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### **KOINŌNIA: The Biblical Proclamation of KOINŌNIA and its Relationship to the Proclamation and Celebration of the Lord's Supper**

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**KOINŌNIA: THE BIBLICAL PROCLAMATION OF KOINŌNIA  
AND ITS RELATIONSHIP TO THE PROCLAMATION  
AND CELEBRATION OF THE LORD'S SUPPER**

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A Thesis Presented to the Faculty  
of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis,  
Department of Systematic Theology  
in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of  
Master of Sacred Theology

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by  
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May 1994

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Reader

**KOINŌNIA: THE BIBLICAL PROCLAMATION OF KOINŌNIA  
AND ITS RELATIONSHIP TO THE CHURCH'S CONFESSION  
AND CELEBRATION OF THE LORD'S SUPPER:**

An exegetical analysis of the grammatical phrase "*koinōnia*  
plus the genitive," *koinōnia* in Pauline usage,  
especially in 1 Corinthians 10, and the general  
usage of *koinōnia* in selected liturgies and  
writings of the first four centuries

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION . . . . . iv

Chapter

I. *KOINŌNIA* AND THE "GENITIVE OF THE THING SHARED" 1

The Primacy of the "Common Thing" in  
Classical Usage  
The Dative Construction in Classical Usage  
*Koinōnia* in Greek Philosophy and Religion  
*Koinōnia* and Its Cognates in the Septuagint  
The Primacy of the "Common Thing" in New  
Testament Usage  
Summary

II. *KOINŌNIA* IN PAULINE USAGE . . . . . 26

General Listing[p.29]  
The Primacy of the "Common Thing Shared" in  
Paul  
Grammatical Limitations  
Words, Parallel Words, and Parallel  
Constructions  
A Case Study: 2 Corinthians 13:13  
Summary

III. *KOINŌNIA* IN 1 CORINTHIANS 10 . . . . . 55

The Cultural Context and Setting  
The Biblical Context  
1 Corinthians 10:16  
Summary

IV. *KOINŌNIA* IN THE EARLY CHURCH . . . . . 90

Data from the Early Church Fathers  
Liturgical Data  
Further References  
Summary

V. SUMMARY AND MODERN IMPLICATIONS . . . . . 111

BIBLIOGRAPHY . . . . . 127

## KOINŌNIA

"Fellowship." What does it mean? How is one to "achieve" it? Or, does one achieve it at all? What are the modern views concerning *koinōnia* and do they parallel Paul's use of the term in his writings? Where is the *koinōnia* hall in the church? Pastors, theologians and lay people alike are challenged to answer these questions, either overtly or subtly, for true faith looks to root itself on solid, common, *KOINON*, ground. The task of this study is to pursue clarity regarding *koinōnia* which may help in recognizing when it is spoken of in lesser, other, or even opposite ways.

*Koinōnia* and its cognates will first be examined in a broad linguistic study to determine its general, common usage in classical as well as biblical literature. The goal of the first part of this study is to determine the etymological and grammatical parameters of the common usage of *koinōnia* necessary for a proper understanding of the word usage in Paul.

*Koinōnia* and its cognates will then be examined more specifically in their Pauline usage especially in the context of the Lord's Supper (they are specifically connected in 1 Corinthians 10, the *koinōnia* of the body,

*koinōnia* of the blood). A broad study is included to provide a general understanding of the word, but in this section the focus will be both on Pauline usage of *koinōnia* and its cognates as well as his usage of parallel words and constructions with *koinōnia* to bring to light what is both common and unique in his usage of the word.<sup>1</sup>

The final section of this paper presents a general overview of the liturgical and patristic writings concerning *koinōnia* to ascertain the course of the early church's understanding and usage of the word. Was there continuity or discontinuity between the Pauline usage of *koinōnia* and that of the early church and its liturgy? If discontinuity, at what point was it apparent? Patristic references to the Lord's Supper and *koinōnia* will be examined in this regard. Werner Elert's work, Eucharist and Church Fellowship in the First Four Centuries, also will provide valuable insight to this study concerning the church's viewpoint and application in the immediate post-apostolic era.

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<sup>1</sup>This thesis is written with the presupposition that the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are the divinely inspired written Word of God. This presupposition will engage the reader when certain authors begin to see discontinuity in the understanding of *koinōnia* amongst the biblical writers themselves. This author would argue for a unified view of the Scriptural witness against the modern day emphasis of different authors, different theologies. There will be certain accommodation to this pressure, though, in that the paper's focus will mainly center on the data from Pauline usage.

For a more detailed look at this issue see Robert Preus, The Inspiration of Scripture, 2nd ed. (London: Oliver and Boyd, 1957) and also Franz Pieper, Christian Dogmatics, vol.1 (St. Louis, MO: Concordia Pub. House, 1950), pp. 193-367.

## CHAPTER I

### *Koinōnia* AND "THE GENITIVE OF THE THING SHARED"

*Koinōnia* means "(the) having something in common with someone."<sup>1</sup> This chapter will demonstrate that the correct interpretation of *koinōnia* must always focus first on the "thing shared," which defines more specifically the *koinōnia*. The "thing shared" will most often be in the genitive. What the "common thing" is, or how it may be received, these become the primary questions in a balanced discussion of *koinōnia*. Secondary, though important, is the discussion of who the "fellow-sharers" are (the "fellow sharers are most often in the dative case). J. Y. Campbell says, in his research of *koinōnia* and its usage throughout classical literature, "The marked infrequency of the dative of the person as compared with the genitive of the thing is further proof that the idea of 'participation in something' is the primary one."<sup>2</sup> This primary usage is called *koinōnia* + the genitive of the thing shared.

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<sup>1</sup>J. Y. Campbell, "*Koinōnia* and its Cognates in the New Testament," Three New Testament Studies (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1965), pg. 5.

<sup>2</sup>Campbell, page 3.

*Koinōnia* has specific boundaries then within which interpretation must take place. Its use with the genitive construction is the primary one. Yet, it is more often spoken of today in its abstract form when translated "fellowship."<sup>3</sup> The problem with such translation is not just that it is vague. The problem is that the word *koinōnia* is properly limited and specified not in its abstract form, but in its construction with designating nouns, usually a genitive("the thing received in common, the thing shared."). It will be demonstrated that *koinōnia* + the "genitive of the thing shared" is the primary usage from which the abstract form and other cognates flow. This is true especially in Paul, but it was a common usage of the word even before the New Testament era.

In this portion of the study, Friedrich Hauck's essay in The Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, J. Y. Campbell's essay in Three New Testament Studies, Michael

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<sup>3</sup>Walter Bauer, A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature, Trans. by William F. Arndt and F. Wilbur Gingrich, 2nd Edition Revised and Augmented by F. Wilbur Gingrich and Frederich Danker, (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1979) pp. 438-439. The first entry in BAG is that of "association, communion, fellowship or close relationship." It is not until the fourth entry that the base interpretation of "participation, sharing in something" is discussed. This valuing the abstract interpretation of the word as primary renders a false sense of importance to the abstract use of the word. It is rather the "participation in something," with the "something" being usually in the genitive, that is the primary usage of the word as will be demonstrated in this section. The abstract use of the word is less prominent, even secondary to the usage of *koinōnia* plus the "genitive of the thing shared."



McDermott's article in Biblische Zeitschrift, George Jourdan's article in the Journal of Biblical Literature proved most helpful.<sup>4</sup> The study begins by analyzing the usage of *koinōnia* in classical literature and generally comparing it with the Scriptural usage. This defines the

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<sup>4</sup>The most comprehensive work concerning *koinōnia* remains Heinrich Sessemann's Der Begriff koinonia im Neuen Testament (Giessen: n.p., 1933). Sessemann's work assigned three primary meanings to the word: *Mitteilsamkeit* (generosity), *Anteilhaben* (participation), and *Gemeinschaft* (community, fellowship). Sessemann's main emphasis is that *koinōnia* is "participation." There is definitely a "sacramental" emphasis. One may note here that the third category, "Gemeinschaft," was the least significant for Sessemann in that no major Pauline text was included under this category. Modern interpreters do not deny Sessemann's main divisions but they challenge his relative neglect of the communitarian aspect of *koinōnia*.

Hauck's work (see footnote #10) was done along the same lines as Sessemann and so his work provides a useful summary for the grammatical, etymological guidelines for our discussion. J. Y. Campbell also provides valuable research as he does a detailed trace of the usage of *koinōnia* and its cognates through classical literature. (see footnote #5)

Michael McDermott and His work, "The Biblical Doctrine of KOINONIA," Biblische Zeitschrift 19(1975):64-77, 219-233, is included because he seeks to synthesize the principal meanings of *koinōnia* in a more comprehensive interpretation of the word. And, he offers much to the debate about *koinōnia* because of his challenge to the "sacramental" view of the word as he emphasizes more a dynamic, communitarian view. The question for McDermott; "does the data support this move away from the view that the genitives, the things in common, also bestow *koinōnia*, creating and maintaining the community?"

George V. Jourdan, "KOINONIA IN I CORINTHIANS 10:16," Journal of Biblical Literature 67(1948):111-124, and his work is included because of his argument over the subjective and objective force of the usage of *koinōnia*. He says, "*koinōnia* possesses a quality of signification which is capable of being applied simultaneously in an internal and in an external direction, that is to say, of being used at the same time with an objective and subjective force (p.119)." His work struggles with the grammatical limitations and the full understanding of *koinōnia* in Pauline usage.

etymological and grammatical limits necessary for a proper understanding of the word and its constructions.

The limitations of this initial study must be stated up front because a purely etymological, grammatical study can not finally establish a definitive understanding for Pauline interpretation.<sup>5</sup> One must always give consideration for language development and an author's specific application of a word. While an author surely might deviate, or expand the usage of word or phrase("coin a phrase"), in this study it is significant that Paul's usage of the word *koinōnia* and its general construction are strikingly parallel to the common Greek construction of the term.<sup>6</sup> Only

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<sup>5</sup>Christopher Mitchell, "The use of Lexicons and Word Studies in Exegesis," Concordia Journal, 11(1985):128-133. The author points out the inherent weaknesses of interpretation based solely on etymological and grammatical investigation. He argues that "Modern linguistic theory has revolutionized the study of languages by introducing such approaches as generative-transformational grammar, semantic field theory, and speech-act semantics(p.128)." The thrust of his work focuses the interpreter on the importance of parallel words and usage in a particular author and the "semantic field(words with shared meanings)" of a particular word. This he argues will provide a more definitive understanding of words and their biblical usage.

<sup>6</sup>Campbell, pp.1-26. In his argument, he cites all the Biblical evidence concerning the "koin-" word group. His conclusion is that the meaning of the term is always retained as "participation along with others in something." His essay demonstrates that "the thing participated in" is central to a proper understanding of *koinōnia*. This thing shared is most often in the genitive. The genitive is the pivotal element in the construction. But, he also argues that one must establish the type of genitive that it is. Here Campbell speaks of the genitive as "the thing participated in" and nothing more. He aptly points out the necessary boundaries of grammatical research, but he fails to deal adequately with the

in his usage of the verbal form *koinōneō* does he deviate. The grammatical use of the dative with *koinōnia* is usually to denote the "person with whom the common thing is shared."<sup>7</sup> Paul deviates from this usage by "coining" a new usage, "the dative of the thing shared."<sup>8</sup> This is further evidence, especially for Pauline usage, that the "thing shared" is primary in the interpretation of *koinōnia*. This evidence in classical and Pauline usage that "*koinōnia* + the genitive(denoting the thing shared)" is the most common, primary usage is a controlling factor in a balanced understanding of the word.

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particular words that Paul uses and the theological weight that is inherent in the "common things." Herein lies the limitation of Campbell's study because Paul uses this common construction to point to the genitive as "the thing shared." But these are not ordinary words as will be seen later. Ultimately, work with synonyms and parallel constructions in Paul will determine with certainty what these common things, written in the genitive, mean in Pauline usage.

<sup>7</sup>Campbell, p.3. Here he argues that the person with whom the sharing takes place is "naturally" in the dative case. His point though is that the dative construction with *koinōnia* is rare making the idea of "association" secondary.

<sup>8</sup>Campbell, p.12. In eight instances out of eleven, in the usage of verbal form with Paul, Campbell calls this "the dative of the thing shared." He says that there is no real parallel to this usage in classical authors.

What must be noted here is the focus on the "common thing shared" in Pauline usage. Even with the dative construction, which was mainly used to denote the idea of "association," the primacy of the "common thing" is emphasized as Paul transforms the usage to illustrate this fact. The primacy of the genitive construction is unaffected and the primary focus on the "common thing" for proper interpretation is enhanced.

The Primacy of the "Common Thing" in Classical Usage

Hauck and Campbell lay a foundation for understanding *koinōnia* by tracing the usage of the word and its cognates, *koinōnos* and *koinōnein* in classical Greek. The primacy of usage is that of "*koinōnia* plus the genitive" which emphasizes the "the thing common thing." The other cognates derive their meaning then from this common thing. For example, the related noun *koinōnos* is derived from the root *koinōn-*, (common) and means accordingly that one who is *koinōnos* is "one who has something in common with someone else."<sup>9</sup> Hauck's essay under-translates the word "fellow, participant"<sup>10</sup> because there is something unique, something more in this being a "fellow, participant" with someone else which is ultimately the meaning of *koinōnia*. It is the "common thing shared" that primarily specifies the *koinōnos* relationship.

For both Hauck and Campbell there are numerous examples in classical Greek of a genitive construction with *koinōnia* and its cognates.<sup>11</sup> Hauck says, "Sometimes

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<sup>9</sup>Campbell, p.1.

<sup>10</sup>F. Hauck, "koinonia," Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, 10 vols., ed. Gerhard Kittel (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979)3:797. Hereafter TDNT.

<sup>11</sup>Campbell's whole study was a review of the classical usage of *koinōnia* in the work of "more than twenty writers, ranging in date and character from Pindar to Dio."(p.1) His study summarizes more than 600 occurrences of the word and provides a real foundation for our work in the interpretation of the *koinōnia* in Paul. He says, "a total of nearly six hundred occurrences of the three words(taken

*koinōnos* is accompanied by a second noun indicating the nature of the participation."<sup>12</sup> But here Campbell is most emphatic saying,

"The primary idea expressed by *koinōnos* and its cognates is not that of association with another person or other persons, but that of participation in something(emphasis mine) in which others also participate. This has been recognized and insisted upon by New Testament scholars like Cremer and Zahn, but many others have gone sadly astray in the interpretation of New Testament passages because they have made the idea of association the primary one."<sup>13</sup>

In the Greek construction of *koinōnia* (and its cognates) the genitive construction becomes the important factor in defining more clearly the *koinōnia*. To miss the primacy of "the genitive of the thing shared" or worse to dismiss "the thing shared" is to miss the specific *koinōnia*.

In classical Greek usage then, marriage is called a "*koinōnia pantos tou biou*, 'koinonia in all things of life.'<sup>14</sup> Friendship is "*koinōnia tou biou*, 'koinonia in life (life's matters)'" or, "*koinōnia philōn*, 'koinonia in brotherly love.'<sup>15</sup> Campbell cites Xenophon, Plato,

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together) ought, I feel, to provide a sufficient basis for such general conclusions as I have attempted to draw"(p.1).

<sup>12</sup>Hauck, TDNT, 3:797. Hauck is less conclusive in his study as he says, "It (*koinōnos*) implies fellowship or sharing with someone or in something. . . . Sometimes *koinōnos* is accompanied by a second noun indicating the nature of the participation(p.797)." Campbell's work is much more conclusive in this regard.

<sup>13</sup>Campbell, p.2.

<sup>14</sup>Hauck, TDNT, p.798.

<sup>15</sup>Hauck, TDNT, p.798.

Demosthenes, and Aristotle arguing that the full construction of the term requires that the thing shared (the genitive) and the person with whom it is to be shared (dative) should be explicitly stated. He substantiates the fact that *koinōnos* did not acquire the general meaning of a "companion"<sup>16</sup> which the dictionaries claim for it because the writers studied offered no such evidence.<sup>17</sup> This is not strange considering the importance of the genitive with *koinōnia* and its cognates. No "general" interpretation of *koinōnos* as "companion" or *koinōnia* as "fellowship" can do justice to "each, individual" genitive. Therefore, each use of *koinōnia* and its cognates must be examined concerning the particular "thing shared" to determine what kind of relationship is described." With the genitive, with the "common thing" goes the meaning of *koinōnia*.

#### The Dative Construction in Classical Usage

The dative construction is the usual means of conveying the "one with whom the common thing is shared." It

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<sup>16</sup>The translation of "companion" again prioritizes the idea of association over against the idea of participation together in something. This shift in emphasis seems to be a recent development that reacts negatively to any substantial discussion about the primacy of the genitive construction over against the primacy of the abstract noun. It also is a movement away from a real focus on the "things shared" as defining the *koinōnia*. This is why the grammatical parameters are so vital. They may not "nail down" fully the biblical understanding of the word, but it helps to eliminate under-interpretation and misinterpretation.

<sup>17</sup>Campbell, p.2-3.

is called the "dative of the person."<sup>18</sup> In a full construction of *koinōnia* and its cognates, one should find the genitive of the "thing shared," and the dative "of the person with whom one shares" explicitly mentioned in the text.

Yet, Campbell's research even here demonstrates the insignificance of the dative construction with *koinōnia* in comparison to that of the genitive. He says, "Thus altogether the genitive of the thing is more than twice as common as the dative of the person."<sup>19</sup> This emphasis of the genitive usage in comparison to the dative is further proof for Campbell that "the idea of 'participation in something' is the primary meaning."<sup>20</sup>

#### *Koinōnia* in Greek Philosophy and Religion

"With Plato the word *koinōnia* enters into a philosophical system. It designates in his works all kinds of union based on a common interest. . . . Beyond this there is the *koinōnia* of the ideas, and a *koinōnia* that is the universe embraces gods and men in an order of justice, friendship and temperance."<sup>21</sup> McDermott speaks about the importance of *koinōnia* in the teachings of Plato, Aristotle,

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<sup>18</sup>Campbell, p.3.

<sup>19</sup>Campbell, p.4.

<sup>20</sup>Campbell, p.3.

<sup>21</sup>McDermott, p.67.

the Stoics and other basic Greek, philosophical systems.

*Koinōnia* was important in the realm of philosophy, but with the Greeks its usage enters into the realm of the sacred, the realm of the gods. In Greek thought *koinōnia* enters into sphere of the sacral in that the word was common in a cultic, religious settings speaking of a *koinōnia psuchōn* (a *koinōnia* in the souls) among the gods, men, and animals though more in the manner of a union than of a communion with the divinity.<sup>22</sup> Cultic feasts were the place where the *koinōnia* of the gods and men occurred.<sup>23</sup>

At this point it should be noted that the usage of *koinōnia* in sacred writings does not necessarily imply Pauline dependence upon hellenistic theology. The supposed influence of hellenistic mysticism in Paul is stressed especially in the "religionsgeschichtliche" interpretation of Paul as well as in the "existentialist" interpretation. His theology of "*dikaioσunē*(righteousness)," the sacraments, and *koinōnia* are all understood with respect to the Greek milieu of his time. For a detailed account of Paul's modern interpreters see Herrman Ridderbos.<sup>24</sup> But, to limit Pauline

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<sup>22</sup>McDermott, p.68.

<sup>23</sup>McDermott, p.68. He says that uniting of the greek gods with their devotees in meals and sacrifices was a "long recognized *koinōnia*."

<sup>24</sup>Herman Ridderbos, Paul: an Outline of his Theology (Grand Rapids: Eerdmann's Pub. Co., 1975). pp.13-44. Ridderbos examines the main interpretations of Paul in the last one hundred years. He says, "In the main we have to do here with four successive basic conceptions, namely, that of



interpretation to the realm of the Greeks does him an injustice for Paul was a "Hebrew of the Hebrews" (Philippians 3:4-6). He was well-versed in Old Testament theology and practice. He was well aware of the sacrificial system among the promised people. He merely uses a common word to express a new understanding of God's relationship with man, post-resurrection of Jesus Christ.

In classical literature then the cognates *koinōnos*, *koinōneō* and *koinōnia*, each derive their meanings from this idea of "having something in common." *Koinōnia* means "(the) having something in common with someone; *Koinōnos* means "one who has something in common with someone else."<sup>25</sup> *Koinōneō*, "with the ordinary significance of the -eō termination its primary meaning is simply 'to be a *koinōnos*', i.e., 'to have something in common with someone

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the Tübingen school, the liberal, the history of religions, and the eschatological interpretations(p.15)." Ridderbos examines all the "schools" of thought with reference to Pauline theology and finds them wanting. He says, "Finally, then, it remains to mention that interpretation of Paul's eschatological preaching--to our mind the most adequate interpretation--which does justice both to the present and the future significance of the 'eschatology' and which does not attempt to dissolve the historical backbone of Paul's preaching. . . . There is no specific school in the investigation to be spoken of here, but rather a widespread group of interpreters, highly differentiated among themselves, who endeavor to understand the Pauline gospel in its original meaning and purport without subjecting its content to a previously determined hermeneutical principle" (p.42).

<sup>25</sup>Campbell, p.1. Campbell's emphasis contrasts that of Hauck whose stress is on companionship.

else.'"<sup>26</sup> *Koinōnia* and its cognates are primarily defined by "the thing shared" and this is expressed by means of the genitive.

"When a genitive is used with *koinōnia* it is highly probable that it is a genitive of the thing shared, and that even if the noun in question happens to denote persons; this probability becomes almost certainty unless either the genitive clearly includes all those who share in something or associate with one another, or those with whom they associate are clearly mentioned."<sup>27</sup>

The genitive construction, the "common thing" is so significant in defining the *koinōnia* that even in its occasional absence in the classical writers it still exerts its influence. The occasional absence of the genitive of the thing shared does not diminish the importance of "the common thing" in defining *koinōnia* as Campbell says, "To some extent this absence of the 'dative of the person' may be explained in much the same way as the occasional absence of the 'genitive of the thing'; clear indication in the context makes it unnecessary."<sup>28</sup>

Furthermore, his research demonstrates the primacy of the "common thing" in that the genitive, "the common thing," even if a person, is primary, defining construction for a

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<sup>26</sup>Campbell, p.4. His argument concerning the verbal form again stresses the primacy of the common thing as definitive in the interpretation of *koinōnia* when he says, "Here too the idea of association with that other person is derivative and secondary. The full construction is the same as that of *koinōnos*, the genitive of the thing and the dative of the person, but again this is found comparatively infrequently.

<sup>27</sup>Campbell, p.6.

<sup>28</sup>Campbell, p.3.

proper understanding of the "*koinōnia*." He cites examples in Plato's Republic where several times "*ha tōn gunaikōn koinōnia*" means not "participation by . . .," but "in the women."<sup>29</sup> In classical usage the significant matter is the genitive construction, "the common thing shared." As previously stated, with the genitive construction, with the emphasis on the "common thing," goes the *koinonia*.

