the body of the letter (cf. O'Brien 1991: 82–83). It is not far-fetched, for example, to see in 1 Cor. 1:4–9 a hint of Paul's concern with the perfectionism that was plaguing some of the Corinthian believers (cf. Bruce 1971: 20–21).

a personal agent, πνεύματος; Eph. 5:9, φωτός, is closer, but an important textual variant is πνεύματος.

^{12.} The parallel prayer in Colossians makes no explicit reference to the Lord's return, but note the prominent role this theme plays in 1 Thess. 1:10 and 2 Thess. 1:9-10.

Even more clearly, Philippians addresses this issue in 3:12, "Not that I have already obtained it, or have already become perfect, but I press on." Not surprisingly, therefore, twice in his introduction (1:6, 10) Paul reminds the Philippians of the *partial* character of their sanctification. To be sure, believers may—no, must—be regarded as "pure and blameless" in this life, and thus Paul's prayer is in effect a commandment that the Philippians give evidence of their sanctification now. All the same, the apostle is focusing, as he did when writing to the Thessalonians, on the perfection of the sanctifying process, on his desire that God will sanctify them "completely" (*holoteleis*) and preserve them "without blame at [*en*] the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Thess. 5:23).

Additional Notes

- **1:1.** Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ: The Majority text, accompanied by some versional and patristic evidence (see Tischendorf 1869–72: ad loc.) transposes the names to Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, an order that "predominates decidedly only in the Thessalonian Epistles" (Vincent).
- 1:1. πασιν: Lightfoot (on 1:4) speaks of the "studied repetition of the word 'all' in this epistle" (cf. 1:2, 4, 7 [two times], 8, 25; 2:17; 4:21) and finds it "impossible" not to link this fact with Paul's emphasis on unity. Since Rom. 1:17 is the only other salutation that addresses the congregation in this fashion (1 Cor. 1:2 and 2 Cor. 1:1 are not exactly parallel), Lightfoot's point seems reasonable.
- 1:1. $\dot{\alpha}\gamma$ iouç: Paul uses this word approximately forty times to describe Christians collectively, and because it occurs in most of the salutations, we need not look for any special significance in its use here. One should note, however, that this Pauline trait is hardly a trivial mannerism. Quite the contrary, it reflects in a striking way one of Paul's most fundamental conceptions, the believer's definitive sanctification (see the exegesis on 3:10).
- 1:1. σὺν ἐπισκόποις: The suggestion that these two Greek words should be read as one, "fellowbishops," can be traced back as early as Chrysostom (though this is disputed by Lightfoot 1868: 96n2); and his contemporary, Theodore of Mopsuestia, appears to reject it (see the helpful note in Swete 1880–82: 1.198–99). Metzger (1994: 544), who attributes this view to "dogmatic or ecclesiastical interests," rejects it on two grounds: first, "the construction would be imperfect, the συν-having no appropriate reference" (but does not this remark beg the question at issue, namely, whether Paul regarded himself as an ἐπίσκοπος?); second, "the letter is obviously intended for the whole community" (but would the disputed reading necessarily exclude the church as a whole?). Although those two arguments appear inconclusive, Metzger and virtually all commentators are probably correct in rejecting this reading. Paul never calls himself an ἐπίσκοπος, so that the burden of proof would seem to rest on those who might see a self-reference in συν-. More important, σύν occurs in the salutations in 1–2 Corinthians, where its force is clearly "with."
- 1:2. ἀπὸ θεοῦ πατρὸς ἡμῶν καὶ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ: Even though Vincent is correct in stressing the need "to distinguish between ideas which unconsciously underlie particular
- 13. H. Beyer, incidentally, greatly overstates the point when he describes this view as "not grammatically possible" (TDNT 2:616n26). Schenk (1984: 78–80), who gives an unnecessarily involved discussion of $\sigma\acute{v}v$ (whether it is inclusive or additive), regards the phrase as a non-Pauline interpolation.

expressions, and the same ideas used with a definite conscious dogmatic purpose," so that the conjoining of God and Christ here and elsewhere is not unequivocal proof that Paul believed in the deity of Christ—it would be unwise to ignore the ease and naturalness with which Paul appears to regard his Lord as on the same level with the Father. Vincent himself agrees that the expression "may be allowed to point to that doctrine which he elsewhere asserts."