#### *Koinōnia* and its Cognates in the Septuagint

In the Septuagint the "*koinōn*-" group is infrequently used and does not offer much useful data concerning the linguistic and syntactic parameters of *koinōnia* interpretation. This is not to say, however, that Paul is not influenced by the Old Testament in his use of the word. Since Paul claims to have his roots in the Old Testament,<sup>30</sup> it stands to reason that even with the Greek word *koinōnia*,

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<sup>29</sup>Campbell, p.6-7.

<sup>30</sup>1 Corinthians 11:22 - "Are they Hebrews? So am I. Are they Israelites? So am I. Are they Abraham's descendants? So am I." Philippians 3:4-6 - "If anyone else thinks he has reasons to put confidence in the flesh, I have more: circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; in regard to the law, a Pharisee; as for zeal, persecuting the church; as for legalistic righteousness, faultless."

H. C. Hewlett, "Philippians," The International Bible Commentary, ed. F. F. Bruce (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1986), says concerning Philippians 3, "Paul does not write as one who despises what he has never known. On the contrary, he could excel all his critics both in privileges of birth and upbringing, and in behavior . . . no proselyte; . . . one of the covenant people; . . . Hebrew of the Hebrews, the Aramaic-speaking son of Aramaic-speaking parents, and no Hellenist" (p.1447).

Paul is expressing a theological truth that has its very roots in the Old Testament revelation of God's work with and for his people (Cf. diatheke).

The few examples of the *koinōn*- word group have no reference to Yahweh, only to men. In the LXX *koinōnos* occurs 8 times, *koinōneō* occurs 13 times and *koinōnia* occurs only three times.<sup>31</sup> In its usage there are no grammatical deviations of concern. The genitive construction is used in Job 34:8; Proverbs 1:11; 2 Maccabees 5:20; 14:25; 3 Maccabees 2:31 with the verbal form *koinōneō*. Of the three usages of *koinōnia* in the LXX, the genitive construction is used twice. In 3 Maccabees 4:6, "*pros biōn koinōnian gamikōn*, 'for the sharing of life in marriage,'" is similar, not in structure but in overall meaning,<sup>32</sup> to the reference of the wife as "*koinōnos tou biou*, 'sharer in life,'" in classical Greek.

The most striking difference concerning the word's use in the LXX, as compared with other literature, is the absence of a *koinōnia* between men and God. The word is used to express man's relationship with man.<sup>33</sup> This absence has

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<sup>31</sup> For a further, more detailed discussion of *koinonia* and its cognates in the Old Testament see Campbell, p.7-9.

<sup>32</sup>Campbell, p.2. He says, "Mention of the thing shared is almost always found, and the normal construction is a genitive. Plato sometimes uses a prepositional phrase instead of a genitive." The emphasis of the "common thing" is still primary in one's interpretation. In this regard the two phrases are similar.

<sup>33</sup>Lev.6:2; Job.34:8; Wisd.8:18; 3 Macc.4:6.

been explained as "the sense of distance from God felt by the righteous Israelite as distinct from the Greek. "A righteous man of the Old Testament regards himself as "ebed" in a relationship of dependence upon God, belonging to him."<sup>34</sup> The infrequent, anthropocentric use of *koinōnia* in the LXX has led many to interpret Paul's use of *koinōnia* in parallel with the mystery religions rather than with the Old Testament. How much of this is true is highly debatable.<sup>35</sup>

It is not within the scope of this paper to do a detailed examination of *koinōnia* and Old Testament theology. While the "*koinōn*-" root is sparse in the LXX, the theology of the "separation of God and man" and the "divine initiative" expressed by Paul in his writings is not. The Old Testament "locatedness" of God for the sake of man's salvation is richly evident in the Old Testament. One only has to see the text in 1 Kings 8:10-11, 27-32 and the

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<sup>34</sup>Hauck, *TDNT*, 3:801, To press the point of the linguistic difference between the OT and the NT concerning *koinōnia* to the point of there being "two different theologies" is unfounded. For even in Paul the phrase "*doulos tou Christou*" is used. (Rom.1:1; Phil.1:1; Tit.1:1; Gal.1:10; Gal.4:1; 2 Tim.2:24; 1 Peter 2:16 etc.) The separation that exists between God and men because of sin is no less evident in NT theology.

<sup>35</sup>For further Discussion see McDermott, pp.65-67. McDermott sees continuity and discontinuity between Paul and the Old Testament. For him, the corporate personality of the "sons of Adam" understood by the Hebrew's provided much data for Pauline expression. But, he too emphasizes the marked difference of the Old Testament and the Pauline usage of *koinonia* when he says, "The sacrificial meal binding Israel to God, described in Deut.12 and Exod.24, never considered establishing a community between Israel and Yahweh" (p.66). For him, this distance is "never bridged" (p.67).

meaning of the temple, the pillar cloud, the tent of meeting and so forth. This is to be emphasized against a view that sees a divergence between Paul and the Septuagint merely because of the LXX's infrequent use of the word *koinōnia*. Scarce usage can not establish such a divergence with certainty. Here studies in the OT usage of "covenant (Genesis 12; Exodus 20; Jeremiah 31), promise (Genesis 3), the kingdom of Israel,<sup>36</sup> and Torah," where Yahweh establishes a relationship of grace, would help one to determine whether Paul introduces Hellenistic ideas into his theology or whether he explicates Old Testament theology in his use of the term *koinōnia*.<sup>37</sup> McDermott says it well,

"It would be misleading to consider the New Testament doctrine as an Athene-like inspiration springing whole and entire from St. Paul's brain. The Old Testament offers abundant material that prepared for a later synthesis."<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>36</sup>See John Bright's book, The Kingdom of God, (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1953). In the book Bright traces the phrase "kingdom of God" through the Bible as its unifying theme.

<sup>37</sup>For a general discussion of these themes, see William Dyrness, Themes in Old Testament Theology, (Downers Grove: InterVarsity press, 1979). Especially note his discussion of sin and the "breaking of fellowship between Yahweh and man" (pp. 99-110), and his discussion of the cult where he says, "The OT cultic acts had a deeper sacramental dimension that gave them their objective character. The temple, for example, reminded Israel of God's presence, but also -- by virtue of God's promise (emphasis mine) and the sacrifices (emphasis mine) performed there -- actually was a mediation of the presence" (p.145). Without the use of the word *koinōnia*, the element shared is still evident.

<sup>38</sup>McDermott, p.65-66. The author relates OT "corporate personality" with the Pauline understanding of "*koinōnia*."

While the infrequent use of the term and its anthropocentric emphasis has sparked much theological debate, the LXX use of *koinōnia* with the genitive, "the thing in common," is still compatible with the grammatical construction of classical Greek. The emphasis remains on the "common thing shared."

### The Primacy of the "Common Thing" in New Testament Usage

The New Testament usage of *koinōnia* and its cognates is also in parallel with the classical writers.<sup>39</sup> In most cases the "genitive of the thing shared" is emphasized. It is the predominate usage. But, the "thing in common" is evident in the context, even if it is not expressed in the genitive.

### *Koinōnos* and the "Thing Shared"

"Of the nine passages in the New Testament in which *koinonos* occurs only one, 1 Corinthians x 18ff, raises any important problems of interpretation . . . . Among the other eight there are three in which it is used with the genitive of the thing shared, and one in which a prepositional phrase is used instead. The dative of the person with whom one shares something or associates does not occur at all . . . . But, the genitive of the person whose partner or associate on is occurs twice, and a possessive adjective with the same

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<sup>39</sup>Campbell, p.11.

significance once."<sup>40</sup> The "common thing" is definitive for proper interpretation.

*Koinōnoi* + the genitive can be found in 2 Peter 1:4; 1 Peter 5:1; 1 Corinthians 10:18; 2 Corinthians 1:7. The thing shared is that which primarily defines whether the person is "*koinōnos*." In 1 Corinthians 10 the phrases "*koinōnia tou haimatos* (in the blood). . .*tou sōmatos* (in the body)" define the "things in common" therefore the *koinōnia*. "*Koinōnos*" is also used in this context to establish that the altar(*thusiastēriou*) and demons (*daimoniōn*), as the things in common, designate the one who is *koinōnos*. In 2 Cor.1:7 they are *koinōnos* who have in common "the sufferings (*pathēmatōn*)" and "the comfort(*paraklēseōs*)" that come in knowing Christ and caring for one another. In 1 Peter 5:1 Peter calls himself "*koinōnos*" in the element shared, the "*doxēs* (glory)" which is common to all who share in the sufferings of Christ.

*Koinōnos* as partner in a common business/enterprise is common in the New Testament as it was in classical usage. It means more than "sharer" for there is a common "enterprise" in which the "partners" share.<sup>41</sup> In Matthew

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<sup>40</sup>Campbell, p.9.

<sup>41</sup>Campbell argues that in Luke 5:10 there is a conscious change in wording to define the difference in the partners. "Metochoi" - it seems probable that by this he means those who at the time happened to be sharing in the work of fishing, while by *koinōnoi* he means those who were regularly partners with him, sharing in the profits. (p.10)



23:30 Jesus calls the pharisees "*koinōnoi en haimati tōn prophatōn*, 'partakers or sharers in the blood of the prophets.'" The common element is expressed by "*en* plus the dative." Again, the common element of blood, bloodshed, determines the relationship. "*en* plus the dative" is substituted here for the "genitive of the thing shared."<sup>42</sup> In Luke 5:10 the phrase "*koinōnoi to Simōni*" is used to describe the relationship of James and John to Peter (the dative usually indicates a "fellow sharer in a thing") as partners in business. In Philemon 17, "*ei oun me echeis koinōnon*," *koinōnos* here too is used in the sense of business partner.

These cognates go beyond the scope of the paper but are helpful in that they provide parallel data, not divergent data. The use of *koinōnos* in the New Testament thus does not differ from its use in classical writers.<sup>43</sup> The primacy of the genitive construction is evident and in every text and context where the word or construction is used, the common element defines the relationship.

#### *Koinōneō* and the "Dative of the Thing Shared"

With the verbal root "*koinōneō*" there is a distinctive, grammatical shift especially in Paul's use of the word. Campbell says, "In eight instances (Rom.15:27;

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<sup>42</sup>Campbell, p.10.

<sup>43</sup>Campbell, p.11.

Gal.6:6; Eph.5:11; Phil.4:14, 15; 1 Tim.5:22; 1 Pet.4:13; Rev.18:4) of the eleven we have what is usually regarded as the dative of the thing shared."<sup>44</sup>

In Campbell's research in classical literature the dative most often expressed the person with whom the thing was in common. The emphasis there was on "community." The dative described the ones "bonded together." The genitives define the nature of this relationship and how it is received.

The shift in Paul only demonstrates more emphatically the primacy of the "common element" by his creating of the "dative of the thing shared." Campbell argues that this shift to the "dative of the thing shared" is unique to Paul.<sup>45</sup> McDermott challenges this claim of uniqueness for Paul<sup>46</sup> but does not deny the importance of this transformed

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<sup>44</sup>Campbell, p.12. It should be noted that all the authors reviewed, McDermott, Jourdan, Panikulam, as well as Campbell were in agreement with Campbell's assessment of Paul's "dative of the thing shared" designation.

<sup>45</sup>Campbell, p.12.

<sup>46</sup>McDermott, note #25, p.74-5. Although he claims that this is not unique to Paul saying, "One may find further examples in Stephanus, Passow, and Liddell-Scott-Jones . . . For in all such cases a personal subject of the verb is followed by a dative of person, and impersonal subject by a dative of thing" (p.73). He argues that these retain their usual translation of "participation along with someone." Nonetheless affirms the Pauline uniqueness when he says, "The unusual element in Paul's usage is that a personal subject of *koinōneō* is followed by a dative of thing. The reason for this we take to be the dynamic meaning of 'to make to be a participator in', or even 'to contribute to the participation in' which, we have already seen, is a usage dear to St. Paul"(p.74). The "dynamic" aspect of the verb

dative construction. What is expressed here in Paul is the common element, in this case "the dative of the thing shared."<sup>47</sup>

The common element defines more specifically the verb *koinōneō* as Paul emphasizes "the common thing" uniquely in the dative case, as compared with Greek usage of the dative defining the "person with whom one shared." Blass-DeBrunner-Funk emphasizes the difficulty of classifying Paul's grammar here when it lists Rom. 15:27; 1 Tim. 5:22; 1 Peter 4:13; 2 John 11; Gal. 6:6; Phil. 4:15 and the use of the dative with "*koinōneō*" under the heading "The partitive genitive with verbs meaning 'to take from, eat of.'"<sup>48</sup> Paul changes the emphasis of the dative usage away from "relationship" back

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demands an object and this is expressed best by the dative. Not only does this demonstrate the "dynamic" aspect of the verb, it also demonstrates the primacy of the "common thing" in the interpretation of *koinōnia* and its cognates. The verb is then translated, "make a participator in."

<sup>47</sup>McDermott, p.71-75, McDermott may challenge the uniqueness of the construction for Paul, but he argues emphatically the importance of the construction to Paul. To him this construction of the "dative of the thing shared" + the verbal form is proof for a more dynamic understanding of *koinōnia*. Instead of merely "to participate in something," he sees the force as "to make someone a participator in something." This construction for him argues the case because the "dynamic action, inherent in the verb demands an object" (p.74). And, this use of the dative differentiates this force from the more common static understanding of "participate in something (*koinōnia* + the genitive)."

<sup>48</sup>F. Blass and A. DeBrunner, A Greek Grammar of the New Testament, trans. by Robert Funk, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961), 169(1), p.93. Here the dative of the thing shared is viewed as functioning in the place of the partitive genitive.

to the "common thing shared," which was usually defined by the genitive.

The dative construction will be discussed more indepth in the following chapter as the paper deals in a detailed way with Paul's use of the word. This unusual usage, while different from classical usage grammatically, still is in parallel with the classical writers primary emphasis on the "common thing shared."

### *Koinōnia* and the "Thing Shared"

"*Koinōnia*" with the genitive in the New Testament brings nothing unexpected to the discussion. The genitive construction is used in 1 Cor. 1:9, "*koinōnian tou huiou*, (in the son);" 1 Cor. 10:16, "*koinōnia tou haimatos* (in the blood), *koinōnia tou sōmatos* (in the body);" 2 Cor. 8:4, "*koinōnian tēs diakoniēs* (in the ministry);" 2 Cor. 13:13, "*ha koinōnia tou hagiou pneumatos* (in the Holy Spirit);" Phil. 2:1, "*koinōnia pneumatos* (in the Spirit);" Phil. 3:10, "*koinōnian pathēmaton autou* (in his sufferings);" and Philemon 6, "*tēs pisteos*, (in the faith)." In 2 Cor. 6:14 and in Phil. 1:5 the dative construction of the thing shared and the phrase "*eis to euaggelion*, 'in the Gospel'" are used respectively to emphasize such an interpretation.

Phil. 4:14-15 speaks of the fact that the *koinōnia* existing between Paul and the Philippians "*mou tē thlipsei*, 'in my (Paul's) affliction,'" was demonstrated in their sharing with him in both spiritual and material ways.

The absolute use of *koinōnia* (*koinōnian*, contribution) should also be understood in light of "common element shared."<sup>49</sup> *Koinōnian*, "contribution," is no "general term" in the Pauline usage as it is used only with reference to Christians and their concern for one another. The Scriptures use *koinōnia* and its cognates predominately in a "Christian" context between believers, of Christ, his Spirit, and his body and blood. For the Biblical writers there is a *koinōnia* to God in Christ that lives as a *koinōnian* to one's fellow Christians.

When the word is used concretely then, the "common thing" is evident in the context. Rom. 15:26,27 speaks of the contribution to the saints in Jerusalem as a "*koinōnian*," and expresses the reason for this, "*tois pneumatikois autōn ekoinonēsan ta ethnē*, 'in their spiritual things, the gentiles have partaken.'

These absolute uses of "*koinōnia*" utilize the word to link a visible action (offering, right hand of *koinōnian*) to an existing *koinōnia* that was alive in the hearts of Christians through their common faith in the Christ and his Gospel (Rom.15:26; Gal.2:9). There is a *koinōnia* to God in Christ that lives as a *koinōnian* to a fellow believer.

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<sup>49</sup>Our common participation in Christ (1 Corinthians 1:9; and "en Christo," Gal.3:23-29) and our common faith (Eph. 4:1-7), these motivate Christ's people to serve and give as we have been given to. Rom.15:26-27 speaks of the *koinōnian* in reference to the commonality of "spiritual things." Gal. 2:9: Here the "right hand of *koinōnia*" is given because of the "common Gospel."

Summary

The genitive of the thing shared, "the common thing shared," is the key element in determining the meaning of the word "*koinōnia*" and its cognates in classical literature as well as in the New Testament. For Campbell its ultimate meaning can only be - "participation along with others in something."<sup>50</sup> For Hauck it is "to share with someone in something."<sup>51</sup> He also translates the verb more dynamically "to give someone a share in something."<sup>52</sup> McDermott argues that this dynamic meaning in the verb should be carried over in one's understanding of "*koinōnia*" as well.<sup>53</sup> But in each discussion of the meaning of the root "*koinōn-*" the genitive construction and the "common thing shared" are the essential elements.

The focusing on "sharing, giving a share, participating etc." at the expense of "the common thing," the genitive, and its primary role in defining the *koinōnia* is to do violence to classical and biblical usage of the word. Schuyler Brown rightly says, "To determine the religious significance of *koinōnia* in the New Testament and its possible ecclesiological relevance it will be necessary to ask in each case: *who* is participating in *what*, and with

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<sup>50</sup>Campbell, p.28.

<sup>51</sup>Hauck, p.804.

<sup>52</sup>Ibid., p.808.

<sup>53</sup>See McDermott's discussion on 2 Cor. 13:13, p.223-224.

whom? The association idea is secondary in the *koinōn*- word-group so that in many instances no attention may be paid to the question 'with whom.'"<sup>54</sup> The primary usage of *koinōnia* + the "genitive of the thing shared" and its primary focus on the "common thing" defining the *koinōnia* should be taken at face value for the data point in this direction. Whatever else may be posited must also run in this direction.

For this paper then, the challenge is *how* these genitives function, *what* these "common things" are and *how* do they define, even "impart" *koinōnia*? Determining these questions takes this investigation beyond a purely grammatical, syntactical examination. What remains to be done is to demonstrate more clearly the primacy of the genitive construction, to interpret more clearly the "thing shared" in Pauline usage and to analyze parallel words and constructions allowing Paul to determine his own uniqueness.

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<sup>54</sup>Schuyler Brown, "Koinonia as the Basis of New Testament Ecclesiology?", One in Christ, Vol.12:2(1976), p.160. See also footnote #16.

## CHAPTER II

### *KOINŌNIA* IN PAULINE USAGE

The linguistic, grammatical data have done their job. It has defined necessary boundaries within which lies a full, dynamic understanding of the meaning of *koinōnia*. The data have demonstrated that this word is primarily used in construction with "the genitive noun, the thing shared" and that in every discussion of *koinōnia* the primary focus must be on the "thing in common." Schuyler Brown summarizes it well when he says,

"To determine the religious significance of *koinōnia* in the New Testament and its possible ecclesiological relevance it will be necessary to ask in each case: *who* is participating in *what*, and with *whom*? The association idea is secondary in the *koinōn*-word-group so that in many instances no attention may be paid to the question 'with whom.'"<sup>1</sup>

The one who is *koinōnos* has a share in the "common thing." Even the absolute use of *koinōnia* derives its meaning from the more common, definite construction with the genitive and not vice-versa. All these things will be evidenced clearly as the paper researches the word through the Pauline corpus.

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<sup>1</sup>Schuyler Brown, "Koinōnia as the Basis of New Testament Ecclesiology?", One in Christ, Vol.12:2(1976), p.160.



These boundaries then -- the primacy of the "genitive of the thing shared" and the primary stress on the "thing in common -- reprimand both mis-interpretation and under-interpretation. Against those who maintain a generic meaning of *koinōnia*, namely as association, friendship, fellowship, the genitive construction and the focus on the "thing shared" demands and conveys a more definite understanding. Within these parameters, with priorities defined by the data, attention is now given to Paul's use of *koinōnia*.

One finds the most comprehensive New Testament usage of *koinōnia* in the writings of the Apostle Paul. In the New Testament the term *koinōnia* occurs 19 times in all: 13 in Paul, 1 in Acts, 1 in Hebrews, and 4 in 1 John. At best, the other uses in the Bible may reflect some aspect of Paul's presentation, but his work with the word is truly the most comprehensive of any biblical writer.

The Apostle uses this common word/phrase from Greek culture to describe God's relationship with the believer, the believer to God and to one another.<sup>2</sup> So comprehensive is

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<sup>2</sup>It is significant that the word is used in Hebrews 2:14 in reference to the incarnation of Christ. "Since the children have(*koinōneō*) flesh and blood(*haimatos, sarkos*), he too participated/partook (*metechō*) in their humanity." With the incarnation, where God becomes man, where Jesus becomes *koinos*, the expansion of the definition of *koinōnia* is necessitated. Why? Because Christ is "the common thing" between God the Father and his people. (See 1 Corinthians 1:9, where Jesus is the "genitive of the thing shared"). This incarnation understanding of the Gospel message, the word become flesh for our sake, the tabernacle-presence of God in Christ(John 1:14) is central, not only to Christian thought in general, but also to Paul (Romans 5:15-17; 2 Corinthians

this term for the fullness of life in Christ for Paul that George Panikulam argues that it is the word that best conveys the ecclesiology of the church.<sup>3</sup> Michael McDermott says, in his quest for a re-interpretation of the word, "One may certainly find traces of Jewish and even pagan influences in his(Paul's) thought, but an original religious genius of the first order cannot be adequately explained in terms of determining antecedents. Paul was certainly no scissors-and-paste eclectic. . . . There are parallels to his thought in Jewish and pagan works. The word itself may have been in use in the pre-Pauline Corinthian community, perhaps to designate the union attained by the reception of the Eucharist. Be that as it may, Paul's mastery of the *koinōn*-stem, is clearly his own. He twists grammatical constructions, invents a new form of the stem, and creates two new meanings that are accepted into the Greek language: communion and collection. "Community, participation, contribution, collection, communion," these are some possible ways of translating *koinōnia*. . . . There is

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5:17-21). *Koinōnia* will be proclaimed like it has never been before. The incarnation necessitates that.

<sup>3</sup>George Panikulam, *Koinonia in the New Testament: a Dynamic Expression of the Christian life*, (Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1979). Panikulam points out two important facts concerning *koinōnia*. 1) the primary stress in Pauline *koinōnia* is on a Christocentric life, and 2) Paul never uses *koinōnia* for the individual sharing of someone in Christ(p.5). He argues for a strict communitarian sense of the word because of its usage in Paul and because of Paul's use of the phrase *en Christo einai* for a Christian's inward, personal relationship with Christ.

fullness of significance in almost every occurrence of this word."<sup>4</sup>

While there is a tremendous fullness to the word, there is also a priority of translation even for Paul in that the genitive construction/the "common thing shared," is still determinative of the meaning of *koinōnia*. This must be emphasized again and again for many translators of Paul accept the grammatical boundaries of the word and then forget it in their interpretation of him. No less for Paul is the importance of the "common thing," which creates and defines the *koinōnia* relationship. One needs only look at the general classification of the word in Paul to see this:

<u>WITH THE GENITIVE</u>	<u>WITH THE DATIVE</u>	<u>ABSOLUTE FORM</u>
<i>koinōnia</i>	<i>koinōneō</i>	<i>koinōnia</i>
1 Cor.1:9	Rom.12:13	Rom. 15:26
1 Cor.10:16	Rom.15:27	2 Cor. 6:14
1 Cor.10:16	Gal.6:6	Gal. 2:9
2 Cor.8:4	1 Tim.5:22	
2 Cor.13:13		<i>koinōnos</i>
Phil.2:1	<i>sugkoinōneō</i>	2 Cor. 8:23
Phil. 3:10	Eph. 5:11	Philemon 17
Philemon 6	Phil. 4:14	
<i>koinōnos</i>		
1 Cor.10:18,20		
2 Cor.1:7		
<i>sugkoinōnos</i>		
Romans 11:17		
1 Cor. 9:23		
Phil. 1:7		
<i>koinōnia</i> + 'eis'		
2 Cor.9:13		
Phil.1:5		
<i>koinōneō</i> + 'eis'		
Phil.4:15		

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<sup>4</sup>Michael McDermott, "The Biblical Doctrine of KOINŌNIA," Biblische Zeitschrift 19(1975), p.232.

One must focus then on that "common thing" because even in Paul's new grammatical construction ("the dative of the thing shared,"<sup>5</sup> the use of "eis" with *koinōnia*, "the genitive of the person shared," etc.) the element, what is shared defines the interpretation and proclamation the word.

In this investigation of Paul's understanding of *koinōnia*, "the common things (most often in the genitive)" must therefore be our guide. What is the significance of these "common things" for Paul? His use of specific words, most often the "genitive of the thing shared," will help to define the special theological freight carried by the word *koinōnia*.

#### THE PRIMACY OF THE "COMMON THING SHARED" IN PAUL

##### THE GENITIVE CONSTRUCTION

The relationship of "*koinōnia*, *koinōnos*, and *koinōneō*" is for Paul an intimate one. He relates these words very carefully. "*Koinōnia* + the genitive" is the base from which all other cognates derive their meaning. Of the 28 instances of *koinōnia* and its cognates in Pauline usage, 17 are used with the genitive. The predominate emphasis

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<sup>5</sup>J. Y. Campbell, "*Koinōnia* and its Cognates in the New Testament," Three New Testament Studies (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1965), p.356, "Divergences from the ordinary constructions, the genitive of the thing and the dative of the person, are exceedingly rare: they are hardly to be found except in Plato." P.364, He argues that a real "dative of thing participated in" is a usage unique to Paul. Even here one must point out the unique focus of Paul on the "thing shared."

being the "genitive of the thing shared." Paul's use of *koinōneō* also lays stress on the "common thing."<sup>6</sup> And, the one who is *koinōnos* is the one who is in "*koinōnia*" by virtue of the "common thing." The primacy of the construction of "*koinōnia* + the genitive" and the primary stress on the "common thing" in Pauline usage is clearly evident in his writings.

1 Corinthians 1:9 - The genitive of the thing shared is "Jesus Christ, his son our Lord."<sup>7</sup> In this context the stress is on the faithfulness and grace of God "through whom you were called (aorist passive) into '*koinōnia tou huiou*

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<sup>6</sup>See Rom. 12:13; 15:26-7; Gal. 6:6; 1 Tim. 5:22.

Romans 12:13 - "*tais chreiais tōn hagiōn koinōnountes*" translated, "Be participators, sharers in the needs of the holy ones, the saints." The common Gospel, the common faith creates a common concern in the caring for the saints. The question is share what? That comes in Romans 15.

Romans 15:26-27 - Here Paul calls them to make a *koinōnian* to the poor of the saints in Jerusalem. He calls them to this "for if in their spiritual things the Gentiles are participants(*koinōneō*), they owe in physical things to serve them.

Galatians 6:6 - "The one who is taught the word must share, give share(*koinōneō*) to the one who teaches in all good things." In the text one sees that there is a *koinōnia* in the word which moves one to share physical and spiritual possessions.

1 Timothy 5:22 - "Do not be participants(*koinōneō*) in the sins of others.

Each verse speaks about a *koinōnia* that works its way out in the lives of those who are *koinōnos* with each other in Christ. It is most natural to speak this way about Christian care for all care for one another must flow from our relationship with Christ.

<sup>7</sup>Campbell says, "Whenever *koinōnia* is followed by a genitive which can without difficulty be taken as a genitive of the thing shared, it is best to give it its primary signification of 'participation in.'"(p.20)

*autou*"(in Jesus Christ our Lord). The "thing in common" is Jesus Christ, his son our Lord. Campbell's study has shown that this construction can even be used when the genitive is personal, rather than a thing.<sup>8</sup>

1 Corinthians 1:9 demonstrates the need to translate according to the basic grammar and usage of the word, and then to let Paul further define the words that he happens to use. "Jesus Christ His Son" is best understood as the "common thing shared." Some argue for a subjective genitive here,<sup>9</sup> others stress relationship, but again Campbell states correctly, "Translators and commentators are all but unanimous in rendering *koinōnia* here by fellowship, but some translate the whole phrase 'the fellowship of his son' and other 'fellowship with his son.' The objection to the first is the absence of the article with *koinōnia*. . . . The objection to the second is that it takes *tou huiou* as a genitive of the person with whom one associates, and, as we have seen, such a genitive, if it is ever found at all, is certainly exceedingly rare."<sup>10</sup> Even *tou huiou Iēsou Christou* as genitive of source would not be the best translation because Paul states that it is "God who calls us into *koinōnia*." The Son becomes the "defining mode" of such *koinōnia*.

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<sup>8</sup>Campbell, p.6.

<sup>9</sup>Jourdan, p.118.

<sup>10</sup>Campbell, p.27.

1 Cor. 10:16-17 - This much debated passage will be the subject of specific inquiry in the next section. At this point one notes the genitive of the things shared are "*tou haimatos. . . . tou sōματος*," the body and blood of Christ. This fits very well with classical usage.

2 Corinthians 8:4 - Paul here speaks of the "*koinōnian tes diakonias*." The shared "service" for the saints is the common thing shared. Many speak here of *koinōnian* in the absolute sense of "collection."<sup>11</sup> This would be an overstatement because Paul has defined the *koinōnia* with the genitive of the thing shared, "diakonias." And, when he wishes for the word to be understood as "contribution," he uses it in an absolute sense with no modifying genitive (Romans 15:26; 2 Corinthians 6:14, 8:23; Galatians 2:9; Philemon 17). Even in these passages, the "common thing" is in the context.

2 Cor. 13:13 - The Trinitarian benediction is translated, "The Grace of Lord Jesus, the love of God and the *koinonia* of the Holy Spirit (*charis tou kuriou Iēsou, agapē tou theou*, and *koinōnia tou hagiou pneumatos*," has all three constructions in parallel with one another. Many

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<sup>11</sup>George Panikulam, p.49; K. F. Nickle, The Collection. A Study in Paul's Strategy, (London, 1966) p.106; McDermott, p.222; Brown, p.163 - he is not willing to call this use of *koinōnia* a "collection" because of the genitive, but it is clearly for him another way of saying collection, "a participation in the relief of the saints."

commentators have struggled with the grammar.<sup>12</sup> The main question centers on whether to translate *tou hagiou pneumatōs* in its primary sense of participation "in the Holy Spirit," or, to take it in its more unusual, less frequent sense of "the *koinōnia* that the Holy Spirit has." Concerning his research Campbell says, "Theoretically, *koinōnia* might be used with three dependent genitives, of three different kinds. The genitive of the thing shared, which is used with *koinōnos* and *koinōnein*, may naturally be retained unchanged. Corresponding to the subject of the verb *koinōnein* we may have a subjective genitive. And, a genitive maybe substituted for the dative of the person with whom one shares something, or with whom one associates."<sup>13</sup> Unless there is a

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<sup>12</sup>The Argument is concerned with a) taking the genitive in parallel with the other two phrases, thus a subjective genitive, or b) taking the genitive to be the more common "genitive of the thing shared." Campbell argues, "We have seen that the subjective genitive with *koinōnia* is really very infrequent . . . . It is another arbitrary assumption to suppose that the desire for stylistic uniformity would have him led to use the genitive (as subjective) at the cost of clarity" (p.26-27). Jourdan argues for the subjective by pointing out that the verb *koinōneō* had, although rare, the meaning "to give a share." He takes 2 Cor. 13:13; Phil. 2:1; 1 Cor. 1:9 all as subjectives saying, one needs "to understand them as relating, not to the *person with whom*, or the *thing in which*, the sharing together takes place, but rather to the *person by whom* the sharing is effected" (p.118). McDermott represents still another view when he says, "There has been much debate about the type of genitive: objective or subjective, participation in the Holy Spirit or community effected by the Holy Spirit? . . . . (Against the "participation in" view) Yet we have seen that *koinōnia* may assume both a receptive and a dynamic meaning. One need not limit Paul's grammar to narrowly; perhaps both meanings are intended at least implicitly" (p.223-224).

<sup>13</sup>Campbell, p.5.



compelling reason, it is best to translate Paul according to common usage. The "genitive of the thing shared" in this passage is the Holy Spirit. The problem of a more definite translation will be discussed later.

Phil. 2:1 - the Spirit(*pneumatōs*) is the genitive.

Phil. 3:10 - Paul here uses "*pathēmaton autou* (his sufferings)" as the genitive that modifies *koinōnia*. They are the common things shared.

Phil. 1:5 - In this passage "*eis to euaggelion*" further argues for a focus on the "common thing" as definitive of the *koinōnia*. Instead of the more common genitive, Paul defines it with the preposition "eis."<sup>14</sup> This further substantiates the position that *koinōnia* is "having something in common with someone else."<sup>15</sup> Rather than leaving two descriptive genitives to confuse the reader with both the idea of "association" and "participation in a common thing." Paul defines the common thing more explicitly with *eis*. *Humōn* gives ownership to the *koinōnia* as theirs.

#### THE DATIVE CONSTRUCTION

Paul's emphasis on the common thing is stressed also in his unique usage of the "dative of the thing shared."

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<sup>14</sup>Campbell, p.19. "The use of *eis* may well be due simply to the disinclination to use more than one kind of genitive with *koinōnia* which we noted in the classical authors." *eis to euaggelion* is the common thing shared in this passage, with the genitive *humōn*, either being subjective or possessive.

<sup>15</sup>Campbell, p.5.

With the verb *koinonēō*, Paul transforms the dative, which usually stressed the idea of association, to that of "participation in a common thing." McDermott sees this as an argument for a more dynamic view of *koinōnia* in Paul as he says, "The dynamic action inherent in the verb demands and object. Also, There seems to be no way of avoiding the conclusion that both dynamic and static connotations are contained in the word -- otherwise *metadidonai* and the dative or *koinōneō* and the genitive would have been sufficient to express Paul's thought in the traditional categories."<sup>16</sup> Some examples,

Romans 12:13 - *tais chreiais tōn hagiōn koinōnountes*, the "material" needs of the saints is the common thing shared.

Romans 15:27 - *tois pneumatikois autōn ekoinonēsan*, the spiritual things are the "common things shared." This is essential to Paul's argument for the church at Rome to share with the saints at Jerusalem. He argues that they have a real participation in the Jews "spiritual blessings" which could mean "Jesus as the Messiah, the Gospel message etc." Therefore, they are to share materially with them as well. This is much the same usage as that of Galatians 6:6.

Philippians 4:14 - *sugkoinonēasant mou tē thlipsei*, "having participated in my afflictions." The common thing shared is "my afflictions," with *mou* be a possessive genitive defining the "common thing." The compound verb may

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<sup>16</sup>McDermott, p.74.

be used to express more of a "fellowship, partnership" emphasis. Campbell says, "The very existence of the compound *sugkoinōnein* (which has exactly the same construction as *koinōnein*) suggests that the idea of association with someone else was not always felt to be expressed plainly by *koinōnein*; otherwise there would have been no point in using the compound."<sup>17</sup>

Ephesians 5:11, "*sugkoinōneite tois ergois tois akarpois*," and 1 Timothy 5:22, "*mēde koinōnei hamartiais allotriais*," are completely in concert with the Pauline stress on the "common thing shared" in his created construction "the dative of the thing shared."

With the "dative of the thing shared," Paul creates a construction not known in classical literature which emphasizes even more clearly the primacy of the "common thing." Many see the stress on the "common thing" by virtue of this construction and others even sense a "dynamism" in the word by virtue of the verb and the use of the dative. McDermott says, "There seems to be no way of avoiding the conclusion that both the dynamic and static connotations are contained in the word -- otherwise *metadidonai* and the dative or *koinōneo* and the genitive would have been sufficient to express Paul's thought in the traditional categories."<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>17</sup>Campbell, p.11.

<sup>18</sup>McDermott, p.75.

***Koinōnian: "The Collection"***

Paul's use of *koinōnia* in the absolute sense fails to use the genitive construction, but, one still finds the stress on the "common thing" in the context. Romans 15:26, "*koinōnian tina poiēsasthai eis tous ptōchous tōn hagiōn tōn en hierousalēm,*" 2 Corinthians 9:13, "*haplotēti tēs koinōnias eis autous kai eis pantas,*" and Galatians 2:9, "*dexias koinōnias,*" all assume this "absolute" use by virtue of a "common thing" *koinōnia* in the context. The common share in the Gospel *eis to euaggelion* (2 Cor. 9:13), the common participation in the "spiritual blessings" *tois pneumatikois* (Rom. 15:27), "the grace given to me" -- which surely was assumed to have been given to James and Peter -- *tēn charin tēn dotheisan,* these are the "shared things" that move fellow Christians to care for one another and to maintain their unity with one another.

Paul's order of his presentation of the word *koinōnia* in the Corinthian letters bears this point out. He speaks of the Father's calling the people into the *koinōnia* in his Son *Jesus Christ* in 1 Corinthians 1:9. The call becomes actual in Paul's presentation of the Lord's Supper, the *koinōnia tou haimatos, tou sōmatos* in 1 Corinthians 10:16. A *koinōnia* in Christ, his body and blood, must then be lived out for the sake of others. Thus, 2 Corinthians 9:13 and the "contribution, *koinōnian*" for the saints. Whether one accepts this argument or not, the primacy of the "common

thing shared" remains.

### Grammatical Limitations

Paul specifically employs *koinonia* and its cognates with reference to God and his gracious, saving activity to his people as well as to the resulting christocentric life that is lived for others.<sup>19</sup> The benediction in 2 Corinthians 13 also shows this, as *koinōnia* is used in parallel with *charis* (Grace) and *agapē* (self-less love). These are Gospel words, words of God's initiative and gracious giving to us. Can the "genitive of the thing shared" tell us of this Gospel emphasis which was unknown in mystical literature or legalistic writings? Can a syntactical discussion alone help us explicate fully what this "common thing" is for Paul? Yes and No; it can tell us the importance of the "thing shared," but more investigation must be done.

The grammar and the syntax of Pauline usage have demonstrated the essential importance of the genitive and the primary focus on the "thing shared" in understanding *koinōnia*. But, the full understanding of "the common thing," what it is to Paul, can be established more firmly. The essential difference between Paul's "common things" (usually in the genitive) as compared with those used in classical, Hellenistic or Jewish writings is that such words, such "genitives of the thing shared" (Christ, the Holy Spirit, the

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<sup>19</sup>See chapter 2, footnote #3.

Gospel, the Sufferings of Christ, the Body and the Blood of Christ) have never before been used with *koinōnia*. Therefore each word must be analyzed on its own terms, grammatically and theologically.

Many seek to find a more "dynamic" understanding of *koinōnia*, either with the verb or with the genitive categories. F. Blass and A. Debrunner enter the debate over the true nature of the genitives (whether they are subjective or the "genitive of the thing shared") but does not solve it by saying,

"In many instances the genitives *theou, christou* in Paul are used only to express some relationship not exactly defined; . . . The division of the genitive into objective or subjective etc. is really only an attempt to set off several special types among the manifold possibilities of the general function of the adnominal genitive which is to denote a relationship."<sup>20</sup>

One must then not look only to the construction and the grammar for a full understanding of *koinōnia* because the genitive construction itself will not tell us what these specific words are to Paul absolutely. Investigating these words in other passages as well as investigating Paul's use of *koinōnia* in context with other phrases will determine more fully the meaning of *koinōnia* for Paul.

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<sup>20</sup>F. Blass and A. DeBrunner, A Greek Grammar of the New Testament, trans. by Robert Funk, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961), (163), p.90.

Words, Parallel Words, Parallel Constructions

"*Christou*(Christ), *pneumatos*(Spirit), *pathēmatōn autou*(his sufferings), *agapē*(love), and *charis*(grace)" are words that are used with *koinōnia*. The choice of these words can hardly be accidental. For Paul these words are words of the Gospel; they are words of God's initiative and gracious giving to us. McDermott says,

"It is God's grace which does everything in salvation. Yet St. Paul never tires of warning the Christians to stand firm in their faith. . . . A classic text is Phil.2:12-13, '*meta phobou kai tromou tēn heautōn sōtērion katēgazesthe. ho theos gar estin ho energōn en hūmin kai to thelein kai to energein huper tēs eudokias* (With fear and trembling accomplish your own salvation. For God is the one who is working in you indeed the desiring and the working on behalf of (his) good pleasure.'. . . All is owed to the lover, nothing to the beloved."<sup>21</sup>

The Gospel aspect of *koinōnia* is demonstrated most clearly in 1 Corinthians 1:9 - "*pistos ho theos di' hou eklēthēte eis koinōnian tou huiou autou Iēsou Christou tou kuriou hēmōn.*" The verb is the aorist, passive (*eklēthēte*). This divine passive clearly shows the divine

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<sup>21</sup>McDermott, p.76. In his exposition he affirms the grace of God in justification but always makes it conditional upon our response. This is a misunderstanding of the "genitive" as a static "thing" that requires something in man for it to become actual. His argument for a more dynamic understanding of "koinonia" is excellent, but he fails to see that the strength of that argument is that God's gracious gifts are not dead things but living and enlivening things. For Paul himself says, "Therefore, God is at work in us both the willing and the doing according to his good pleasure(Phil. 2:13). Paul also says, "It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me"(Gal. 2:20). The genitives are full of life because of God's promises, God's name, God's presence.

initiative and gracious giving of God. The genitive of the thing shared is "Jesus Christ, his Son." Here the genitive can easily be a "genitive of source," or a "subjective genitive." But it is better to take the more common usage, "participation in Jesus as 'common thing.'" Still, *koinōnia* is a gift from the Father defined by participation in Jesus Christ, his Son. A Christ *koinōnia* is a *koinōnia* with the Father and with one another. When Fritz Rienecker translates 1 Cor. 1:9, "the blending of two wills into a common cause,"<sup>22</sup> he has missed the significance of the genitive. A Christ *koinōnia* is a gift, a life-giving gift, because Christ determines and conveys the *koinōnia*.<sup>23</sup> He is the gift by which the world is reconciled to God.<sup>24</sup>

In his discussion of *koinos* and *koinōnia*, J. G. Davies stresses that the New Testament emphasis upon the divine initiative is inseparable from the discussion of *koinōnia*. He says, "The New Testament is not concerned with a man who was elevated to the Godhead, but with the living God who descended to manhood."<sup>25</sup> At this point one may

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<sup>22</sup>Fritz Rienecker and Cleon Rogers, Linguistic Key to the Greek New Testament, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1976), p.386.

<sup>23</sup>See Ephesians chapter two.

<sup>24</sup>2 Cor. 5:18-20.

<sup>25</sup>J. G. Davies, Members One of Another, (London: A. R. Mowbray, 1958), p.7. Here the Gospel is explicated well as Davies discusses how the Incarnation is Jesus becoming "koinos" for us. No matter how our reason will have no God who is "common," the truth remains that what God has



observe the minimal importance of the relative absence of the *koinōn*- group in the LXX. The proclamation of God who would locate himself so that he can be found, so that there can be a relationship with God and man, this is a central theme in the Old Testament.<sup>26</sup>

In *koinōnia* there is the divine initiative, there is grace because the genitives are words of grace. "While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us (Romans 5:8)." A Christ *koinōnia*, *koinōnia tou Christou*, is a Gospel *koinōnia*. This is central to Paul.

These words are not static things either. Rather,

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sanctified, we are not to despise (Acts 10:14-15).

<sup>26</sup>Much is made of this absence when a supposed difference between the Old Testament and the New Testament is proposed. While it is true that the *koinōn*- group is relatively absent in the Old Testament (see Chapter one), the theology of God who descends, locates himself for man so that man might have a relationship with Him is prevalent. This paper cannot probe this further, but it is just as possible for Paul to use this new word, *koinōnia*, to describe Old Testament theology post incarnation, death and resurrection of Christ. It may be that one is merely speaking of new wineskins for the same wine. For in Christ circumcision gives way to Baptism in His name; In Christ passover gives way to the Lord's Supper; In Christ the shadow of the Old Testament word is brought to light in the *logos* made flesh. Tent of meeting, Tabernacle, Temple, covenant, prophet, etc. these are things that must be analyzed before a definite statement about Old Testament/New Testament congruity, or incongruity concerning *koinōnia* can be made.

This emphasis was made in each of the major sources concerning the absence of *koinōnia* in the Old Testament when they said that a Jew would never be "koinōnos" with God. Herein is expressed the sense of distance which the righteous Israelite feels from God as different from the Greek (see Chapter 1, footnote #34). The degree of that statement is open to question. For a righteous God became man. This is the statement of Scripture.

they are life creating and sustaining "things" which convey the *koinōnia* which is theirs to give. Jesus is the living bread.<sup>27</sup> His words are Spirit and life.<sup>28</sup> Our "flesh" may profit nothing but his flesh won for us our salvation.<sup>29</sup> In John 17 Jesus speaks again and again of the word and its central significance to faith. The gifts that the Lord gives are not dead things, but full of life. For a dynamic understanding of *koinōnia* only has to look at the "common thing."<sup>30</sup>

The struggle to fully understand Pauline usage of *koinōnia* is demonstrated by the many interpreters who see a "subjective" emphasis in his use. This is natural because

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<sup>27</sup>John 6:51.

<sup>28</sup>John 6:63.