- 1:3. εὐχαριστῶ: Most commentators prefer to construe this verb with verse 5, in which case one needs to take verse 4 (or at least the second part of verse 4; cf. Lightfoot) as more or less parenthetical. This understanding, though defensible, creates a slight awkwardness, namely, the use of ἐπί in two different senses within the same grammatical construction (i.e., two prepositional phrases ruled by the same verb). It appears more natural to take verses 3–4a (up to ὑμῶν) as the main clause, with verses 4b–5 as a subordinate, participial clause. Meyer (on v. 5) objects that in this case "the specification of the ground for thanks would be entirely wanting," but this comment overlooks how easy it is for Paul to shift or readjust his thought in the middle of a sentence. In other words, a desire to bring in the note of joy leads Paul to a reiteration of the initial thought of thanksgiving, only that now (at the end of v. 4—see additional notes on that verse) he uses the broader notion expressed by δ έησις.
- 1:3. The addition of ἐγὼ μέν (preceding εὐχαριστῶ) by the "Western" tradition led some older scholars to draw the inference that Paul had just received a communication from the Philippians in which they apologized for the smallness of their gift. Paul's response is, "As for me, I am most thankful." For an extensive discussion of this variant, see especially Greijdanus 1937: 67–69.
- 1:3. ἐπὶ πάση τῆ μνείᾳ ὑμῶν (lit., in all the [i.e., my] remembrance of you): It has been suggested that this construction is a subjective genitive, yielding the translation, "for all your remembrance [of me]." The suggestion is most intriguing and is supported by the immediate context, where Paul has in view the Philippians' concern for him (cf. also 4:10). If so, it would mean that ἐπί is used in the same causal sense both times (vv. 3 and 5) and that the two prepositional clauses are parallel and interpret each other.

In spite of its attractiveness, however, this interpretation conflicts with the broader context of Paul's epistolary style. Paul uses $\mu\nu\epsilon i\alpha$ in the thanksgivings of Romans, 1 Thessalonians (also the verb $\mu\nu\eta\mu\nu\nu\epsilon i\alpha$), Philemon, and 2 Timothy; in all of those cases, the reference is to Paul's remembrance of his addressees. Given the somewhat formal and stereotyped character of those opening sections, it seems much preferable to take the Philippians construction as an objective genitive.

Moreover, ἐπί is used "temporally" in the parallel passages in Romans, 1 Thessalonians, and Philemon. It is true that in those passages the construction is different (ἐπὶ τῶν προσευχῶν), but we should keep in mind that in this kind of context μνεία and προσευχή seem to occupy the same semantic field, and BDAG 654 (meaning 2) prefers the meaning "mention" for μνεία here (though Lightfoot argues cogently that this meaning should be reserved for instances in which the noun is coupled with ποιέομαι). Notice further the suggestive parallel phrase ἐπὶ πάση τῆ θλίψει ἡμῶν in 2 Cor. 1:4 and 1 Thess. 3:7. The NIV is probably correct in translating, "every time I remember you." 14

14. For a detailed argument in favor of the causal interpretation, see O'Brien 1977: 41–46 (building on the work of Schubert 1939). O'Brien (1977: 43) tells us he has not found one instance (in or outside the NT) where εὐχαριστῶ ἐπί has a temporal force (for a reaffirmation and further defense of his view, see now O'Brien 1991: 59–61; against it, Fee 1995: 78–80 and Bockmuehl 1998: 58). Strictly speaking, however, it would be imprecise to describe the use even here as temporal (note my quotation marks above). The