<sup>29</sup>See Herman Sasse's discussion of the term "sarx" in Johannine usage, We Confess the Sacraments, vol. 2, trans. by Norman Nagel, (St. Louis: Concordia Pub. House, 1973) pp.79-81.

<sup>30</sup>Here I believe McDermott goes wrong. He does a great job with the data, arguing for a dynamic view of *koinōnia* and its cognates. He argues quite convincingly that even the "dative of the thing shared" used with the verbal form *koinōneō* demonstrates a more dynamic view of the word. Paul's change in construction, "the dative of the thing," is for him proof of this because the verbal form demands an object (McDermott, p.71-75). But, later in his paper, he sadly dismisses the sacramental, dynamic view of *koinōnia* in the Lord's Supper as something "effected by" the body and blood. He argues against himself. There is a dynamic, fellowship-giving view of *koinōnia* and one only needs to look more closely at the words that Paul uses to define the "common things." The genitive phrase has argued for the interpretation "participation in the common thing." But never has there been such a common thing participated in before.

*koinōnia* is used in the context of the Gospel and God's initiative in Christ to redeem his world. But, Campbell says it well, "The subjective genitive is infrequent; <sup>31</sup> In only one passage in the New Testament do we find what seems to be certainly a subjective genitive with *koinōnia* -- Philippians 1:5;<sup>32</sup> And, Whenever *koinōnia* is followed by a genitive which can without difficulty be taken as a genitive of the thing shared, it is best to give it its primary signification of 'participation in.'"<sup>33</sup> The grammar, the primacy of the common thing (even if not in the genitive) moves us to translate *koinōnia* as "participation in a common thing." The subjective aspect of the genitive is minimized, but the question remains what are these "divine, common gifts" for Paul, and what is the unique "partnership" that they convey to those who are "common participators?" A case study on 2 Corinthians 13:13 is included to demonstrate the foregoing discussion and chapter III will focus more specifically on the book in which Paul uses *koinonia* and its cognates most fully.

#### A Case Study: 2 Corinthians 13:13

*"hē charis tou Iēsou kuriou kai hē agapē tou theou kai hē koinōnia tou hagiou pneumatōs meta pantōn humōn. amēn."*

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<sup>31</sup>Campbell, p.6.

<sup>32</sup>Campbell, p.19.

<sup>33</sup>Campbell, p.20.

2 Corinthians 13:13 is a pivotal passage. Here Paul's use of parallel words and constructions evidence the understanding of the "dynamic, Gospel aspect" of the genitive "participated in."

*Koinōnia* in 2 Cor. 13:13 is in parallel with *charis* (grace) and *agapē* (love). The genitives are the Father (*theou*), Son (*kuriou Iēsou*) and the Holy Spirit (*hagiu pneumatos*). The debate continues over the character of these genitives. The first two are taken to be subjective genitives, "The grace which our Lord gives(has)," and "the love which the Father gives(or has)," while the *koinōnia tou hagiu pneumatos* is nevertheless argued to be an objective genitive, "a participation in the Holy Spirit." J. Y. Campbell argues for the more common 'participation in the Holy Spirit' because the subjective genitive can mean only the *koinōnia* that the Spirit has, not gives."<sup>34</sup>

Grammatically Campbell is correct, but does this do justice to the specific words, "*tou christou, theou, pneumatos*, that Paul uses?" Does this view adequately explain the parallel words *charis* (grace) and *agapē* (love) that are specifically used in context with *koinōnia*. No, not fully. While Campbell argues that the "thing shared" is the key to *koinōnia*, here he lays emphasis on the phrase "participation in the Holy Spirit."<sup>35</sup> To de-emphasize the

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<sup>34</sup>Campbell, p.26.

<sup>35</sup>Ibid., p.37.

dynamic aspect of the common thing (here "*tou pneumatos*") by switching the emphasis from fully understanding "*pneuma*(Spirit)" in Paul to a more generic understanding of the whole phrase, "participation in the Spirit," he fails to do justice to Paul's understanding of the Spirit as gift given and gift bestowing.<sup>36</sup>

Others argue for the subjective genitive and they argue that it has "dynamic force," meaning, "that which is effected/imparted by the Holy Spirit."<sup>37</sup> This argument oversteps the boundaries of good grammar.

Others argue that implicit in *koinōnia* lies both an objective and subjective force.<sup>38</sup> George Jourdan also says,

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<sup>36</sup>Jourdan argues that "if it could be proved that 2 Cor. 13:13 and Phil. 2:1 referred to a sharing together in the Holy Spirit, the opportunity might be provided for some to insist that the spiritual benefit indicated is a quality inherent in man" (p.118). The reason why this can not be true is not to be determined by the particular grammatical category, but by Paul's understanding of the Holy Spirit elsewhere in his writings. Christ, the Spirit, the body and blood of Christ, are Gospel words for Paul.

<sup>37</sup>McDermott, p.223, "There has been much debate about the type of genitive: objective(he must understand this objective use as the "thing shared" for this is how he speaks elsewhere) or subjective, participation in the Holy Spirit or community effected by the Holy Spirit." (See also L.S. Thornton, The Common Life in the Body of Christ, [London: n.p. 1963], p.70; Panikulam, p.70 where he says concerning 2 Corinthians 13:13, "The Spirit thus becomes the determining power of the whole Christian existence. . . . one then can rightly conclude that any inclusion of the *koinonia tou pneumatos hagiou* into a subjective genitive or into an objective genitive exclusively is a wrong interpretation").

<sup>38</sup>McDermott, p.224. "One need not limit Paul's grammar too narrowly, perhaps both meanings are intended." McDermott argues for a dynamic understanding of "*koinōnia*" by in-

"It must be admitted that it is possible to regard the genitive of the third element of the blessing, *koinōnia tou hagiou pneumatos*, as either subjective or objective. The first two elements stand clear. 'The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ' can be nothing else than 'the grace which the Lord Jesus Christ gives,' and likewise, 'the love of God' must be 'the love with which God enriches man.' But the third element can be interpreted in more ways than one: either 'the sharing together in the Holy Spirit' or 'the sharing together effected by the Holy Spirit.'"<sup>39</sup>

It is better to say, the grammar makes the primary interpretation, "the *koinōnia* in the Holy Spirit." But, common participation in the "Holy Spirit" binds those who are *koinōnos* because of the character of the Holy Spirit. Even Campbell says, "It is true that participation in the same Spirit necessarily creates fellowship between those who so participate, but it does not follow that a writer who speaks of participation in the Spirit necessarily has the resulting fellowship in mind."<sup>40</sup> This is not any writer though, this is Paul. And for Paul, the Holy Spirit is both gift received in common and gift which creates life and salvation.<sup>41</sup>

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corporating data from the use of the verb "*koinōneō*" in Paul.

<sup>39</sup>George V. Jourdan, "Koinonia in I Corinthians 10:16," Journal of Biblical Literature, 67 (1948): 116.

<sup>40</sup>Campbell, p.26.

<sup>41</sup>Paul speaks of the Holy Spirit both as gift received(static), and as the enlivening, leading, sanctifying personal indwelling of God in the hearts of believers.

In 2 Corinthians 1:22, 5:5 - Paul calls the Spirit "a deposit in our hearts, guaranteeing what is to come." Yet, he does not fail to call this seemingly static gift, the one

The "Holy Spirit" is the "common thing," but he is no static gift. Neither are the other "things shared" in Pauline usage. They (Christou, sōματος, haimatos, euaggelion, etc.) are gifts that give life. They alone are God's, given, effecting and sustaining.

The tension in the debate over what kind of words these genitives are can not be fully resolved through grammatical discussions alone(see footnotes #34-36).

McDermott says,

"*Koinōnia* may assume both a receptive and a dynamic meaning. One need not limit Paul's grammar too narrowly; perhaps both meanings are intended at least implicitly."<sup>42</sup>

Regardless, the danger exists in under-translation. The exclusion of the dynamic character of the "common thing" runs the risk of missing the gracious, bestowed character of *koinōnia* defined by Paul's understanding of just what these "common things" are. It opens one to a misunderstanding of *koinōnia* as mere "participation" by denying the "dynamic,

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who pours out God's love into our hearts(Romans 5:5), the one who gave life to Christ and gives life to Christians (Romans 8:11), the person of the triune God who lives within each believer(1 Corinthians 3:16), and the one who sanctifies us(1 Corinthians 6:11). In 1 Corinthians 12:13, he speaks of the "being baptized by the Spirit," and, also, calling the spirit the object of our reception, "we were all given the one Spirit to drink." The grammar of *koinōnia tou hagiou pneumatos* would have the interpretation, "participation in the Holy Spirit." This is right. But the question remains, "what is the Holy Spirit for Paul, the thing in which all participate?" This only he can answer and he does. The Spirit is the dynamic, life-giving gift from God to his people.

<sup>42</sup>McDermott, p.224.

gracious gift" quality of the "common thing shared."

Grammatical categories alone are not able to convey what is unique in Paul's usage. The genitive construction, and the emphasis on the "common thing" are primary in any interpretation of *koinōnia*, but never before has there been a genitive "*tou Christou, tou hagiou Pneumatos*." Martin Luther says it well, "When a word is used of Christ, it becomes a new word."<sup>43</sup> Christ, his Spirit, his body and blood, give content to *koinōnia*. *Koinōnia* is "an intimate relationship that is given, effected, sustained and defined by these "things in common." One must now examine further Pauline usage of these "common things" and parallel words and constructions for a fuller understanding of *koinōnia* in his writings.

"*Charis*" and "*agapē*," which are foundational for Paul's theology in general, are used in 2 Cor. 13:13 in construction with the genitives "*tou kuriou Iēsou*(the Lord Jesus)" and "*tou theou*(God)." These words are gifts for Paul which find their origin in the gracious will of "*theou*" and "*kuriou Iēsou*" and are given to mankind for their salvation through Christ. We can only hear what Paul is saying when we respect the uniqueness of these genitives and parallel words for him.

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<sup>43</sup>Martin Luther, "Disputation on Jn.1:14, 1539," *Luther's Works*, vol. 38, ed. by Martin Lehmann, (Philadelphia: Fortress), p.253. The phrase "designations with a new meaning" is "*fieri nova vocabula*." (Weimar, XXXIX, II, 30, 18).



The phrases could, for Paul, be interchangeable with one another. One may easily speak of the "*koinōnia tou theou, agapē tou christou, charis tou hagiou pneumatos* (the *koinonia* of God, the love of Christ and the grace of the Holy Spirit)," or, "*koinōnia tou christou, charis tou theou, agapē tou hagiou pneumatos* (the *koinōnia* of Christ, the grace of God and the love of the Holy Spirit)." Paul specifically uses the phrase "*agapē tou hagiou pneumatos* (the love of the Holy Spirit)" and others elsewhere.<sup>44</sup>

Chrysostom argued this way when he said,

"Thus the things of the Trinity are undivided: and whereas the communion is of the Spirit, it hath been found of the Son; and whereas the grace is of the Son, it is also of the Father and of the Holy Spirit."<sup>45</sup>

Jourdan comments on Chrysostom saying,

"Thus surely this great commentator made it manifest that he regarded *koinōnia, charis* and *agapē* to be gifts from the three Divine Persons equally. That being so, all the genitives of the blessing must be taken for subjectives."<sup>46</sup>

To recognize the "common thing" as dynamic according to grammatical categories alone does not yet exhaust the

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<sup>44</sup>Romans 15:30. Other instances: 1 Cor. 1:9 - *koinōnia tou Christou*; Rom. 8:35 - *tēs agapēs tou Christou*; Rom. 5:15 - *charis tou theou*; 1 John. 1:3 - *koinōnia meta tou patros*. . . . 1:5-6 *koinōnia* is spoken of with reference to "*theos*." There are many other references besides these. The point to be made is that Paul is able to use these words interchangeably, that is quite clearly the case.

<sup>45</sup>St. John Chrysostom, "Homilies on Second Corinthians," ed. Philip Schaff, *NPNF*, 1st Series, vol.12, (New York: Christian Literature Co, 1889), p. 419.

<sup>46</sup>Jourdan, p. 117.

matter as already observed. What must be shown is that the gifts of "grace, love, and *koinōnia*" are not only gifts which "God(*theou*), Christ(*Iēsou*), and the Spirit(*pneumatos*)" have but gifts which are given. This is surely the case in Paul. The parallel words "*charis*(grace)" and "*agapē*(love)" are gifts which are given. Their origin is in "God(*theos*), Christ(*christos*)," and the "*hagia pneuma*," but more importantly these are constantly spoken of as being given to people for their salvation. Such is the unity of the Trinity in the bestowal of our salvation.

"*Agapē*" is used in Galatians 2:20 where Paul says, "I live by faith in the Son of God who loved(*agapēsantos*) me and gave himself up for me." Ephesians 2:4 speaks of God being rich in mercy "on account of much love(*agapen*) with which he loved us(*ēgapēsen*). . . . by grace you are saved." The divine passive, "*ēgapēmenoi*" is used in Col. 3:12, calling believers "those who have been loved."

"*Charis*" is a gift in Rom. 3:24 (also Eph. 3:17). 1 Cor. 1:4 speaks of the "*charis*" given, which is also the context of the phrase "*koinōnian tou huiou autou Iēsou christou*(the "fellowship" created, sustained in his son Jesus Christ." For Paul the words in 2 Cor. 13:13 are words of grace, God's gracious gifts to people. They are gifts which are alive, dynamic.<sup>47</sup> They are words of divine

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<sup>47</sup>"*charis, Christos, pneuma*" etc. are all used by Paul with "*zoē*, life." (See Rom. 5:10, 21; 6:23; 8:2, 10; 2 Cor. 4:10; Gal. 6:8; Phil. 2:16 etc.) These same words that "give

initiative and gracious giving. They are Gospel words, the "dynamis" of God for our salvation (Rom. 1:16; 1 Cor. 1:18). The "common things" in Pauline usage are unique because by their nature they are the source and also the conveyors of the *koinōnia*. The "common things," most often in the genitive not only effect but bestow the *koinōnia*.

### Summary

The character of the "common thing" is a grammatical and theological question that is and must be involved in every discussion of *koinōnia*. The question of how God deals with men is essential in one's understanding of *koinōnia*. It is no surprise that *koinōnia* is used concerning the Incarnation in Hebrews 2. It is an incarnation word. It is a Gospel word. It is a dynamic, bestowing word because of the "common things shared."

The "common things" -- most often the genitive of the thing shared, but also the dative of the thing, the thing defined by certain prepositions -- are the life giving factors in a dynamic understanding of *koinōnia*. Therefore a proper distinction is to be observed between a dynamic view of *koinōnia* and a dynamic view of the "common things participated in" which define, even bestow *koinōnia*. The

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life" are the genitives that Paul uses with *koinōnia*. They are the "dynamis (Rom.1:16)" of the Gospel created in the suffering (*pathēmatos autou*), death and resurrection of our Lord. The power of the Gospel is his to give and he gives it to us in his life-giving means, his word and his name with the water, and his body and blood.

data show that the character of the noun is determined by grammatical concerns, further Pauline use of the word, and parallel constructions. Therefore, *koinōnia* is a gracious gift because the words Paul uses, Christ, his Spirit, his body and blood, and his sufferings, are dynamic, grace bestowing **things** in common.

The grammar has done its job. It has focused the discussion on the "common things." But Paul moves us beyond the grammatical questions to questions of Law and Gospel. To "participate," or, to "have fellowship" becomes a secondary, yet important characteristic in comparison to the "element shared." The "element shared" is Gospel, pure gift. It is life-giving, dynamic. So, then the *koinōnia*. The "common things" are the key to *koinōnia* but never have "common things" carried such freight. *Koinōnia* takes on the characteristics of these particular "common things," the life-giving gifts of the gracious giver. This is nowhere more clearly stated than in Paul's discussion of *koinōnia* in 1 Corinthians 10.

## CHAPTER III

### *KOINŌNIA* IN 1 CORINTHIANS 10

In light of the foregoing, the critical passage in 1 Corinthians 10 must now be examined. The Pauline discussion concerning *koinōnia* in this chapter is a water-shed passage that divides interpreters. Many refuse to acknowledge that Christ's real body and blood are "participated in" through the bread and wine,<sup>1</sup> even though Paul's exact phrase is

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<sup>1</sup>Even those who have been cited thus far in the paper defending the "genitive of the thing shared," concerning these verses opt for a more "spiritualized, or general" view concerning *koinōnia*. Jourdan calls this *koinōnia*, "the realization of a fraternal or communal 'sharing together' in Christ, the remembrance or memorial of the death of Christ." (p.123) McDermott sees "sacramentalism" as a form of Hellenism for Jews would never understand a *koinōnia* with God in food. He says, "Even Philo never said that the sacrifice brought about *koinōnia*, whereby the worshippers participated in Yahweh" (p.220). J. Y. Campbell is even more emphatic when he says, "There is no reference in this passage to any kind of mystical union, mediated through food, either with God or with Christ" (p.25). First, much of this thought is built on the erroneous assumption that "the Jews had no sacraments." One must do a more detailed study on the function of circumcision, the tabernacle, the sacrifices etc. before such a statement can be made. A further question here is whether the Jewish faith accurately promoted the Old Testament faith and whether post-exilic Judaism has any relationship to the "faith of the Israelites as people of the promise" in the Old Testament. After all, the Jews could never envision a *koinōnia* between God and man and yet the Bible proclaims as fact the incarnation! (Hebrews 2:14, John 1:14). When the fulfillment of the Old Testament promises, Jesus Christ, comes, they refuse to

"*koinonia tou sōmatos*(in the body)" and "*koinōnia tou haimatos*(in the blood)." Much spiritualizing and generalizing occurs. Thus, the meaning, the importance of the "genitive of the thing shared" and the emphasis on the "common thing" becomes an even more vital aspect in the understanding of *koinōnia*.

The discussion of "*koinōnia tou sōmatos*(in the body)" and "*koinonia tou haimatos*(in the blood)" must then be guided by Paul's words, the "common things." These are gifting, life-creating, and sustaining words as has been demonstrated in the previous chapter. They are Gospel words (words of grace, words that give life because of what they inherently are) as Robert Roth says, "the Word enfleshed."<sup>2</sup> This data must be a guide for a proper interpretation of chapter 10 in Paul's first (technically the second) letter to the Corinthians.

No matter what the interpretation, it must also be stated that for all the authors researched, 1 Corinthians 10:16 is seen as fundamental passage for a full understanding of *koinōnia*. George Jourdan says, "It is in 1 Corinthians 10:16 that we perceive the fullness of meaning

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receive Him. Even Paul must be aware of this distinction as one who was formerly persecutor of the church (a faithful Pharisee) until he met the risen and ascended Jesus Christ on the road to Damascus. Secondly, the genitive construction and the "thing shared" argues against such spiritualizing.

<sup>2</sup>Robert Roth, The Meaning and Practice of the Lord's Supper ed. Helmut Lehman (Philadelphia: Mulenberg Press, 1961), p.14.

(of *koinōnia*) further expanded and given a definite and particular application."<sup>3</sup> George Panikulam further defines the importance of these verses when he says, "In 1 Corinthians 10:16ff a concrete mode of attaining the fellowship with the Son is given."<sup>4</sup> J. G. Davies also says, "Indeed the Eucharist is the principal means whereby the *koinōnia* is realized. This is succinctly expressed by Paul in 1 Corinthians 10:16."<sup>5</sup> This paper argues then for a Gospel - sacramental<sup>6</sup> understanding of 1 Corinthians 10:16

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<sup>3</sup>George V. Jourdan, "Koinōnia in I Corinthians 10:16," Journal of Bible Literature, 67(1948), p.119.

<sup>4</sup>George Panikulam, Koinōnia in the New Testament: a Dynamic Expression of the Christian life, (Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1979), p.17.

<sup>5</sup>J. G. Davies, Members One of Another, (London: A.R. Mowbray, 1958), p. 21.

<sup>6</sup>The word "sacramental" is used to describe the special, saving presence of almighty God within the limits of spatial humanity, namely that the personal God of the Scriptures, Father, Son and Holy Spirit willingly locates himself in common things so that man, in the limits of his humanity, might be able to enter into a relationship with this personal God.

This proclamation is very biblical even outside of the discussion of fellowship(*koinōnia*). One only has to look to the biblical proclamation of the tent of meeting/tabernacle (Exodus 29:42; 33:7; 40:34-35; Leviticus 1:1; 9:23; Numbers 1:1), the Temple (1 Kings 8:27-30; 2 Chronicles 6:18-21; 7:1-2; Habakkuk 2:20; John 2:19-21; Revelation 21:22), the incarnate Christ(John 1:14; 2:19-21; Ephesians 2:21), the words of the Scripture(John 6:63), the meaning/power/use of the Name of God (1 Kings 8:27-30; Matthew 18:20; Acts 4:12) in the Scripture(especially as it applies to Baptism(Matthew 28:19), and of course the whole discussion of the Lord's Supper and the sacramental presence of the body and blood in, with and under the bread and wine to see that God has always come "all the way" to the "to *koinon*" point for man to redeem and restore him.

Once again, the words of King Solomon challenge even the

because of the importance and significance of the "common things" -- here further emphasized by the primary usage of *koinōnia* + the genitive of the thing shared -- in the giving/receiving of *koinōnia*.

When Paul speaks of a *koinōnia tou huiou* in 1 Corinthians 1:9 the emphasis on "the common thing shared" moves one to ask, "where is this Son so that we might receive Him in common?" Paul clarifies the phrase "*tou huiou*" by offering a "definitive element shared later in this letter," *tou sōmatos, tou haimatos* (1 Corinthians 10:16).<sup>7</sup> Thus, the importance of this chapter in the whole

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most rationalistic hearts to believe when he says, "But will God really dwell on earth? The heavens, even the highest heavens cannot contain you. How much less this temple I have built! Yet give attention to your servant's prayer and his plea for mercy, O Lord my God. Hear the cry and the prayer that your servant is praying in your presence this day. May your eyes be open toward this temple night and day, this place of which you said, 'My Name shall be there,' so that you will hear the prayer your servant prays towards this place. . . . Hear from heaven, your dwelling place, and when you hear, forgive" (1 Kings 8:27-30).

<sup>7</sup>Panikulam, p.17, He argues that "In 1 Corinthians 10:16 a concrete mode of attaining the fellowship with the Son is given." See also Heinrich Sessemann's Der Begriff koinonia im Neuen Testament (Giessen: n.p., 1933), p. 51, who says, "Paulus denkt nicht statisch; für ihn ist die Berufung in die Gemeinschaft Christi nicht ein so weit abgeschlossenes Ereignis der Vergangenheit, dass der Glaubige nicht im Herrnmahl die *koinōnia Christou* immer aufs neue erleben konnte und musste. Dynamisches Denken ist für Paulus charakteristisch; Gott, der die Glaubigen einmal in die Gemeinschaft seines Sohnes berufen hat, vergewissert sie im Herrnmahl immer wieder der *koinōnia tou huiou autou*. . . . Paul's thought is not static; for him the call to the fellowship with Christ is not such a closed event of the past that the faithful cannot and must not live anew the *koinonia Christou* in the Lord's Supper. Dynamic thought is characteristic of Paul; God who once called the faithful to



understanding of *koinōnia* and its significance for the modern church can not be over-emphasized.

### The Cultural Context and Setting

What are the issues of concern in the Corinthian congregation. To what kind of people does Paul write? To what degree does the cultural milieu influence or even determine the meaning of *koinōnia* for Paul? Does it have any influence at all? The biblical and cultural context of the letter to the Corinthians is essential for understanding Paul's usage of the word because *koinōnia* is a real participation with God that is to be realized in the lives of real people who have real sin and need real forgiveness. The cultural setting was certainly affecting the reception of the Gospel in the congregation and in many ways Paul was calling the Corinthian people out from their cultural surroundings. Gunther Bornkamm says,

Corinth was a city of an entirely different character from Athens, which though long insignificant politically, was still world-famed as a center of culture. . . . In Paul's day it was a wealthy modern commercial city, a center of trade . . . . The quite large amounts of information . . . afford a vivid picture of the hustle and bustle in the huge market place, the temples, theatres, and baths. But they also reveal the city's proverbial immorality. The Isthmian games held outside the gates attracted many visitors. This background helps us to understand both the many religious, social, and moral problems treated at length in the Corinthian letters and also what these

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the fellowship with His Son reassures them in the Lord's Supper of a *koinōnia tou huiou autou*."

say about the extremely proletarian character of the Church (1 Cor.1:26).<sup>8</sup>

The cultural setting then was the Hellenistic, pagan world. It was a world where religion was viewed pragmatically. Even the gods were not "separate, holy" beings. They were like greater, more powerful men, and they had what man lacked and yearned for.<sup>9</sup> There were many "similarities" between men and the gods. Men and the gods were not moral, or even spiritual opposites, they merely differed by degree.

Religion, therefore, was a matter of getting in on what the gods possessed or pleasing the gods to ensure blessings in this life. The movement for the religious person was inward, upward, and progressive, moving more and more to godlike levels, but most of all, pragmatic.<sup>10</sup> It was

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<sup>8</sup>Gunther Bornkamm, Paul, trans. D.M.G. Stalker (New York: Harper and Row, 1971) p.68.

<sup>9</sup>Eduard Lohse, The New Testament Environment, trans. John E. Steely (Nashville: Abingdon, 1981), p.223-225.

<sup>10</sup>Lohse, pp. 241-242, 253-276. In this discussion, Lohse summarizes the Hellenistic mystery religions that spoke of man's salvation through participation in "mystery rites." Also, starting on 253, he gives a detailed analysis of the Gnostic religion. This was the supreme, eclectic blend of all the hellenistic religions into one. It speaks of the different levels that one must climb by virtue of one's "gnosis(knowledge)." While Gnosticism remained less defined at the time of Paul, Lohse argues that it surely was of "pre-Christian" origin(p.254). And, he speaks of the "pneumatics" of 1 Corinthians (1 Corinthians 4:8) as those who were a mix between Christian understanding and Gnostic self-understanding (p.272). He speaks of the Corinthian problems, "the opinion that Christian liberty knows no boundaries and that everything is permissible (1 Corinthians

an anthropocentric understanding of salvation whereby man was deified. For the adversaries of Paul in 1 Corinthians the words "*pneumatikoi* (pertaining to the spirit), *psuchikoi* (pertaining to world, external life), and *sarkinos* (pertaining to the flesh)" were levels in man to be climbed through religious experience and practice.<sup>11</sup>

Not only was such religiosity introspective, it was often either pietistic or over-indulgent (See I Corinthians 6, 8, and 10). Paul's gospel message was subject to this eclectic, anthropocentric manipulation. J. T. Mueller says,

As Corinth increased in wealth, it correspondingly grew in wickedness, becoming rapidly a city of wealth and vice. Here "the vice of the East and West met and clasped hands in the work of human degradation." Religion was turned into prostitution. The presiding deities were the sea-god Poseidon, in whose honor the Isthmian Games were held, and Aphrodite, whose beautiful temple crowned the Acro Corinthus which towered above the city to a height of about two thousand feet. . . . So vile was the debauchery perpetrated in the city that the verb "*korinthiazesthai*," or to do a thing in "Corinthian style," became a synonym for the most vicious immorality. To be a "Corinthian" meant to be a refined and polished moral pervert.<sup>12</sup>

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6:12; 10:23) and the emphasis that "the body does not matter, only the spirit (1 Corinthians 6:12-20) as being "early forms of Christian gnosticism" (p.273).

<sup>11</sup>See Löhse, pp.265-267. He argues that the teaching of Gnosticism was so influential that many of the New Testament writings were polemical works in contrast to this oriental, syncretistic religious system. See Philipians; John; 1,2,3 John.

<sup>12</sup>J. T. Mueller, The Church at Corinth (St. Louis: Concordia Pub. House, 1928), p.15; See also Donald Guthrie, New Testament Introduction (Downer's Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1970), p.421.

Such was the cultural context of the church. In an eclectic milieu such as Corinth, one is not surprised to find the main problems of the church being "factions" (1 Corinthians 1:10; 3:3-4), "arrogance" (1 Corinthians 3:18-21, 4:18), "license" (1 Corinthians 6:12-17), and gross "immorality" (1 Corinthians 5-6).

In this context the apostle proclaimed a Gospel message that absolutely contradicted the popular notions of religion. He claims to know nothing except "Christ and him crucified: a stumbling block to the Jews and foolishness to the Gentiles (1 Cor.2:2)." Paul's hope alone is in the forgiveness of sins which Christ won for us at the cross. He calls Christ Jesus "our righteousness, holiness and redemption (1 Corinthians 1:30)," salvation completely outside of man. The church at Corinth was quickly being pulled away from its life source, Christ and his cross, towards a anthropocentric salvation of intuitive "knowledge" and "pneumatic" experience.<sup>13</sup> Even though Paul spent 18

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<sup>13</sup>Leonard Goppelt, Jesus, Paul and Judaism: An Introduction to New Testament Theology, (New York: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1964), p. 272-273. Goppelt argues that Paul was fighting a "Judaistic Gnosticism" in the Corinthians. These "pneumatics(p.171) boasted of visions(2 Corinthians 3:7; 12:1-10), mighty works(2 Cor. 12:12) and license according to their spiritual strength(1 Cor. 1:11; 3:1-4; 4:8; 5:1; 6:12; 7:40; 8:1; 9:1; 13:4; 14:1; 15:12). He argues that "proponents of this religiosity had discovered an authentic self by means of intuitive knowledge which they felt was revelation. . . . Similar to the mystics, they withdrew into this genuine pneumatic self and retreated from the corporeal life in this world." p.174.

Lohse also argues that the influence was plaguing the Corinthian believers especially in the area of salvation.

months in Corinth<sup>14</sup> establishing them in the faith, his work was being eroded and subordinated by such syncretism.

The Corinthian ways -- influenced by the cultural religious setting -- of thinking about God, religion, man, and the world were subordinating the Gospel to themselves. Theirs was a view of rights and power, of autonomy and self-centeredness. Paul challenges this with the teaching, "Everything is permissible, but not everything is beneficial. . . . Nobody should seek his own good, but the good of others." (1 Corinthians 10:23-24). Paul lays the foundation for his rebuilding of the Corinthian church with his words "*Pistos ho theos di' hou eklēthēte eis koinōnian tou huiou autou Iēsou Christou tou kyriou hēmōn*" (1 Corinthians 1:9), *koinōnia tou haimatos, koinōnia tou sōματος. . . . hen sōma hoi polloi esmen, hoi gar pantes ek tou henos artou metechomen*, (1 Corinthians 10:16-17).

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Gnostic salvation was that "the soul (the divine substance in man) must reascend into the higher world from which it came" (p.259). The gnostic does not value "history" (p.261) as such, but the eternal truth proposed by the story. "Thus the "pneumatics" professed that they had already been perfected by the Spirit. . . . that Christian liberty knows no bounds (1 Cor.6:12; 10:23), and what a person does or experiences in the body does not matter because only the spirit matters (1 Cor.6:12-20)" p.272-273.

Whether Gnosticism was at this time an already well-defined theology one can not say. But the elements that were essential to a well-defined gnostic religiosity were already plaguing the church at Corinth. This is sure.

<sup>14</sup>Paul was at Corinth between 51 and 53 AD based on the data for the proconsulate of Gallio. For a discussion on the dates, see Donald Guthrie, New Testament Introduction, (Downers Grove: Inter Varsity Press, 1970), pp. 662-9.

Hellenistic influences were exerting themselves on the Corinthian church. Such influences needed to be addressed. But, to claim that Paul must be interpreted in view of these pagan emphases is unwarranted. For Paul's message is one with a different anthropology, different theology and different soteriology as compared to the mystery religions and cults of that time.<sup>15</sup> While it is certain that the church was infiltrated by the surrounding views of the culture, there is no evidence that Paul formed his views accordingly.<sup>16</sup> T. W. Manson says,

Christ mysticism for Paul is not the kind of thing that is commonly meant by mysticism. The mystic - in the ordinary sense of the word - is one who by a certain kind of spiritual discipline comes to a special kind of experience - an indescribable sense of communion with the ultimate divine essence, of being absorbed into the Absolute Reality. . . . It is suffered, experienced by an elite few. For Paul, this experience is bound up in Christ, not for the spiritually elite, but it is

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<sup>15</sup>For Paul, men were sinful and totally depraved before God (Rom. 3:23). There was no point of contact between men and God by nature. But, God in his mercy, sacrificed himself for men and for their salvation, thereby securing reconciliation between God and his creation (2 Cor. 5: 17-20). The mystery religions and cults of that time knew of no "complete" separation between men and gods. They differed only by their power. Salvation was more the natural "process" of the deifying of men, not grace. There was contact and participation with these gods, but conditions always had to be met. For a further discussion on this issue see Herman Ridderbos, Paul: An Outline of His Theology, trans. John Richard De Witt (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1975), pp.57-64; 186-205; and Lohse, p. 222-252.

<sup>16</sup>See T. W. Manson On Paul and John, ed. Matthew Black (Naperville: Alec Allenson Inc., 1963) and his discussion of "*katallasso, katallagē*", pp.51-53. The word reconciliation has no essential part in the Greek and Hellenistic religious systems.

the normal thing for all Christians; not a rare thing but a daily experience.<sup>17</sup>

The evidence in Paul's writings shows that his message was not an eclectic blend of the surrounding religious systems, but rather, a call to the people at Corinth to break from the thoughts and practices that encompassed them.

### The Biblical Context

Paul begins the first letter to the Corinthians by contrasting the foregoing with the faithfulness of God. The issue is fidelity, namely God's fidelity to His people and His willingness to create and sustain a *koinōnia* relationship for his people. This is also a call to unity (1 Corinthians 1:10; 10:17), a joyful result of *koinōnia tou huiou, koinōnia tou sōmatos, koinōnia tou haimatos*. Only the Lord could make "one" what was in such disobedient disarray. The letter calls the church to receive this gift of *koinōnia* in Christ, on His terms of grace alone. The "common thing shared" in 1 Corinthians 1:9 poses the question "where can this *tou huiou Iēsou Christou* be participated in, so that *koinōnia* might be a reality for these people in such spiritual disarray?" Throughout the letter there is the tension between the faithfulness of God, the *koinōnia* that he gives, and the unfaithfulness of his people.

The issue is faithfulness, but more importantly the issue is whether one receives grace as grace. There were

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<sup>17</sup>Manson, p.74.

some in Corinth who claimed special freedom by virtue of their spirit-filled "wisdom" and "strength" (1 Corinthians 4:10). Such "freedom" demonstrated itself in open immorality (1 Corinthians 5) and disdain for fellow believers (1 Corinthians 11). The issue was the characteristic of the Gospel as grace and a call from that Gospel message to love for the brethren. Bornkamm says,

"The spirit-filled people's phrase was. . ."All things are lawful for me" (1 Cor. 6:12; 10:23). They paraded their freedom to the point of licentiousness . . . they even used their watchword "freedom" to justify intercourse with prostitutes, which in the common pagan view was quite expected and permissible."<sup>18</sup>

Paul has a list of the slogan words which identify the factions in 1 Corinthians: "Knowledge, wisdom and '*pneumatikoi*(spiritual ones - 1 Corinthians 14:37; 12)'" were the top level above "*psuchikoi*(worldly ones - 1 Corinthians 2:14)" and "*sarkinoi*(fleshly ones - 1 Corinthians 3:1)." Such words identify the "gnostic" influence that plagued the church.<sup>19</sup> The influence of Gnosticism was exerting itself and destroying the Pauline understanding of God's grace in Christ. Eduard Lohse says,

A person on the basis of revelation comes to know himself and will be able to ascend to the Good and thus belongs to the elect. But anyone who is filled with love for the body and for matter will remain lost and wandering in the darkness and will experience death in the body. When a man comprehends who he is and who he is to be, he will renounce all passions and desires and

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<sup>18</sup>Bornkamm, p. 72.

<sup>19</sup>See above, chapter 3, footnote #10.



will liberate himself from all that binds him to the body and hence to the world.<sup>20</sup>

This "renunciation" of these "worldly" elements of life could take the form of extreme asceticism or uninhibited licentiousness concerning the things of the body because worldly, fleshly things no longer were of consequence. The "strong ones" at Corinth, the "pneumatikoi," were boasting of their spiritual strength in the use of their liberty(1 Corinthians 6:12-20; 8:1-13; 10:1-13, 23-33). Lohse says,

Such 'enthusiasm' appears first in the community founded by Paul in Corinth. Here the "pneumatics" professed that they had already been perfected by the Spirit, that the time of salvation was already present (1 Cor. 4:8), that an inalienable power flowed from the sacraments of Baptism and the Supper (1 Cor. 10:1-13), and that a future consummation which would come with the resurrection of the dead was no longer to be expected (1 Cor. 15:12). In their exuberance they held the opinion that Christian liberty knows no bounds, and everything is permissible (1 Cor. 6:12; 10:23). What a person does and experiences with the body does not matter, because only the spirit matters(1 Cor. 6:12ff).<sup>21</sup>

Paul turns such a system upside down. He boasts of the "foolishness of the Gospel, the crucified God, Jesus Christ (1:21-25)." Where Jesus is, there is no distance between heaven and earth which is yet to be bridged, or climbed. Davies rightly says, "When God enters into *koinōnia* with man in the person of Jesus Christ, all that was *koinos* was hallowed."<sup>22</sup> Paul boasts of the "crucified

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<sup>20</sup>Lohse, p.265.

<sup>21</sup>Lohse, p.272.

<sup>22</sup>Davies, p.24.

Christ" and the strength of this message, not his own (1:27-30). He can boast only of his weaknesses(2:1-5). He, as one who is totally free(ch.9), is a slave(*doulos*) of Christ as are all who are free in him(7:22). He calls them to the flesh level in the "*koinōnia* in the Son"(1 Corinthians 1:9).

Paul intensifies his admonishing of the "strong ones" in 1 Corinthians 8. He calls them not to use their strength and liberty to cause a "weaker" brother to stumble. He asserts in 8:4 that there is only one God and that idols are nothing. But, for some, to buy and eat food in the market place that was partially sacrificed to idols (a common occurrence)<sup>23</sup> was to place oneself under their dominion. Even though "idols are nothing," the "weak" brother in good conscience could not partake. Paul says, "But see to it lest by any means this power(*exousia*) become a stumbling block to the weak" (1 Cor.8:9). He illustrates his call to the "strong" for restraint by speaking of his use of liberty in his ministry to them (1 Corinthians 9).

In Chapter 10 the admonishing becomes a warning. The matters in question are both "faithfulness" and "spiritual strength 1 Corinthians 10:12-13)." Attention is directed

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<sup>23</sup>Edward Kilmartin, in his book The Eucharist in the Primitive Church (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1965), p.76 says that only a part of the victim in the heathen sacrifices was consumed, the rest was eaten at the cultic banquet. Further, the meat purchased in the market place was, according to the practice at Corinth, often obtained from a sacrificial victim.

away from the discussion of the weaker brother to a discussion of the conduct of the "strong." Just who are the "faithful"? Who are the "strong"? Here the emphasis is on their personal salvation. Edward Kilmartin says,

Paul feels impelled to warn the Corinthians of the danger involved in the participation in sacrificial banquets. He tells them that if they judge reasonably, they will conclude that a sharing in these cultic meals is a sharing in fellowship with idols, or rather with devils. In order to show the logic of this argument, he presents two acknowledged facts for consideration: 1) Through the Eucharist, the Christian attains participation of Christ. 2) In the Jewish cultic meal, eating of the sacrificial meat implies a sharing in the "altar." The conclusion follows that participation in the heathen cultic meals involves a fellowship with devils. Since idols are nothing, this worship is inspired by devils and implies communion with devils. It must therefore be avoided as detrimental to salvation.<sup>24</sup>

In verses 1-12, Paul challenges the so called "strong" in faith(10:12) to look at the history of Israel. He speaks of the Lord's faithfulness in his calling the Israelites into a community, a relationship of grace, in their being "baptized into Moses," and their eating and drinking the "spiritual food and drink" which was Christ. The point of this section is not that these "means of grace" in the Old Testament were ineffective, but rather, that those who despise these means are subject to judgment. These can not be seen as mere symbols only. They were natural phenomena sanctified and invested with the very

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<sup>24</sup>Kilmartin, p.78.

presence of God.<sup>25</sup> Yet Paul warns the reader that even here there is the danger of losing what God has truly given.

Verse 12 says, "Therefore, let him who thinks he stands, take heed lest he fall." To those who would have God according to their own ability to stand, trusting in their good deeds, there is only warning, even judgment. To boast in one's personal spiritual attainments or experiences as proof of salvation is to make the sacraments, pre-Incarnate Christ as they were, Law. Ernst Käsemann says,

His (Paul's) purpose in portraying Israel as the first recipient of the Christian sacraments in 1 Cor. 10:1-13 is this: to refute the opinion of the enthusiasts that the sacramental opus operatum is a pledge of the impossibility of damnation now or in the future.<sup>26</sup>

Similar thoughts occur in 1 Cor. 11:29-31, where Paul says that failing to discern the presence of the body of Christ, its Gospel, dynamic character, and its presence in the brethren (by caring for one another as of Christ) brings personal judgment. Enthusiasm, the teaching that the Lord works without flesh-level, *to koinon* means, and works righteousness are kindred spirits in that they make the gifts of the Lord Law. For both views seek to find something inherent in a person making one more worthy to receive God's gifts than another. The admonition to take heed is followed

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<sup>25</sup>In 1 Corinthians 10:3-4, Paul says, "They all ate the same spiritual food and drank the same spiritual drink from the rock that accompanied them, and that rock was Christ" (emphasis mine).

<sup>26</sup>Ernst Käsemann, Essays on New Testament Themes (London: SCM Press, 1960), p.116.

by the fact, "God is faithful" (v.13).

Paul has now come full circle. He begins the letter with the faithfulness of God who calls the Corinthians into *koinōnia* (1 Corinthians 1:9); He examines their own behavior (1 Corinthians 3, 6, 8, 9); He warns them of the disdain that Israel had for the "gifts of grace" (1 Corinthians 10) and their judgment by God; And, he calls them back to *koinōnia* given in the body and the blood of Christ (1 Corinthians 10:16-17).

The biblical context of *koinōnia* in 1 Corinthians 10 is the mercy of God in spite of the manifest disobedience of his people and the real judgment upon those who will not have their relationship to God on terms of grace alone. God's gracious work and gifts can not be made nothings, they can only be despised.<sup>27</sup> Thus, Paul calls the Corinthians to repentance in chapter 10:14 and makes the Gospel call concrete in the *koinōnia* in the body and the blood of Christ in the Lord's Supper.

#### 1 Corinthians 10:16

The phrases, "*koinōnia tou haimatos, koinōnia tou sōmatos, koinōnoi tou thusiastariou*" and "*koinōnos daimoniōn*," are perfectly compatible with classical usage and emphasis. The genitives are the "elements in common."

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<sup>27</sup>Käsemann on p.125 points out rightly that "we do not by our lack of reverence, render his gift ineffective nor turn the presence of Christ into absence. Salvation despised becomes judgment."

With respect to the body and the blood, these "things in common" not only define the *koinōnia*, they are dynamic in and of themselves in that the power of the Gospel is inherent in them.<sup>28</sup> For each phrase, this "element in common" is essential for Paul as the data has demonstrated.<sup>29</sup>

The only shift in this context is the shift from *koinōnia* in verse 16, to *koinōnoi* in verses 18 and 20, and, the use of the somewhat perplexing "things in common" with *koinōnoi*, namely, "*thusiastapiou . . . daimoniōn*." The sacrifices are the "common things shared" which bonds the Israelites through the altar<sup>30</sup> and the pagan Greeks at the

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<sup>28</sup>Paul uses the words the "body" and the "blood" in reference to salvation several times. But more so, he speaks of their power to effect the salvation of Christ.

Ephesians 2:16 - "And in this one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross". . . . Colossians 1:22 - "But now he has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy in his sight". . . . Romans 5:9 - "Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through him". . . . Ephesians 1:7 - "In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace". . . . Ephesians 2:13 - "But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near through the blood of Christ. . . . Colossians 1:20 - "And through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood."

<sup>29</sup>Campbell, p.23. He argues that the only meaning that *koinōnia tou sōmatos, tou haimatos* should have is "participation (with others) in the body of Christ, in the blood of Christ."

<sup>30</sup>Kilmartin says that the Jewish cultic meal, as long as the old covenant was in force, brought about fellowship with Yahweh, p.82.

cultic feast. Is this a problem? No, a problem exists only when Paul's simple phraseology is denied as conveying its natural meaning. Is there a shift for the sake of emphasis? Kilmartin says,

There is a difference between *koinōnia* and *koinōnos* and the difference seems to have influenced the use of the two words. *Koinōnos* simply means partner; it has a weak meaning. Others have argued that *koinōnia* does not refer to the participation but a means of participation. However there is no basis for inserting between the bread and the body of Christ the concept of a "means of participation." What Paul says is that the participants of the Eucharist receive the sacramentally present Christ.<sup>31</sup>

Here, one might suggest that the stronger word *koinōnia* may be used in this context to illustrate the uniqueness of the "common things," the "body" and the "blood" for Paul. Only Christ's body and blood are inherently "dynamic, life-creating and sustaining" elements. The "sacrifices that are offered on the altar"<sup>32</sup> bestowed the *koinōnia* only as types waiting for the revelation of the antitype (the one who is sacrificed for our sin). Even if a weaker emphasis is noted here, the "common thing" defines the *koinōnia*. Ridderbos says, "The general idea here again is that he who partakes of the sacrificial meal enters into fellowship with God himself. But the point here is the special way in which this takes place, namely, by eating and drinking that which

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<sup>31</sup>Kilmartin, p.81.