- 1:4. ὑπὲρ πάντων ὑμῶν: In the parallel passages Paul uses the preposition περί. The use of ὑπέρ for περί is not unusual in Paul (BDF §231.1), but could its presence here be explained by its proximity to δεήσει (even if the sense "petition" is not prominent in this passage)? If so, ὑπὲρ πάντων ὑμῶν should be connected with what immediately precedes and only indirectly with εὐχαριστῶ (contra Lightfoot). On the significance of πάντων, see the second additional note on 1:1.
- 1:4. μετὰ χαρᾶς τὴν δέησιν ποιούμενος: the article τήν would seem to indicate a reference to the previously mentioned δεήσει, and this factor suggests strongly that μετὰ χαρᾶς begins a new clause (contra NASB) and is emphatic.
- 1:4. The word δέησις may be used in the broad sense of "prayer" as a synonym for προσευχή (cf. also εὐχή) or in a narrow sense as a synonym of αἴτημα (request; cf. also ἰκετηρία, supplication, in Heb. 5:7). In the second sense it contrasts with εὐχαριστία (thanksgiving), and this factor has led most commentators to deny that the beginning of verse 5 (= the ground of thanksgiving) should be construed with δέησιν ποιούμενος. Such a construction, however, seems preferable because of the likelihood that δέησις is being used in its more general sense, in which case the semantic contrast with εὐχαριστία is neutralized—indeed, the notion of "thanksgiving" is thereby included in that of "prayer." (Does not the emphasis on joy seem more easily associated with the idea of thanksgiving than with that of petition?) Note that ἔντευξις, which normally means "petition," seems to be used of thanksgiving in 1 Tim. 4:5 (cf. BDAG 340 [2.c]).
- 1:5. ἐπί (here "because, in view of"): This preposition is used to express the grounds of thanksgiving only in this verse and in 1 Cor. 1:4; normally Paul uses a causal participle (Col. 1:4; 1 Thess. 1:3; Philem. 5) or ὅτι (Rom. 1:8; 1 Cor. 1:5 [?]; 2 Thess. 1:3).
- 1:5. τῆς πρώτης ἡμέρας: This phrase corresponds to ἐν ἀρχῆ τοῦ εὐαγγελίου (lit., in the beginning of the gospel, Phil. 4:15). Lightfoot points out that the article τῆς, omitted by most manuscripts, is unnecessary with numerals; however, its attestation (see NA²⁷) is early and strong.
- **1:6.** π εποιθώς: The position is emphatic as common with Paul. Schenk (1984: 92) takes his structural approach to an extreme when he views this participle as synonymous ("Kontextidentisch") with π ροσεύχομαι in verse 9.
- **1:6.** αὐτὸ τοῦτο: Appealing to 2 Pet. 1:5, Meyer argues for an adverbial use here, referring to the previous verse rather than to what follows. We may paraphrase: "being persuaded, for this very reason [viz., your constancy], that God will preserve you." This construction would fit nicely with the exposition above; moreover, it could be supported with appeal to τοῦτο αὐτό

preposition $\grave{\epsilon}\pi\acute{\iota}$ probably preserves its "local" sense. It is simply that the idea conveyed by the whole is naturally translated with a temporal English clause. Incidentally, because of the position of the article (cf. BDF §275.3), Meyer argues for the following sense: "my remembrance of you *in its entire tenor and compass* is mingled with thankfulness towards God" (similarly most commentators). I view this approach as an instance of overinterpretation and would suggest that Paul uses this construction here primarily because it lends some emphasis to his statement.

^{15.} Indeed, Schenk (1984: 91–92, stressing the verbal similarity with 4:6) argues that Paul intends a substantive connection, not just a pun, between εὐχαριστῶ and χαρά: "The prayer of thanks is an expression of joy to God for what he has done" (nevertheless, Schenk affirms that δέησις = intercession). Kent (1978: 107) goes too far, however, in construing verse 5 with μετὰ χαρᾶς; this connection is grammatically inexact, though it usefully calls attention to the emphatic position of the phrase. For the LXX background to the semantic field of prayer, see Cimosa 1985.

- in 2 Cor. 2:3 (cf. BDAG 153, s.v. αὐτός, meaning 1.g, end of paragraph; but see NASB). Lightfoot dismisses this idea on the basis of word order and most commentators follow him; indeed, the use of αὐτὸ τοῦτο elsewhere in Paul (2 Cor. 7:11; Gal. 2:10; and several instances of εἰς αὐτὸ τοῦτο) does not support an adverbial force here. The matter cannot be solved conclusively (Phil. 1:25 does not really help us); Meyer's construction should be regarded as plausible but not probable. (Cf. also Ewald 1923: 53.)
- **1:6.** ἐν ὑμῖν (lit., in you): This construction often means "among you, in your midst," a rendering preferred by Martin (1976: 65). Meyer objects that the ὑπὲρ πάντων ὑμῶν of verse 7 suggests that Paul is expressing "a confidence felt in respect to all individuals." This passage alone does not help us resolve the ambiguity, though the parallel in 2:13 (see my comments there) strongly supports Meyer.
- **1:6.** ἄχρι ἡμέρας Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ: The literal NASB rendering, "until the day of Christ Jesus," is awkward, for the English speaker anticipates "at"; NIV preserves "until" and smooths out the sentence by rendering the verb ἐπιτελέσει, "will carry it on to completion," possibly the best solution (the NEB uses the preposition "by"). See further the comments on verse 10.
- **1:6.** Many important witnesses have the transposition $\mbox{i}_{\eta} \pi o \hat{\upsilon} \times \rho \iota \sigma \tau o \hat{\upsilon}$, but the reading adopted in NA²⁷ is extremely early (\mathfrak{P}^{46}) and has wide geographic attestation (B D lat); it also fits the pattern of the later epistles (see the first additional note on 1:1). In spite of Sinaiticus, even Tischendorf (1869–72: ad loc.) adopts this text.
- 1:7. φρονείν: On the significance of this word see the introduction, "Distinctive Teaching."
- 1:7. διὰ τὸ ἔχειν με ἐν τῆ καρδία ὑμᾶς (because I have you in my [lit., the] heart): Some commentators have suggested taking με as object and ὑμᾶς as subject: "because you have me in your heart." This rendering yields a smoother connection with the first part of the verse; that is, the Philippians' love and care for Paul is the reason (διά) he is justified to feel confident. In fact, however, we may see the reason as resting "not on the act of remembering but on the thing remembered" (Lightfoot; no one would want to argue on the basis of Rom. 6:17 that Paul was thankful that the Romans had been servants of sin—such grammatically imprecise constructions are natural and common).