<sup>32</sup>For more information on the sacrificial emphasis of the Lord's Supper, see Sverre Aalen, "The Lord's Supper as Sacrifice in the New Testament," Novum Testamentum, 6 (1963), p. 128-152.

is lain on the altar (cf. 1 Cor. 9:13; Matthew 23:19)."<sup>33</sup>

The "*koinōnoi ton daimoniōn*" is also in concert with classical grammar and the emphasis is also laid on the "demons" as the "common things shared." Here there is more a static understanding of the "common thing" because Paul says, "Idols are nothing and there is no God but one" (1 Corinthians 8:4); And "Do I mean then that a sacrifice offered to an idol is anything or that an idol is anything. No!" (1 Corinthians 10:19). It is also emphatic to note that there is no real comparison between the inherent dynamism of Christ's body and blood and their ability to convey what is theirs to give over against the "demons" as dynamic things in common. Yet, through the eating and drinking at the "table of the demons" a real participation takes place. Paul's argument then, is, don't be fooled. If one eats of the food sacrificed to idols, it is not idols that we are "participating in." Rather, it is in the demons themselves. This must be emphasized as Paul uses *koinōnos* + the genitive, emphasizing the "common thing shared."

Others assert instead that *koinōnos* was merely used stylistically to link the arguments together throughout the pericope.<sup>34</sup> Nevertheless, with all things considered, the use of the different cognates of *koinōnia* does not prove

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<sup>33</sup>Ridderbos, p.417-418.

<sup>34</sup>See R. C. H. Lenski's commentary Interpretation of I and II Corinthians, (Minneapolis: Augsburg Pub. Co., 1963), pp.415-416 for this argument.



problematic for the genitive construction, the primary focus on the "common thing shared," or the dynamic understanding of the body and the blood. The different cognates used and the "arguments over the meaning of the altar and the demons" ought not deter a "sacramental" understanding of 1 Corinthians 10:16 because, as McDermott says, "All the difficulties of exegetes disappear when one recognizes that Paul is not arguing a *fortiori* from the Jewish and pagan idea of *koinōnia* to the Eucharist, but the reverse."<sup>35</sup>

The emphasis for Paul is primarily on the "common thing shared." But, even with this grammatical emphasis, many argue for more general interpretations, a definite usurping of the grammatical boundaries. Paul, in verse 16, says "*koinōnia tou sōmatos . . . koinōnia tou haimatos*. He separates the phrases and because of this, some argue "the body and the blood" merely makes reference to the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross. Panikulam speaks this way when he says, "the sense of Jesus words are, 'I, the body and the blood, am the true paschal Lamb.'<sup>36</sup> According to Jeremias, where body and blood are separated, there is reference to sacrifice.<sup>37</sup>

It is true that these phrases, and more specifically

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<sup>35</sup>McDermott, p.220.

<sup>36</sup>Panikulam, p.20.

<sup>37</sup>J. Jeremias, The Eucharistic Words of Jesus, 3rd ed. pp. 222, 237.

the body and the blood, are then to be understood in reference to Christ's sacrifice. He was crucified for our salvation. It is a historical fact that is confessed by the church, "he suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified dead and buried and rose again according to the Scriptures." The "body and blood, the things in common" are Gospel words, they are to be seen in reference to God's redeeming activity for mankind.<sup>38</sup> Roth says,

New Testament Christianity differs from other religions not that there is no sacrifice but that the sacrifice is offered by God not man.<sup>39</sup>

Still more needs to be said. These phrases can not merely be another way of saying "the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross." "*Koinōnia* + the genitive" emphasizes the "common thing shared." And this emphasis on participation in a "real, common thing shared" conveys more clarity than this. The fact that there was the sacrifice for our sins avails us nothing if the benefits of that sacrifice are not delivered. One looks to the cross to see the sacrifice. One comes to the Lord's Table to receive his benefits because at the table Christ delivers his grace through the common things, "the body and the blood." Paul is not merely making a "reference" to the Lord's sacrificial death, he is speaking of "partaking" the "dynamic common things" which alone create and sustain life in Christ. In these verses,

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<sup>38</sup>See above, chapter III, footnote #28.

<sup>39</sup>Roth, p.26.

"*koinōnia*" and "*metecho*" are used in parallel emphasizing a real participation in/partaking of the body and the blood.<sup>40</sup>

For those who say that the body and blood can not be things participated in,<sup>41</sup> M. E. Boismard's words suffice, "Some think that Paul is speaking (in v.16) not about communion with the physical body of Christ, but a spiritual union with the Christian community which St. Paul also calls the Body of Christ. Such an interpretation does violence to the context and ignores the Pauline basis for the theme church; the body of Christ. Paul himself declares as clearly as possible, that if the Christian community can form the body of Christ in the wide sense it precisely because it shares in the physical body of Christ."<sup>42</sup>

Willi Marxsen and H. Conzelmann and others say that the eating and drinking are not the points of comparison in the text and thereby argue for a more general understanding

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<sup>40</sup>See Elert's discussion on *koinonia* as *metalepsis*, in Eucharist and Fellowship in the First Four Centuries, trans. N. E. Nagel (St. Louis: Concordia Pub. House, 1966), pp.16-17. Here he cites numerous witnesses of the early church and early liturgies to confirm the parallel relationship of *koinōnia* and *metechō*, showing that the earliest understanding of the sacrament was in complete harmony with such a view.

<sup>41</sup>See C. K. Barrett, The First Epistle to the Corinthians, (London 1971), p.233 where he says, "The sharing of the break is taken to be a means of sharing in the body of Christ. It is very improbable that this is a reference to the human body of Christ in its physical aspect, since this is described by Paul in other terms. . . the body of Christ refers to the church."

<sup>42</sup>M. E. Boismard, The Eucharist in the New Testament, (London: 1965), p.180.

of *koinōnia*.<sup>43</sup> They argue that the "partaking" of the elements is not essential to Paul's argument. Kasemann also argues for a more general interpretation saying that the phrases "*Koinōnia tou sōmatos, koinōnia tou haimatos,*" and "*koinōnos ton daimoniōn*" are best translated as expressions of dominion.<sup>44</sup> Eduard Schweizer also argues this way when he says, "Therefore, there is a partaking of Christ crucified for our sake, only in the sense of a partaking of Christ in the word."<sup>45</sup> Even Ridderbos argues for a more "general" understanding of the phrase when he says, "Communion in the body and blood of Christ means nothing other therefore than the participation of his people in Christ's death."<sup>46</sup>

Against such spiritualizing, the Pauline emphasis throughout the passage is on the "participation in the real

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<sup>43</sup>Willi Marxsen, The Lord's Supper as a Christological Problem, trans. Lorenz Nieting (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1970), p.11-12; H. Conzelmann, Der Erste Brief an die Korinther, p. 171. Marxsen's argument is that the "terminology for eating and drinking is lacking" and therefore what is interpreted is not the bread and the wine, but the participation in the meal. In much the same way, Conzelmann argues that the participation in the meal is the constitutive factor here and not the partaking of the elements. Both arguments are ignorant of the grammatical construction of the genitive with *koinōnia*, the context's stress on the eating and drinking, and the parallel relationship of *koinōnia* and *metechō*.

<sup>44</sup>Kasemann argues that man is not autonomous, so the question becomes "To whom do you belong?" p.117.

<sup>45</sup>Eduard Schweizer, The Lord's Supper According to the New Testament, translated by James M. Davis, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1967), p.37.

<sup>46</sup>Ridderbos, p.418.

body and blood of Christ." The context is on the "eating and drinking" of these "things in common." This further emphasizes the more natural translation "participation in the true body and blood of Christ." The contrast between verses 14-17 and verses 1-13, is the eating and drinking of the spiritual food by faith versus the eating and drinking in unbelief. In verses 14-22, the comparison continues between the "partaking" at the Lord's table versus the "partaking at the table of the demons." Paul says, "You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons"(v.21). Each argument stresses a real participation and reception.

To stress "participation in the meal," or the phrases as "dominion, partaking in Christ, participation in his death" over against the real participation in the body and the blood, in, with and under the bread and wine misses several, crucial aspects in Paul's argument in 1 Corinthians 10. The grammatical construction of the genitive with *koinōnia* stresses the "element shared." This may not be neglected; The context stresses eating and drinking.<sup>47</sup> There is no reason for an abrupt shift away from such an understanding; And, 1 Corinthians 10:16 must also be

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<sup>47</sup>The parallel usage of *koinōnia* and *metechō* by Paul in this text helps clarify his understanding. That "participating, and partaking" are not the main emphasis, this is correct to a degree. "Participating or partaking" the common element is stressed by Paul. Eating and drinking are givens, the elements are the big thing here, but the "eating and drinking" are essential as well.

interpreted in reference to 1 Corinthians 11:17-32 where eating and drinking the Lord's Supper in faith is a fundamental emphasis as well as the emphasis of the real presence of the body and blood of Christ.<sup>48</sup>

The question of Lordship is inherent in the section, but the grammatical use of *koinōnia* with the genitive (the primary emphasis on the "common things shared," the frequency of "*pinō*(to drink)" and "*esthiō*(to eat)" throughout the chapter, and the Gospel, dynamic nature of the "things in common" prevent us from limiting our interpretation. Dominion talk is not yet Christ for us;<sup>49</sup> Body and blood given to you, is. Gift given, gift received, this is Christ for us. This does not make the sacrament "magic," it rightfully acknowledges it as the Lord's means of grace which is inherently dynamic but also rejectable.<sup>50</sup>

The "common things" in this section, the body and the

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<sup>48</sup>Panikulam, p.19. He relates the two passages by saying, "In our context Paul is not telling the Corinthians how to celebrate the Eucharist, but what it signifies."

<sup>49</sup>Käsemann, p. 125. He argues that *koinonia* be translated "domination of the body and blood, demons. . . ." With Christ the judge-Savior is present. When the Savior is denied, the judge remains -- Dominion is not a proper translation because it does not carry the Gospel freight well. Salvation depends on God, the gracious God in Christ. Christ has dominion whether one acknowledges it or not (Rom. 14:11; Phil.2:10). This is the Law Christ. In the body and blood, one receives him as Savior.

<sup>50</sup>See Elert's discussion of the parallel understanding of "*metechē*" and "*koinōnia*," p.17.

blood -- not merely another way of saying "tou Christou" -- are dynamic elements that create and sustain *koinōnia*.

Manson says,

The decisive factor is not the relation of persons who come together because they happen to share a common faith or desire to live a certain kind of life. The Church is a society of people who are first of all in a particular relation to Christ, e.g. that he is master and each is a disciple.<sup>51</sup>

The peculiar relationship to Christ is given in the partaking of his body and blood. The words are specific. Roth says,

The Spirit does not come apart from these elements because it is precisely the sanctification of creaturely matter that is involved in communion.<sup>52</sup>

Paul specifically uses the words "*sōματος, haimatos*" as the "common things" to express the unique proprium of the Lord's Supper.<sup>53</sup> The *koinōnia* is given in the body and blood, with the bread and wine. It is also true that *koinōnia* is given to us in other means as well. Paul speaks of a *koinōnia* in the Gospel (Phil. 1:5), in the Spirit (2 Cor. 13:13), in the ministry (2 Cor. 8:4) and in the Lord's

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<sup>51</sup>Manson, p.69.

<sup>52</sup>Roth, p.32.

<sup>53</sup>Käsemann in his discussion on p.118 concerning the presence of Christ, argues for the "real presence," saying that this is exactly what Paul wished to say. He argues that Christ's presence is "*pneuma*," which is a heavenly flesh. The gift brings with it its Giver; it is an epiphany of the exalted Lord, who becomes manifest in it. This *pneuma* claims us but adds no new element which we did not possess before! This argument would be persuasive except for the fact that the genitives are "*sōma*" and "*haima*."

Supper. Yet, the ways of God to men are one, the way of the Gospel. Norman Nagel says,

Salvation is alone in God coming all the way to man, all the way into creatureliness, all the way into things. Such is His coming in the Incarnation and the Lord's Supper. Thus alone He comes, and thus the gracious ways of God to man are one."<sup>54</sup>

Concerning 1 Corinthians 11:27-31 Kilmartin says,

There is no question in Paul's mind that the body and blood of Christ are actually received by the unworthy. . . . The presence of Christ is independent of the dispositions of the recipient. It is an objective presence.<sup>55</sup>

Such a view of 1 Corinthians 10 has met with strong criticism from J. Weiss and others. He writes in his commentary on 1 Corinthians: "Is it not superfluous to say that a community which was living long *en Christo*, enters now into the fellowship with the exalted Lord through bread and wine?"<sup>56</sup> Such a question can only be answered by the nature of the Gospel. The Gospel message is about God coming all the way to where people are at to convey His message of forgiveness to them.<sup>57</sup> The "common things" are Gospel and what they are, they bestow.

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<sup>54</sup>Norman Nagel, *The Incarnation and the Lord's Supper in Luther*, Concordia Theological Monthly, 24(September, 1953): 648.

<sup>55</sup>Kilmartin, p.86.

<sup>56</sup>J. Weiss, Erste Korinther, p.285 as quoted by Panikulam, p.17.

<sup>57</sup>See Romans 5:8, where Paul argues for the Gospel initiative inherent in God's action for us through Jesus Christ. He is emphatic in saying, "While we were yet sinners. . . ."



A problem exists for many when the Gospel message and its means are viewed quantitatively. Namely, if there is one Gospel, then one means of bestowing such Gospel. Or, some would quantify the discussion saying that the words of God convey part of the whole, Holy Baptism a part and likewise the Lord's Supper.<sup>58</sup> Paul's use of the word *koinōnia* argues against this quantitative understanding of the Gospel and the means of Grace for he uses various "common things shared" with the word *koinōnia*. Christ, the Gospel, the Spirit, the body/blood, the ministry and so forth are things that can be "participated in" for Paul. They are things that inherently bring what they say because they are the words of Christ. Various means, defined by the Lord Jesus in His Word, convey the one Gospel message. McDermott says,

The actual meaning of *koinōnia* in this passage seems to lie in this, that the original personal union with Christ established by Baptism, finds both its fullest expression and the best opportunity for further deepening in the Eucharist, the communion of the body

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<sup>58</sup>Martin J. Heineken, "An Orientation Towards the Supper Today," The Meaning and Practice of the Lord's Supper, ed. Helmut Lehman, (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1961), p. 178. He says, "It seems to me that if this were properly understood we would quit pitting Word against sacrament and we would see what Luther means when he says that the one Word comes to us in many ways: the preached Word, the Word of Absolution, the sacraments, and the mutual consolation of the brethren, each one having its own worth and significance. Therefore, it would be a perverse misunderstanding of the Word of God -- in which God himself is present in all the fullness of his grace, love and holiness -- to suppose that the sacrament represent some kind of quantitative increment beyond this. The gift is always nothing less than the fullness of God's love which saves and unites men to God."

and the blood of Christ. As love can be total, yet admit increase . . . so also *koinōnia*."<sup>59</sup>

Panikulam says further,

He (Paul) depicts the Eucharistic cup and bread as forming the fellowship with the person of Christ and develops his thought further to the point of saying that this *koinōnia* with Christ produces a new *koinōnia* amongst those who partake of the cup and bread."<sup>60</sup>

The argument of chapter 10 is compatible with the classical emphasis on the "common thing shared." But these words, "the body and the blood," are words that have never been used before. They are inherently dynamic, Gospel "elements in common." Verse 16, "Is not the cup of blessing which we bless a '*koinōnia*' in the blood of Christ? Is not the bread which we break a '*koinōnia*' in the body of Christ?" expects a "yes" answer.<sup>61</sup> Verse 17, then, expresses the result of "receiving the elements" as "we who are many are one body; for we all partake of the one bread." Kilmartin says,

The one bread causes the unity of the body. . . how could a mere symbol establish a unity which is completely real?<sup>62</sup>

Paul's use of the word *koinōnia* throughout the Corinthian letters is also hard data emphasizing the dynamic

<sup>59</sup>McDermott, p.221.

<sup>60</sup>Panikulam, p.29.

<sup>61</sup>Panikulam, p. 19, "The twice repeated *ouchi*, as expecting a positive answer from the Corinthians, is already a hint that they recognized and acknowledged this fact."

<sup>62</sup>Kilmartin, p.81.

interpretation of *koinōnia*. When Paul speaks of a *koinōnia tou huiou* in 1 Corinthians 1:9 the emphasis on "the common thing shared" moves one to ask, "where is this Son so that we might receive Him in common?" And, "who is this Son, Jesus Christ?" Paul answers that in 2 Corinthians 5:19 when he says that Christ is the one through whom "God was reconciling the world to himself." In 1 Corinthians 10:16 the concrete mode of attaining *koinōnia tou huiou* is expressed in Lord's Supper terminology as *koinōnia tou sōματος, tou haimatos*.<sup>63</sup> And, finally, when Paul describes the "gift, the offering" of the Corinthians to the brethren (2 Cor. 9:13), Paul uses the word *koinōnian*. The choice is hardly accidental. The *koinōnia* is dynamic in that the "things in common" for Paul are inherently life-giving and full of grace.

#### Summary

*Koinōnia* is Gospel to Paul. The way God gives it, as a gift through his "common elements," is the way God graciously deals with people. It is the way of the Gospel. *Koinōnia* is God's gift to us through gracious, dynamic gifts, the "common things shared." This is the "to *koinon* (common element)" way. The "common things" are dynamic in that God invests himself there for us and for our salvation. Where there is God's name, his word, his body and

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<sup>63</sup>See above, chapter III, footnote #4.

blood, there is life and salvation.<sup>64</sup> *Koinōnia* as Gospel, God's coming all the way to us (the "to *koinon*" point), is what is at stake for Paul.

Many modern arguments against a dynamic, gracious view of the "common things shared" are made because of the assertion that it is not proper to speak of God as bound to words or elements. These "things shared" are treated as notions of the church, later reflections of the authors as to who they thought Christ to be.<sup>65</sup> In 1 Corinthians 10, the body and blood are then more generically understood as, "the death of Christ, the person of Christ," or, "the life of Christ given for you"<sup>66</sup> in reaction to the "literal" understanding of the words. This interpretation correctly picks up the sacrificial aspects inherent in the words but does violence to Paul's grammatical usage of *koinōnia* and the context if this is all that is said.

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<sup>64</sup>"*onomos*" - Matt. 1:21; 12:21; 28:19; John 1:21; 17:6,12; Rom. 1:5; 10:13; 1 Cor. 6:11; 1 John 2:12. "*logos*" - Matt. 24:35; John 1:14; 4:41; 12:48; 15:3; Rom. 10:17 (hearing); 2 Cor. 5:19; 6:7; Eph.1:13; Phil 2:16; Col.3:16; 1 Tim.4:5-6; Heb. 4:12; 1 Peter 1:23.

<sup>65</sup>See Willi Marxsen, The Lord's Supper as a Christological Problem, pp.4-30; See also: Schweizer, pp.23-29. In both these works the four accounts of the words of institution are taken to be developments of the early church. Thus there are "several" Lord's Supper theologies already in the New Testament.

<sup>66</sup>Schweizer, p.36; Marxsen, p.11-13; Reumann, p.45 (also in his introduction to Marxsen's work, p. xxii-xxiii); Jourdan, pp.120,124; F. Hauk, "koinonia," TDNT, 10 vols., ed. Gerhard Kittel (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979), pp.805-806.

The terms "*tou sōmatos, tou haimatos*" certainly have reference to Christ and all that he has done for our salvation in that they are his sacrificed body and blood (1 Cor. 11:23-25). But, to interpret these phrases, "*koinōnia tou sōmatos, koinōnia tou haimatos*," without stressing the uniqueness of the genitive as the "element in common" is to misunderstand Paul because the evidence cited (the classical and Pauline usage) points emphatically in this direction. Also, to understand the body and blood as "things in common" is to understand the whole message of the Gospel of God becoming man, the "*koinos* (common)" level, for us and for our salvation. The stance of faith is to look where the Savior promises to be (word and sacraments) and trust that he is there for us, doing and bestowing what he says he says.

Whether it is fitting for God to bind himself in words, in water, in bread and wine, or in human flesh is not a question which Scripture leaves open for discussion. The Gospel is that God has bound himself to our flesh for our salvation. To deny the way that God works graciously for us is truly unbelief in the view of Paul and the Scriptures. Luther says it well,

But if it is His will to give salvation to you through the humanity of Christ, through the Word, through the bread in the Supper, who are you, insolent, thankless devil, that you dare to ask why he does not do it in a different way and without these means? You ought to leap for joy that he does it in whatever manner he chooses, if only you obtain it.<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>67</sup>LW, 37, 140

and,

It is one thing if God is present and another thing if he is present for you. He is there for you when he adds his word and binds himself saying, "Here you are to find me." Now when you have the Word you can grasp and have him with certainty.<sup>68</sup>

If there is no Christ born of a virgin and despised by his fellow country men, no Christ who suffered, died on a cross and rose again, no Christ as the logos made flesh, no 'koinos' Christ, then there is no *koinōnia*. The whole usage of the "koin-" and "koinōn-" word groups in the New Testament is at odds with any other understanding than that of the Gospel.

These "common things" are dynamic, life-giving and creating not only because of the genitive construction, but rather because of the kind of words that they are. The Scriptures are Christ speaking his Word with human words (2 Peter 1:21).<sup>69</sup> His word is the revelation of the 'koinos' Christ who is for us and gives himself freely to us. The *koinon* in the Lord's Supper is the body and blood and these effect and bestow the *koinōnia*.

In the modern discussion of the problem, Roth says, Jesus was understood by the New Testament church to be the Word of God who, as the agent of creation, brings

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<sup>68</sup>LW, 37, 68.

<sup>69</sup>For a more detailed discussion of this situation and the particular "words of institution" and their interpretation, see Herman Sasse's book, We Confess the Sacraments, trans. Norman Nagel (St. Louis: Concordia Pub. House, 1985), pp. 49-97.

into being that which he says(Col. 1:16; Heb.1:12; Jn.1:3).<sup>70</sup>

also,

Furthermore, the word does not come as a dis-embodied voice! The Word comes enfleshed(Jn.1:14) and this means that the Incarnate Lord comes to us enfleshed in human words of the sermon as well the flesh of the bread and wine in communion. There can be no docetic word that speaks with out a body.<sup>71</sup>

*Koinōnia* is a real participation with God, by grace, through "things made in common" by him. These "things in common" are by nature alive and enlivening. A *koinōnia tou huiou, tou sōmatos, tou haimatos* must live its way out as a *koinonian* to one's fellow believers. *Koinōnia tou sōmatos, tou haimatos* as inherently powerful "things in common" sustained the unity of the church in Paul's understanding (1 Corinthians 10:17). In the letter to the Corinthians, the Gospel was at stake. The "common things" (Christ's body and blood) are in Pauline usage, dynamic, life-creating, sustaining "things in common." They are sacramental words, the means of the Gospel, so then is *koinōnia*.

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<sup>70</sup>Roth, p.29.

<sup>71</sup>Roth, p.14.

## CHAPTER IV

### KOINONIA IN THE EARLY CHURCH

*Koinōnia*, a dynamic, Gospel relationship with God created and sustained by Christ, His Gospel, His body and blood *huper humōn*, even his sufferings, *koinōnia*, which is received through these "common things" and then is lived out in love towards our fellow man, this is Paul's meaning of the word. "The inherently, dynamic things in common," these bind us first to God and then to one another. Therefore, Paul can even call the "service rendered to the saints," namely the gift of money (given out of their relationship to Christ which binds them to one another), a *koinōnian* (Romans 15:26; 2 Corinthians 8:4; 9:13). The Apostle John also proclaims this vertical, then horizontal *koinōnia* relationship when he says, "We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship (*koinōnia*) with us. And our fellowship (*koinōnia*) is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord."<sup>1</sup> The gifts of Christ, "the things which are in common," bestow what they offer and in essence bind us dynamically to Christ and

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<sup>1</sup> John 1:3-4, NIV translation.



to one another. For John, it is the apostolic words, the proclamation of the Gospel that does this. But John is merely echoing something already proclaimed in Paul. George Panikulam says,

Thus Paul's idea of *koinōnia* is in strict conformity with the other NT occurrences of *koinōnia* inasmuch as *koinōnia* with the person of Christ remains the basis of a *koinōnia* with the brethren.<sup>2</sup>

George Jourdan also says,

From our investigation, one valuable fact has emerged: the spiritual concept which St. Paul sought to transmit by means of the word *koinōnia* was, and is, too large to be confined within the scope of such arguments and expositions. Whether accompanied by a qualified phrase - be it a genitive or a dative, or a prepositional addition, or standing unaccompanied and absolute, *koinōnia* possesses a quality of signification which is capable of being applied simultaneously in an internal and in an external direction; that is to say, it can be used at the same time with both an objective and a subjective force.<sup>3</sup>

It is better said that *koinōnia* is a sacramental<sup>4</sup> relationship with the Lord, created and sustained by his "things in common." These "things in common" are given to people to be received, "participated in." This new

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<sup>2</sup>George Panikulam, *Koinōnia in the New Testament: A Dynamic Expression of the Christian life*, (Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1979), p.24. Any idea that "we" create and sustain biblical *koinōnia* is foreign not only to Paul, but to the New Testament as well. Other authors have argued for a dynamic view of *koinōnia* (see Michael McDermott, "The Biblical Doctrine of KOINONIA," *Biblische Zeitschrift* 19(1975)), but they have failed to see the dynamism in the "common things" themselves. This is not hard to understand as no words such as these have ever been used before.

<sup>3</sup>George V. Jourdan, "KOINŌNIA IN I CORINTHIANS 10:16," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 67(1948): 119.

<sup>4</sup>See Chapter III, footnote #6.

relationship, given and established by the grace of God, empowers one's love for the brethren as "*koinōnia* people" in Christ are moved to live out that love towards one another.

This has been proposed and exhibited throughout this paper. The "common things" are dynamic, life-bestowing, things shared that create and sustain *koinōnia*. Of course, they are also "Gospel gifts," and therefore can be rejected as well.<sup>5</sup> Faith joyfully receives these "things in common." But, even faith is God's gift.<sup>6</sup> This view is best exemplified in Paul's discussion of *koinōnia* and the Lord's Supper in 1 Corinthians, chapters 10-11.

It remains for this paper to probe the early church Fathers (hereafter "the Fathers") and the early church liturgies to determine whether this view of *koinōnia* and the Lord's Supper is common in and confessed also by the early church itself. This overview will rely mainly on the work of others in this area.

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<sup>5</sup>This is the mystery of the Gospel in that almighty, omnipotent God is willing to come among his people to save and redeem them. Thus, the promises of the Old Testament could be rejected even by the people to whom they were offered, the baby Jesus could be over-looked or dismissed, and Jesus himself, the essence of true *koinōnia*, could be despised, rejected and even crucified by those he came to save. Here one must understand the relationship between the irresistible, monergistic, omnipotent God who comes to judge, and the sacramental, resistible God who is present to forgive. The discussion of *koinōnia* falls in the realm of the sacramental, resistible presence of God(Gospel) for the salvation of those who will receive and believe (Rom. 5:8).

<sup>6</sup>See Ephesians 2:8-10, where Paul expounds this most specifically. What God requires, he always gives.

The data from the Pauline usage of *koinōnia*, especially that of 1 Corinthians 10 due to its importance as a water shed passage concerning *koinōnia*. will be compared to the Fathers' use of the term and the general theological themes in the first four centuries. What remains to be done after this is a detailed tracing of the use of the phrase "*koinōnia plus the genitive*" and a detailed examination of the primacy of the "common thing shared" in *koinōnia* through the liturgy and the representative writers of the early church to see if the Pauline usage was maintained both grammatically and theologically. At this point however, one can only begin such an undertaking. A general overview of the Fathers will serve as a pointer for further study.

The data have demonstrated that while the construction of the genitive phrase may be used to denote both the thing or the person shared, the ordinary, overwhelming use is that of the "thing in common."<sup>7</sup> The genitive used with *koinōnia* denotes the "thing in common" and the dative denotes the "one with whom it is in common." For Paul, the dominant emphasis is on the "thing shared(the genitive)" which creates the *koinōnia* as compared

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<sup>7</sup>*Supra*, see chapters I and II. The "thing in common" both determines and conveys the *koinōnia*. Paul uses the grammatical boundaries of the word, but he even coins the "dative of the thing shared," to further emphasize the "thing shared." The Gospel, dynamic and sacramental emphasis of the word is determined not solely by the grammar but by Paul's choice of words(his specific "things in common"). This data is now to be compared with that of the early church Fathers of the first four centuries.

to the "sharers (those in relation, the dative)." While not mutually exclusive, the order and emphasis is essential in Pauline usage. The "thing in common" inherently conveys the *koinōnia* relationship that then is experienced by those who participate together in it.

### The Early Church Fathers

The same emphasis and usage is open to the early church and the church Fathers. One may not force Paul's emphasis upon the Fathers unless it is clear that they wish to be understood this way. Data are not problematic according to Werner Elert because the construction of "*koinōnia* plus the genitive" is common in the Fathers. Elert summarizes the search this way,

In all the liturgies *koinōnia* occurs only twice with the genitives of persons. Theodoret speaks of the *koinōnia* of the king of the barbarians, and in another place of the *koinōnia* of Damascus.<sup>8</sup> Such examples can be found only after diligent search, but the genitives of things present themselves in droves.<sup>9</sup>

Also,

The settled rule is much rather that a *koinōnia* with a person or of persons with one another is expressed

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<sup>8</sup>See Elert's note 2, in Eucharist and Church Fellowship in the First Four Centuries, trans. Norman Nagel (St. Louis: Concordia Pub. House, 1966), p. 222, where he cites several authors such as Cyril of Jerusalem, Cat. Myst., IV, 7: Cross, pp.28, 69; Ap. Cons., VI, 18, 8: pneugete tēs koinōnias autōn; VIII, 15,3: tōn asebon. Theodoret, H.E., IV, 37,3; V, 2, 1: Parmentier, pp. 274, 278.

<sup>9</sup>Elert, "Excursus III," p.219. Elert's data is conclusive and extensive. He reiterates that the main usage of the genitive with *koinōnia* as foundational to any other discussion of the word.

with prepositions (*meta, eis, pros*, as in 1 Jn. 1: 3,6,7).<sup>10</sup>

Elert's discussion of *communio*, which is the Latin translation of the Greek term *koinōnia*, follows the same rules in its construction, although he argues convincingly that the Latin translation from the Greek introduced an ambiguity of translation, even mis-translation that still plagues the church today.<sup>11</sup> Nonetheless, "'*Communio* with the genitive of things' means that several persons together have, possess, gain, or experience these things as well as the bond thereby made between them."<sup>12</sup> Elert is even more emphatic when he reports, "In legal usage we never find it(*communio, koinōnia*) referring to a group of people. For this we find *universitas*, or *corpus*: for groups, *collegium*, *sodalitas*, *societas* . . . even in profane usage, *communio* is never used for a group or association of persons."<sup>13</sup> The common element which is partaken determines the *koinonia*.

Elert has also provided invaluable data to this research in his discussion of the phrase, "*communio*

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<sup>10</sup>Elert, p.219-220.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid. p.220.

<sup>12</sup>Elert cites Cicero, *Tusculanae disputationes*, 5, 5: *communio literarum et vocum*; Tacitus, *Annales*, 12, 19: *victoriae*; Tertullian, *Adversus Marcionem*, 1, 7: *nominum*; 5, 4: *rerum*; De Testimonio animae, 5: *corporalium passionum*; Augustine, *De civitate Dei*, 14, 11: *peccati*; Hilary of Poitiers, *In Psalmum*, 132,2: *terrenarum domorum* for his evidence, p. 204 (footnote #2).

<sup>13</sup>Elert, p.205.

*sanctorum*," or better in the Greek, "*koinōnia tōn hagiōn*," located in the Apostles' Creed. His work shows that this statement was not understood as an appositive to the "holy Christian church," until much later. Rather, for the early church, this phrase was associated with the Lord's Supper in the way of 1 Corinthians 10. Again, one sees the emphasis on the dynamic, "thing shared." He says,

The West received the phrase from the East, but when the Greek precision was replaced by the Latin ambiguity, room was given for it to be understood of persons. This finally led to a merely social understanding of *communio* as a fellowship among men constituted by their relation to one another and as such applied to the Lord's Supper. Thus *tōn hagiōn koinōnia* arrived at a complete contradiction of its original meaning....The East...kept intact its(*koinōnia*) sacramental understanding of the Eucharistic *koinōnia*.<sup>14</sup>

According to Elert, the overwhelming usage of *koinonia* is with the "genitive of the thing shared" and the primary emphasis is on "the common thing shared." The early church is quite compatible with the foregoing in this paper. To solidify this uniformity, this overview turns to the watershed issue of 1 Corinthians 10 and the Lord's Supper.

In the writings of the Fathers, the Lord's Supper was understood as partaking the "common, holy elements." To Confess the Lord's Supper, the *koinōnia* was to confess the body and blood of Christ. Justin says,

But in like manner as Jesus Christ our Savior, having been made flesh by the Word of God, had both flesh and blood for our salvation, so likewise have we been taught that the food which is blessed by the prayer of His

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<sup>14</sup>Elert, p.11.

Word, and from which our blood and flesh by transmutation are nourished, is the flesh and blood of the Jesus who was made flesh."<sup>15</sup>

Irenaeus says,

He (Jesus) has acknowledged the cup (which is a part of creation) as his own blood, from which he bedews our blood; and the bread (also a part of creation) He has established as his own body, from which he gives increase to our bodies.<sup>16</sup>

St. John Damascene says,

We say *koinōnia*, and so it is, for through it we have fellowship with Christ and partake of his flesh and deity. But through it, we also have a *koinōnia* among ourselves and are united with one another. Since we receive one bread, we all become one body of Christ and one blood, members of one another.<sup>17</sup>

So also Cyril of Jerusalem concerning the Eucharist,

By His body, He makes us incorporate with Himself and with one another.<sup>18</sup>

Martin Chemnitz summarizes the discussion of *koinōnia tou sōmatos*, *koinōnia tou haimatos* with reference to the Fathers in 1 Corinthians 10 when he says,

The ancients also (whose interpretations Oecumenius gathered) divided and explained this passage of Paul in this way, namely, that the participation in the body and blood of the Lord in the Supper is a means through which we are both joined to Christ Himself and brought into fellowship with the true members of the church. They write thus: The blood of Christ joins us to Christ as members to the head through that participation or reception which takes place in the Supper.

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<sup>15</sup>Justin Martyr, "The First Apology of Justin," LXVI. *ANF*, vol.1, p.185.

<sup>16</sup>Irenaeus, "Against Heresies," V, ii, 2. *ANF*. vol. 1, p.528.

<sup>17</sup>PG 94: 1153a.

<sup>18</sup>PG 74:560B.

Again: if we are not joined by the body and blood of Christ into the fellowship (*koinonia*) of the church, which is his body, through what other thing shall we be one body?.....But what is the bread of the Lord's Supper through which we become partakers of Christ Himself? Theodoret answers: We partake of the Lord through His precious body and blood; but of demons through food sacrificed to idols.

Chrysostom likewise says that through the bread of the Lord's Supper and through the cup of the Lord we are joined to Christ Himself and to the members of the true church, because this bread is the body of the Lord and the cup is His blood. However he does not understand the body and blood to be removed and separated a great distance from the bread and cup of the Lord's Supper; but the words "The cup of blessing is the communion of the blood of Christ" he interprets this way: "Paul is trying to say that what is in the cup is what flowed from the side of the Lord, and of this we partake." And he goes on to say: "When we hold in our hands the cup of blessing, we are celebrating the marvelous fact that He poured this very thing out for us, and not only did He pour it out, but He gave or imparted it to us all. (Homilia 24 in ad Corinthios; MPG 61, 200).<sup>19</sup>

Not only are the Fathers consistent with the Pauline grammatical usage of *koinōnia*, they are also consistent with the sacramental way that the Lord comes to His people.

Chemnitz quotes Chrysostom,

Again in his *Homilia 24 in 1 ad Corinthios* he says: 'Christ ascended, not only to the visible heaven above but to the very highest throne; there he conveyed His body, this very body which he gives to us to take and to eat, because of His great love.' But hear how Chrysostom explains this. He says: "This mystery makes for you a heaven on earth. Fly to the gates of heaven, yes, to the heaven of heavens, and look around. You will then see the things that have been said (that is, about the Eucharist), for what there (*ekei*) in the heaven of heavens is the most precious thing of all, this I will show you has been placed on the earth. For as in palaces the most important thing of all is not the

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<sup>19</sup>Martin Chemnitz, The Lord's Supper, Translated by J. A. O. Preus, Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, 1979, p.140.



walls, nor the golden roof, but the body of the king sitting on his throne, so also in the heavens the body of the King Himself is the most important of all; but this you are permitted to see here on earth. For I show you not angels or archangels or the heaven of heavens, but Him who is their Lord. Now you will understand how you are able to see on earth that which is the most precious of all things in heaven. You will not only see but touch, you will not only touch but also eat, and having received it you will return home.<sup>20</sup>

There is widespread agreement within the early church Fathers concerning the way of *koinōnia*. The "dynamic things in common" conveyed the *koinōnia*, they brought one into a relationship with God because of God's gracious willingness to "locate" himself, to be "in common." This was not merely a theological debate for them. This was real comfort; This was real certainty; This was God at work in redeeming and restoring His people.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>20</sup>Ibid., p.157. Chrysostom focuses on the words of King Solomon as he dedicated the temple in 1 Kings 8:27-30. Solomon too, spoke about the reality of a God who fills the universe, and yet locates himself in a way that people can find him and be forgiven.

<sup>21</sup> For a further discussion about the Fathers concerning the Lord's Supper, the real presence of the body and blood, the oral eating of the body and blood in, with and under the bread and wine, the simple meaning of the words of institution, the two natures of Christ etc. see Chemnitz, pp. 149-183.

Chemnitz provides much useful data for this discussion about *koinōnia*, the Lord's Supper and the way that God comes to men for their salvation (Romans 5:8). He provides the reader with an extensive selection of quotations from the Fathers concerning these matters and why this discussion is so vital for the church.

He says this concerning the fathers,

"But the ancients were not debating about idle matters, nor were they disturbed about inconsequential things, but rather they drew the sweetest consolations from these teachings. For because of sin our nature was separated and alienated from the Deity, which is the fountain of life (Is.

Liturgies of the Ancient Church

In the early liturgies one finds the same understanding of the "elements in common." There are, in fact, even more pronounced statements concerning the relationship of the bread and wine and the body and blood in the liturgical calls for the Spirit of God to consecrate, sanctify and make the bread and wine the precious body and blood of Christ. Jasper and Cuming's work, Prayers of the Eucharist: Early and Reformed, provides a good overview of the liturgies extant in the early church and the specific references to the early church's understanding of the Lord's Supper.<sup>22</sup> Here one is confronted by the commonality of confession which existed and was also prayed in every corner of the church, in Jerusalem, in Alexandria, in Antioch and

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59:1 ff.; Eph. 4:17 ff.), so that the divine majesty, if He had acted without a mediator between Himself and our human nature, could have fallen upon us like a consuming fire on a pile of straw (Deut. 4:24; Joel 2:3 ff.). Therefore the Son of God assumed our nature, without sin, and first so sanctified it in His own person that He made it not only alive but also life-giving" p.167.

<sup>22</sup>R. C. D. Jasper and G. J. Cuming, Prayers of the Eucharist: Early and Reformed, 3rd rev. ed. (New York: Pueblo Publishing Co., 1987) Much of the work in this overview of liturgical data, *koinōnia*, and the Lord's Supper depends on the work of Jasper and Cuming. They do an excellent job of highlighting the liturgy of the Eucharist for a more focused inquiry.

The Liturgical texts are vital to this discussion in that they are the confessions of those who used them and thus provide not just the writing of one but the faith of many. (as they prayed, so they believed . . . *lex orandi-lex credendi*). Together, with the writings of the Fathers, one can construct the use and meaning of *koinōnia* and the Lord's Supper and thereby provide valuable insight into our use and practice today.

Rome. The confession of the "holy things" for the "holy" ones parallels Paul's understanding and confession of *koinōnia* and the Lord's Supper in 1 Corinthians 10 and 11.

In the Anaphora of Saints Addai and Mari<sup>23</sup>, the weakest testimony for our thesis because of the absence of the words of institution, one still finds the confession of the body and the blood of Christ and the sacramental way of the Gospel when it is said,

*The priest says privately:* And with these heavenly armies, Lord, we also, your lowly, weak and miserable servants give you thanks because you have brought about in us a great grace which cannot be repaid. For you put on our human nature to give us life through your divine nature; you raised us from our lowly state; . . . . you forgave our debts; you justified our sinfulness.<sup>24</sup>

Later,

*The priest says privately:* . . . . Be mindful of all the pious and righteous fathers who were pleasing in your sight, in the commemoration of the body and blood of your Christ, which we offer to you on the pure and holy altar, as you taught us.<sup>25</sup>

The Liturgy of St. Mark<sup>26</sup> is representative of the confession of the Egyptian, Christian church, the so-called

<sup>23</sup>Jasper and Cuming, p.26. "This liturgy originated in Edessa, a city of north-eastern Syria bear the frontier between the Roman Empire and Persia, and one of the earliest centres of Christianity." To be noted, this liturgy provides little direct data for our discussion, yet still exhibits general, parallel themes.

<sup>24</sup>Jasper and Cuming, p.27.

<sup>25</sup>Jasper and Cuming, p.27.

<sup>26</sup>The liturgy of St. Mark is dependent in its final form on the liturgies of St. Basil and St. James, says Jasper and Cuming, p.42. There is much similarity to be sure and the calling of the Holy Spirit to consecrate and sanctify the bread/wine to make it the body and blood is evident in each.

Alexandrian liturgy. In this liturgy, one finds more specifically the "*ta koinon*" (that which is common) way of the Gospel when it is said,

*The bishop prays thus: Lord. . . . [look] upon us and <?send> upon these loaves and these cups your Holy Spirit to sanctify and consecrate them (aloud) and make the bread the body, People: Amen: The bishop aloud: and the cup the blood of the new covenant of our Lord and God and Saviour and King of all, Jesus Christ. . . that they may become to all of us who partake of them for faith, for sobriety, for healing, for renewal of soul, body, and spirit, for fellowship (koinōnia) in eternal life and immortality, . . .*<sup>27</sup>

After the "prayer of elevation," it is natural for the bishop to shout aloud, "The holy things for the holy ones." What else could be meant here but the body and blood, given and shed, to be eaten and drunk creating and sustaining the *koinōnia*? 1 Corinthians 10 is mirrored perfectly in the early liturgical confession of St. Mark.

The Western-Syrian liturgy is represented by the Liturgy of St. James. It is also helpful here to look at Cyril of Jerusalem's Lectures because "It (the Liturgy of St. James) has several points of contact with the *Catecheses* of Cyril of Jerusalem."<sup>28</sup> Cyril also further explains the liturgical pronouncements concerning the Lord's Supper when he says,

Since he himself has declared and said of the bread, 'This is my body,' who will thereafter dare to doubt? And since he has strongly affirmed and said, 'This is my blood,' who will ever doubt, saying that is not his

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<sup>27</sup>Jasper and Cuming, p.49.

<sup>28</sup>Jasper and Cuming, p.55.

blood? So we partake with all assurance as of the body and blood of Christ. For in the figure of bread his body is given to you, and in the figure of wine his blood; that, by partaking of the body and blood of Christ, you may become one body and one blood with him."<sup>29</sup>

The Liturgy of St. James mirrors the liturgy of St. Mark. There is the call for the Holy Spirit to sanctify, to make the elements of bread and wine the body and blood of Christ. There is the promise of forgiveness, eternal life and so forth, for all who "partake." And there is the familiar call of "The holy things for the holy ones." Cyril defines this proclamation even further in his lectures as has been demonstrated.

In the Byzantine liturgy it is said,

Deacon. Sir, bless this holy bread.

Priest. And make this bread the precious body of Christ.

D. Amen, Sir, bless the holy cup.

P. And that which is in this chalice the precious blood of thy Christ.

D. Amen. Sir, bless both holy things.<sup>30</sup>

Also, as the celebrant lifts the host before receiving it saying,

P. The Holy things for the holy ones.  
(*ta hagia tois hagnios*)<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>29</sup>Jasper and Cuming, p.52.

<sup>30</sup>Donald Attwater, Eastern Catholic Worship (New York: The Devin-Adair Co., 1945), p.36.