Since Meyer's time, moreover, virtually all commentators have argued that the accusative closest to the infinitive is normally to be taken as subject; usually, no evidence is given, and Winer (1882: 414n) emphasizes that only the context can be decisive, but we may note the evidence of 2 Cor. 2:13; 8:6. 16 (In his summary of the evidence Hawthorne does not mention these two important verses because he limited his research to phrases where the preposition $\delta\iota\dot{\alpha}$ occurs. As

16. In a thorough study, Reed (1991) examined over 90 NT instances of two substantives with the infinitive and found that in the vast majority of these, the subject *preceded* the object. There is special value, however, in examining passages that correspond more closely with Paul's use in Phil. 1:7. Accordingly, I used BibleWorks to do a search (LXX and NT) of the infinitive followed immediately by an accusative personal pronoun and followed within five words by a second accusative personal pronoun. After setting aside instances where the second accusative was ruled by a different verb or a preposition, I was left with 21 passages (in addition to Phil. 1:7): Gen. 29:19, 20; 32:20; Lev. 18:28; 23:43; *Deut. 4:14; 31:21; Judg. (A) 14:11; 1 Kings 8:21; *1 Esdr. 8:58; Jer. 2:17, 19; 12:15; 22:16; 24:7; Ezek. 12:15; 20:41, 42; 39:27a, 27b; Luke 24:51. Remarkably, the pronoun closest to the infinitive (or, if we prefer, the one that occurs first) functions as the subject in every instance except for the two asterisked passages above, and in both of these the object is impersonal. Surely one would need unusually strong evidence to interpret Phil. 1:7 in a way that is contrary to this pattern.

for the occurrences he lists, his analysis of them seems to me to need sharper focus.) Of particular importance is the fact that Chrysostom, a Greek speaker himself who often weighs alternate positions (see introduction, "Exegetical History"), takes $\mu\epsilon$ as subject and shows no awareness of the alternate possibility (similarly Theodore).