<sup>31</sup>By this liturgical proclamation, the whole issue of the early church understanding of the sacramental presence of Christ in the Lord's Supper is defined. It is the real presence of the real things, the body and blood of Christ. To understand this is to understand the full weight of the sacramental view of *koinōnia* for Paul and his view of the church. He would be quite comfortable with the Fathers in

- Choir. One only is holy, one only is Lord, Jesus Christ, in the glory of God the Father.
- D. Let us give heed.  
Sir, break the holy bread.
- P. The lamb of God, Son of the Father, is broken and distributed, he who is broken but not divided, ever eaten yet never consumed, sanctifying those that partake thereof.<sup>32</sup>

Again, the Coptic liturgy finds itself in much agreement with that of the Byzantine and is even more emphatic concerning the proper understanding of the "elements shared" and the power in that is theirs to graciously bestow. We read concerning the host at its elevation just before distribution,

- P. This is indeed the holy body of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. Amen. This is indeed the precious blood of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. This is in very truth, the body and blood of Emmanuel our God. Amen.
- C. Amen, I believe.
- P. Amen, amen, amen. I believe, I believe, I believe and will confess to my last breath that this is the living body which thine only-begotten Son, our Lord and God and Savior Jesus Christ, took from our Lady and queen of all, the holy sinless Mary, mother of God. . . .I believe that his godhead was not separated from his manhood for a moment, for the twinkle of an eye. He gave his body for the forgiveness of our sins and for eternal life to them that partake of it. I believe, I believe, I believe that this is in very truth that body.<sup>33</sup>

The Gallican and Roman rites provide no new data to

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saying, "The sacrament builds the church."

Elert summarizes this view when he says, "There can hardly have been any who did not recall this Eucharistic meaning of *hagia* when he heard the formula *koinonia tōn hagiōn*. The connection would be made immediately if he thought about it at all" (p.221).

<sup>32</sup>Attwater, p.40.

<sup>33</sup>Attwater, p.92.

the discussion. In fact they reinforce the foregoing. "What was believed and prayed" in the liturgies of the early church was a Lord Jesus who willing located his body and blood in, with and under the forms of bread and wine to redeem and restore his people. "Holy things" created and sustained a graciously, declared holy people. Such was the confession of the early church. Such was the confession of St. Paul in 1 Corinthians 10. Such is the confession of God's people today.

There are ample examples concerning the use of *koinōnia* with the "thing in common" as cited in the work of Elert.<sup>34</sup> Detailing such evidence goes beyond the scope of this chapter, but the fact that Paul's construction is common also to the Fathers is fundamental and very encouraging of further research. One also sees that concerning the body and blood in the Pauline discussion of the Lord's Supper and *koinōnia* in 1 Corinthians 10, which was often the point of departure for most modern scholars in a consistent understanding of *koinōnia* with the "element in common," there is no problem of interpretation for the early church. They confessed the dynamic, life-giving character of "the common thing shared" which bestows the *koinōnia*. This also parallels Pauline usage.

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<sup>34</sup>See above, chapter IV, p.5-7.

Further References

Some further references to this may also be seen in Cyril of Jerusalem where he reflects the liturgy saying,

After that the priest says: 'What is holy for the holy!' Holy are the elements on which the Holy Spirit has descended; and holy are you too, on whom has been bestowed the Holy Spirit. The holy things and the holy people belong together. You say then: 'one is holy one is Lord, Jesus Christ!' In truth only one is holy - that is holy by nature. If we too are holy, it is not by nature but by participation, discipline and prayer.<sup>35</sup>

Chrysostom explicates *koinōnia* as the sharing together in the dynamic, common elements. He gives the fullest account of *koinōnia* in the body and blood. He stresses the dynamic nature of the body and blood which makes us one body. He also stresses the deep unity that is conveyed in what the Lord says and gives. He says in his sermon on 1 Corinthians 10:16-17,

The bread which we break, is it not a participation in the body of Christ. Paul's words are thoroughly persuasive and awe-inspiring. What he is saying is this: 'What is in the cup is what flowed from Christ's side; that is what we share in.' He has called it a cup of blessing, because when we have it in our hands we praise Christ in wonder and astonishment at his unspeakable gift, by blessing him for pouring it out but also for allowing us all to share in it.<sup>36</sup>

Also,

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<sup>35</sup>Cyril of Jerusalem, "Fifth Address on the Mysteries," 19 as found in Documents in Early Christian Thought, eds. Maurice Wiles and Mark Santer (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1975), p. 193.

<sup>36</sup>St. John Chrysostom, "Homilies on 1 Corinthians 24, 1-2 (on I Cor. 10: 16-17), sect. 1, as seen in Documents in Early Christian Thought, p. 197.



Why do I speak of participation(*koinōnia*)? We actually are that body. What is the bread? The body of Christ. And what do we become who receive a share (*metalambanontes*) of it? The body of Christ.<sup>37</sup>

In the Fathers there is ample evidence for the grammatical construction, the dynamic view of the genitive, and the Gospel understanding of the *koinōnia*. There is clear evidence of continuity between the Fathers and Paul concerning *koinōnia*. But, while these data demonstrate a parallelism with Pauline usage and that of the early church, there is evidence also for maintaining a divergence between the two. The dominant theme in Paul that is often lost in the Fathers is his understanding of "righteousness" and salvation as a gift (Rom.4:5; Eph.2:8-9). For the "Apostolic Fathers," the general usage of these terms showed a distinct moralistic tendency. Righteousness was not viewed as a gift but as "proper Christian behavior."<sup>38</sup> Bengt Hagglund says,

With the exception of First Clement, the writings of the Apostolic Fathers have very little in common with Paul's emphasis on justification by faith. It is not unmerited grace that stands at the center of this teaching but rather the new way of life that Christ taught and which he empowers.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>37</sup>Ibid., sect. 2, p. 198. Chrysostom's point is to show that *koinōnia* participation is even more concrete than mere *metochē*, for *koinōnia* involves not only partaking but being made one. He argues for a "flesh level" participation that has spiritual results because of the presence of the body and blood. Thus, Paul uses the more definitive word, *koinōnia*.

<sup>38</sup>Bengt Hagglund, History of Theology, trans. Gene J. Lund (St. Louis: Concordia Pub. House, 1968) p.17.

<sup>39</sup>Hagglund, p.17.

In Irenaeus, Tertullian and Hippolytus one also sees a stress on merit, or the "healing of men's fallen nature." The objective reality of grace given totally and freely in Christ alone is often muddled. The use of the grammatical phrase with *koinōnia*, and even the dynamic nature of the genitives, is still maintained in the Fathers. But, the crucial emphasis, the gracious, Gospel character of the elements, often is lost. What is truly at stake in any discussion of *koinōnia* and the "common things shared" is the Gospel.<sup>40</sup> To lose the Gospel emphasis is to lose the *koinōnia* in toto. Hagglund says,

Irenaeus presented Christ as Savior from the power of sin, who, through His Spirit, redeems man from the corruption of sin so that man can be restored to his original purity. Salvation was described, in other words, in terms of the recovery of health and wholeness. In Tertullian a different point of view comes to the fore: he presented Christ as the teacher who proclaims a new law (*nova lex*), thereby strengthening man's free will so that he can live according to God's commands. To live in a manner consistent with God's law is set forth as the goal of salvation. This is achieved through instruction in the Law. The concept of merit is dominant.<sup>41</sup>

There was also a tendency early on in the writings of the Fathers that further aided a movement, or shift away from the Pauline proclamation of *koinōnia* as Gospel, free gift in toto, from Christ. This is seen in the church's move to defend itself and Christ against the "heretics, those who refused to be under the authority of the Old and New

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<sup>40</sup>See above, section III, pp.81-89.

<sup>41</sup>Hagglund, p.56.

Testament in their teaching and proclamation." The Fathers' formula for protection was the "authority in the teaching of the Bishop, the authority of the Scriptures" and "the rule of faith." These things were to serve as a protection against heresies and schisms. They were to protect God's people from the attacks of those who sought to deliver a false Christ and false salvation which would thereby destroy the unity of the church. Elert discusses how this was a move away from the certainty of Word of God and biblical *koinōnia* when he says, "If the unity of the church rested on the bishops and their apostolic succession, it rested rather insecurely."<sup>42</sup>

#### Summary

The goal of the survey in this chapter is to aid toward further research of the Pauline usage of *koinonia* and its usage in the church Fathers. The general themes detected show that there is continuity in the genitive construction with *koinōnia*; There is continuity in the primary emphasis on the "common thing shared"; And, there is continuity in the dynamic understanding of the "elements in common,"

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<sup>42</sup>Elert, p.53. For a more detailed discussion, see chapter 5 in his book called "Unity and Fellowship." Elert argues all along that the church has had to struggle for a faithful proclamation of biblical *koinonia* and the Lord's Supper. It is not a new phenomenon to meet unchristian and anti-biblical teaching even from within the church. But, so also, the fact of a "confessional" church is not a new phenomenon as some believe, but existed from the very beginnings of the church.

especially as seen in 1 Corinthians 10, the liturgy and the writings concerning the Lord's Supper. But, there is both continuity and discontinuity concerning the Pauline understanding of the "gracious" character of the genitives and *koinōnia* with that of the early church. If Christ is the new law giver, then *koinōnia tou christou* also becomes law.

A closer look at the specific citations in the Fathers would prove most helpful in further paralleling the early church with Paul. Far weightier is the *koinōnia* of the body and the blood confessed in the liturgy. These are hard data indeed. There are times when the Fathers are less than valuable resources, but the liturgy is what was confessed by the church itself. To have such a definitive, sacramental understanding of the body and blood as "things participated in" challenges any modern day discussions concerning the sacramental character of *koinōnia*. Therefore, the Pauline stress of the dynamic, Gospel character of the "element shared," which is always creating, effecting and sustaining *koinōnia* remains.

## CHAPTER 5

### SUMMARY AND MODERN IMPLICATIONS

The problem undertaken in this research project was to seek to discover some effective guidelines for a more specific view of *koinōnia* and its cognates in Pauline usage. In the preliminary research there was agreement concerning the grammatical use of *koinōnia* with the genitives and datives. The genitive described the "thing shared," which is the most vital, central concern of any discussion of *koinōnia*. From the classical writers to the early church Fathers, this was emphasized over and over again. The dative most often was secondary and described the "person" with whom the "common thing" was shared. But, even here, Paul focuses on the "thing in common" by coining the usage of the "dative of the thing shared," which he used with the verbal form of *koinōnia*. These are hard data that define the boundaries for understanding and defining the word. Unfortunately, these data were still used for a variety of interpretations when it came to Paul, some of

which were contradictory.<sup>1</sup>

"*Koinōnia*" and its cognates then were examined in their Pauline usage especially in reference to the Lord's Supper (specifically connected in 1 Corinthians 10, the *koinōnia* of the body, *koinōnia* of the blood) to determine Paul's significance in using this common word. A broad, linguistic and syntactic study of the word was undertaken, but more importantly Paul's use of parallel words and constructions as investigated brought to light what is unique in his use of the term. To Paul, the genitives focus the discussion on the "things in common." They speak of what is unique, yet common. But, these are "common things shared" like never before. They are words full of life, inherently dynamic. They are words of the Gospel which is God locating himself in "things" that we can receive so that we might receive and believe in Him. The words used -- most often in the genitive construction, but other times even intensified by Paul's unusual constructions -- are "the Gospel, Christ, the Holy Spirit, the body and blood, the service ministry, etc." Cyril of Alexandria says much the same when he says,

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<sup>1</sup>This has been demonstrated throughout the paper. Some, even with the importance and significance of the genitive defined grammatically, still emphasize the meaning of "association." This is flatly contradicted by the data and must be viewed as a secondary discussion at best. But, even those who emphasized the genitive, the discussion of 1 Corinthians 10:16 (see chapter 3) saw a "spiritualizing" of the "thing in common," because of several authors unwillingness to believe that "the body and the blood," can really be there. This is still the basis for much of the discussion today.

Christ calls His flesh spirit (John 6:63), and this He says not because He would deny that it is flesh, but because the life-giving and sanctifying power of the Spirit is united with it.<sup>2</sup>

The research of Werner Elert demonstrated the continuity of this "sacramental" understanding of *koinōnia* especially in the early church, its liturgies and in the writings of the Fathers. The paper demonstrated this continuity but also pointed out the discontinuity of the "grace, word-alone" perspective of Paul and the Fathers' tendency to make Christ and the Gospel, a "new law." Again, the discontinuity was not apparent in the grammatical understanding of the phrase nor in the "dynamic" character of the genitives. It was apparent in their understanding of the Gospel.

So, what is *koinōnia*? Does one create it? Does one even maintain it? *Koinōnia* is a word of relationship, no doubt. But it is a word of a specific, well defined

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<sup>2</sup>PG 73:604; PG 74:528. The argument against the sacramental view of the Word of God, Baptism, the Lord's Supper and even *koinōnia* is often falsely caricatured as magic, but this fails to understand that "faith" is necessary for proper reception of these gifts of grace (even faith being a gift -- Ephesians 2:8-10). One also hears the point made that God cannot locate himself in "common things" to communicate His forgiveness and life from the cross to people. This view often promotes the attributes of God as proof, especially omnipresence. To this false opposition of the attributes of God to His sacramental presence, the Bible is fundamentally opposed. One only has to look to 1 Kings 8:27-31, where Solomon resolves the apparent tension in speaking of Gospel, forgiving presence of God being "the place which you have said, My Name shall be there." One only then has to look to the Incarnation and the place where the Incarnate Christ has put His Name to locate the "place, the common thing" for life and salvation.

relationship. It is a word of grace given, created and sustained by the Lord who is the gracious giver. It is not generic. It is not well understood as mere "association, or fellowship." It is a relationship, a bond that is created through flesh-level, *koinos*-level, "things in common." When the Bible offers a *koinōnia tou Christou*, one should ask, "where is this Christ that I may receive Him in a concrete way?" Paul answers, "*koinōnia tou sōmatos. . . koinōnia tou haimatos.*" It is this way throughout the Scriptures as the Bible also answers, "where His Name is, there is Christ" (Matthew 18:20). Thus Baptism takes on a whole new meaning when the Name of God is added to the water. So also the Word (John 6:63), and the Lord's Supper (1 Corinthians 10:16). Each discussion of *koinōnia* cannot do without a theological discussion of these genitives "received in common." Such a discussion concerning the Lord's Supper is given in 1 Corinthians 11:17-32.

Some people try to move the discussion of *koinōnia* away from the "to *koinon*" point. This is especially true in the area of the Lord's Supper where some have called the meal "a sign of communion" (*koinōnia*). Martin Chemnitz answers this by again appealing to the data. Listen to what Chemnitz says,

For the word *koinōnia* never excludes or removes the substance itself from that action in which the communion or the *koinōnia* takes place. For when Paul in Rom.8:9 and 1 Cor. 6:19 says: "The Holy Spirit dwells in you," he is saying the same thing that he says in 2 Cor. 13:14, where he speaks of the "communion of the Holy



Spirit." Are we going to say with the fanatics that the Holy Spirit does not dwell in the believers with His essence, that His essence is far removed from us, and that in His place only something drawn from the substance of the Spirit, namely, His gifts and powers, is present in us? The gifts of charity which were collected for the poor saints and sent to them are called *koinōnia* in Rom. 15:26 and 2 Cor. 8:4.

Does this mean that not the substance of these gifts but only something abstract was given and sent to the poor? The word *koinōnia* means a communication - sometimes actively, that is, a distribution; sometimes passively, that is, a participation; and sometimes the thing itself which is offered and received, as we can demonstrate by individual examples. But in no way does it follow that Paul by the use of the term "the communion of the body" is suggesting that therefore the words of institution are not to be understood as referring to the distribution and reception of the very substance of the body of Christ.<sup>3</sup>

*Koinōnia* is a dynamic relationship with God, created and sustained through these dynamic, life-giving "things in common." This interpretation of a dynamic view of *koinōnia*, created and sustained by the genitives, is not so popular a view. For many today, the generic understanding of "association, comradeship, or fellowship" suffices. Friedreich Schleiermacher represents such a view when he says,

In order to know what the Christian church is, one must first establish "the general concept of the church" together with a right understanding of what is characteristically Christian. . . . the church is a fellowship created by the voluntary actions of men, and only through these does it continue to exist.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup>Martin Chemnitz, The Lord's Supper, trans. by J. A. O. Preus, (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1979), p.138

<sup>4</sup>Schleiermacher, Glaubenslehre, 2,2. Elert quotes him and discusses how this view derives the nature of the church from a generic concept of "fellowship." The church becomes a

This focus on the "voluntary association of people" as being the predominant interpretation of *koinōnia* is a new, philosophical imposition of meaning on a word that truly rebels against such imposition. Elert states that this shift in meaning was allowed to take hold because of the ambiguity of the Latin rendering of the Greek phrase. One might say that the same thing is apparent in the English rendering of the word. As Elert was quoted earlier,

The West received the phrase from the East but when the Greek precision was replaced by the Latin ambiguity, room was given for it (*koinōnia*) to be understood of persons. This finally led to a merely social understanding of *communio* . . . . thus *tōn hagiōn koinōnia* arrived at a complete contradiction of its original meaning."<sup>5</sup>

The results of this research argues against such a diffuse understanding. In fact, to dismiss the genitives, to generalize them is to at best miss the *koinōnia*, or at worst to receive it in unbelief and judgment (1 Corinthians 10:1-12). Unfortunately, things such as "unworthy reception," or "participation in the Lord's Supper to one's judgment (1

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instance among others in the category of "fellowship." Schleiermacher's view of fellowship in general, determined his view of the Lord's Supper. Thus the "to *koinon*" was displaced as defining and conveying the *koinōnia*. For Paul and the early church, it was the sacrament that built the church, not the church building the sacrament. Thus in Schleiermacher one sees a radically different, anthropocentric ecclesiology. Werner Elert, Eucharist and Fellowship in the First Four Centuries, trans. N. E. Nagel (St. Louis: Concordia Pub. House, 1966), p.2.

<sup>5</sup>Elert, p.11.

Cor.11:27)," these are matters of indifference to today's Christian. Private interpretations and faulty practice are common with the result that the certainty of Christ's presence and forgiveness are lost to the common man.

The data argue for certainty, for more concise understanding. The data showed that there are "controls" in the area of grammar that set certain boundaries for a dynamic biblical, sacramental understanding of *koinōnia*. The genitive with *koinōnia* always denotes a common element, "The thing in common," that truly can be shared in a real way. This genitive focuses the reception of *koinōnia* on the "common thing." The "common thing" given and received breeds certainty; It builds faith; It delivers the *koinōnia*. These "common things shared" define and convey the *koinōnia*. To lose the genitive construction, to dismiss the primacy of the common element shared, or to dismiss the inherent dynamic nature of the Pauline "common things" is to misunderstand, even lose *koinōnia*. The emphasis in Pauline usage is "the thing in common," even when dative case is used. *Koinōnia* then is "participation along with others in common thing."

The biblical data force the modern interpreter to again see the pre-eminence of the Word<sup>6</sup> in worship, the

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<sup>6</sup>This author argues that the Word of God is sacramental. It is "koinos" level. The Word is not "principles," rather it is "God-breathed (2 Timothy 3:15-17; John 6:63). This issue is always colored by one's view of the character of the word of God.

celebration of the Lord's Supper in worship. The "fellowship hall" is first the congregation gathered around the altar, the pulpit, the sacraments and the Word. At these *to koinon* points there truly is a relationship created and sustained that moves out into one's community, even the world. But the dependency of the latter upon the former must always be maintained.

Herein lies the great danger of the modern church. When the Word, the Church and *koinōnia* are re-interpreted sociologically, they are made creations of men subject to man's sins and limitations. The real presence of Christ which alone creates and sustains the church is lost.

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Martin Chemnitz, The Lord's Supper, p. 88. Here he discusses the certainty of the word against our own reasoning when he says,

"There is a useful quote that says, 'concerning the things of God we must keep our eyes in the Scripture and not necessarily in our own reason or our own experience.' But the Son of God has put His Word by which He has given us the sacraments into opposition to our thoughts and has willed to do so in such a way so that we must learn from His Word whatever we need to know about these mysteries and must oppose all the absurdities that can be raised in objection to his Word, because He who is true, wise and powerful has spoken it.

Chrysostom in his various writings repeats this necessary warning: 'Let us believe God,' he says, 'whenever He speaks and not contradict Him, even if what He says seems absurd to our senses and minds, for He is above our reason and our ideas. In all things and especially in the case of these mysteries let us not do those things which might destroy us, but looking only at His words, hold firmly to them. For we cannot be deceived by His words. But our senses are easily deceived. His words cannot be false, but our senses are very often deceived. Therefore when He has spoken ('This is My body') let us no longer be hung up with any kind of doubt, but let us understand it with the eyes of our minds.'"

In response to this, one must finally stress the Pauline emphasis of "passing along what one has been given." He says, "What I received from the Lord, I passed on to you. (1 Corinthians 11:23)." His is a trust in the power of the gift given, received and and in the case of the apostolic ministry, passed on. The church is called to do no less today. The integrity of the dynamic, sacramental gift of *koinōnia* in, with and under "the common things shared" needs to be proclaimed to be received and it needs to be defended so as not to be lost among the ambiguities of the modern emphasis of "association," no matter how appealing they might be. One can only receive and pass along the gifts from the Lord. This is central to one's understanding of the "thing in common."

The character of the genitive is a grammatical and theological question that is to be engaged in every discussion of *koinōnia*. The question of how God deals with men is essential in our understanding of *koinōnia*. For Paul, the grammar focuses one on the "things in common." But, these specific "things in common" used by Paul are unique. Christ, his Spirit, his body and blood, and his sufferings move us beyond the grammatical questions to questions of Law and Gospel. To "participate," or, to "have fellowship" becomes a secondary characteristic in comparison to the "element shared." The genitive demonstrates the emphasis on the "common thing." But, "Christ, his body and

blood" as the "common things shared" demonstrate that it is Gospel, pure gift. The "element shared" is a life-giving, dynamic gift. The genitives are the key to *koinōnia* but never have genitives carried such freight. *Koinōnia* assumes the characteristics of the genitive, the life-giving gift of the gracious giver.

It is significant to mention that Panikulam's work with *koinōnia* seeks to demonstrate that this word is the basis for a complete Pauline "ecclesiology."<sup>7</sup> With a proper understanding of *koinōnia* one can say, "The *koinōnia* creates and sustains the church." This paper then has shown the true dynamic, Gospel character of *koinōnia*, which is ever created and sustained by these "things in common."

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<sup>7</sup>George Panikulam, *Koinonia in the New Testament: a Dynamic Expression of the Christian life*, (Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1979), p.5. He sees the word as the basis for Pauline ecclesiology especially in how he relates the other occurrences of the phrase to one another when he says, "Paul sets as the target of Christian vocation *koinōnia* with the Son (I Corinthians 1:9). . . . seen in this light, the other occurrences in Paul like *koinōnia* in faith (Philemon 6, *koinōnia* in the Gospel (Philippians 2:5), *koinōnia* as collection (2 Corinthians 8:4, 9:13; Romans 12:13; 15:26), *koinōnia* in the Spirit (2 Corinthians 13:13; Philippians 2:1), in the Eucharist (I Corinthians 10:16) and *koinōnia* in His sufferings (Philippians 3:10), would serve as concrete modes of responding to this call to *koinōnia* with the Son."

This paper would argue that these are several means of conveying the *koinōnia*, yet the *koinōnia* is whole, one in every way that Jesus meets us. There is no doubt that each occurrence of the *koinōnia* is a call to love and to serve the brethren.

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