- 1:7. συγκοινωνοὺς . . . ὄντας (lit., being fellow-sharers): The participle is probably causal (cf. NASB: "since"; NIV: "for"), though Lenski (1937: 713) prefers to take the participial construction as in apposition ("you all as being my joint-fellowshipers"). The difference is minimal. Bockmuehl (1998: 63) indicates that I construe μου with τῆς χάριτος, but that is apparently a misinterpretation of my paraphrase above.
- 1:8. μ ov: manuscripts containing a "Western" text, supported by a few other witnesses, have the dative μ ot (cf. Old Latin and Vulgate *mihi*). Curiously, \mathfrak{P}^{46} and one Old Latin manuscript (a, which belongs to the 9th cent.) omit the pronoun; if the omission is original, it would account for the variation, but accidental omissions in \mathfrak{P}^{46} are not uncommon (see introduction, "Textual History"). The addition of $\dot{\epsilon}\sigma\tau\nu$ in the Majority text is certainly a secondary smoothing of the text.
- 1:9. καὶ τοῦτο προσεύχομαι: We may relate the prayer to what immediately precedes: "I long to see you, but since I am prevented by my chains, I will minister to you through prayer" (cf. Martin 1976: 68). Alternatively, as suggested in the exposition above, we may understand it as a resumption of verse 4: "I said that I was making prayer for you; here is what I have been praying." These two ideas, of course, are not mutually exclusive.
- 1:9. περισσεύη: This present subjunctive is consonant with the progressive element in the sentence ("more and more," though it would be an overstatement to say that the tense itself emphasizes that element), and this factor has persuaded most critics that the variant aorist reading (περισσεύση, supported by few manuscripts, including B) is a corruption. Possibly so, but Greek writers do not always use tenses as we might expect, and it is difficult to explain how an aorist might have arisen if the present is original. This variation, contrary to what is often thought, does not involve a substantive difference. We should incidentally note that this verb, as Hawthorne rightly emphasizes, is characteristically Pauline and draws attention to the abundance of "the new age opened up by Christ."
- 1:9. ἐπιγνώσει: It is very difficult to come up with an adequate English equivalent for this term if we wish to distinguish it from the simple form $\gamma \nu \hat{\omega} \sigma \iota \varsigma$, "knowledge." The NASB rendering, "real knowledge," tends to overload the Greek compound.¹⁷ It should be noted that Paul uses $\gamma \nu \hat{\omega} \sigma \iota \varsigma$ fifteen times in the Corinthian correspondence, three times in Romans, four times in the Prison and Pastoral Epistles; in contrast, ἐπίγνωσις does not occur in 1–2 Corinthians at all, occurs three times in Romans, twelve times in the Prison and Pastoral Epistles. Assuming a traditional view of the chronology of the epistles, one could reasonably argue that Paul simply developed a preference for the compounded term and that this factor (not some substantive semantic difference between it and $\gamma \nu \hat{\omega} \sigma \iota \varsigma$) accounts for its use here.
- 1:10. δοκιμάζειν . . . διαφέροντα: Both of the terms are polysemous and so four translations are possible—"test/approve the things that differ," "test/approve the things that are excellent." ¹⁸ "Approve what is best" is doubtless the correct idea here (similarly Rom. 2:18), though one must
- 17. Such a rendering could be supported by an appeal to the arguments of Trench (1880: 285) and Lightfoot (1879: 138, on Col. 1:9).
- 18. Both terms are examples of a common kind of metonymy. English *prove*, which earlier meant "try, test," provides a close parallel to $\delta o \kappa \iota \mu \acute{\alpha} \zeta \sigma$; similarly, the verb *distinguish* leads to the commendatory adjective *distinguished*.

note that these terms were common in Hellenistic times, particularly in Stoic circles: Epictetus uses $\delta ο κιμάζω$ with $\phi αντασία$ when expounding on our God-given ability to test external impressions (e.g., Disc. 1.20.7), whereas $\delta ιαφέρω$ is especially common, and the derivative άδιάφορα (things indifferent) is contrasted to both the good and the bad (e.g., 1.20.12). The early fathers tended to see in Paul's statement a concern that believers be able to distinguish heresy. Johnstone, interestingly, sees here not a reference to the contrast between virtue and vice but to "the faculty of distinguishing Christian virtue from all counterfeits; of seeing, in an apparent conflict of duties, what present duty really is; . . . of avoiding moral pitfalls, however carefully covered over" (1875: 42).

1:11. εἰς δόξαν καὶ ἔπαινον θεοῦ (to the glory and praise of God): One of the most striking variants of 𝔰⁴⁶ is found here, εἰς δόξαν θεοῦ καὶ ἔπαινον ἐμοῖ, "to the glory of God and my praise." Metzger (1994: 544), who describes this variant as "astonishing," considers it an early conflation of the original reading with the reading of F and G, "to my glory and praise" (supported by the Latin manuscript g and by Ambrosiaster). Ross (1983: 70) agrees that 𝔰⁴⁶ gives us a conflated reading, but he argues that F and G preserve the original because it easily explains the other variants: "At first sight it would seem outrageous that Paul should make so egotistical a remark, so scribes would naturally alter the offensive ἐμοῖ."

Ross is quite right in stressing the difficulty, and therefore possible originality, of this reading and in pointing to 2 Cor. 1:14 and Phil. 2:16 as evidence that the concept may be compatible with Paul's thought (see also 1 Thess. 2:19 and my comments on Phil. 2:16). It is too much to suggest, however, that Paul could have used the theologically charged term $\delta \acute{o} \xi \alpha$ in this particular construction; that is, although the term by itself may be used of human beings (e.g., 1 Thess. 2:20), the reading of F and G would constitute a doxology ascribed to Paul.