

place in Philippi (77)?

One distinctive aspect of Koester's theological work is an interest in the social and political dimensions of Christianity – both at Paul's time and its implications for today. He admits that K. Stendahl's contra-Bultmannian approach has been very influential in his thinking on the impact of the gospel on the community. In the first essay of the book, 'Paul's Proclamation of God's Justice to the Nations' (first appearing in print in 2004), Koester repeatedly asserts that Paul's language of 'righteousness' should not be related primarily to 'piety and morality' (4) at the individual or existential level, but was intended to 'create righteousness and justice for people, for communities, and for nations' (8) – 'the building of the community of the new age' (11). Though a sociological focus aligns with other pauline scholars, Koester makes the mistake of drawing Paul's community boundaries so wide that the only criteria for inclusion is mutual love, respect and reciprocal servitude (13-14). This appears to gloss over some of the more weighty ethical injunctions (Gal. 5.19-21; 1 Cor. 6.9-10) in Paul and the seriousness of adherence to particular theological beliefs (1 Cor. 12.2-3). At the very least, though, Koester is right to emphasise that Paul frequently used political terms to (re-)describe theological realities offering a 'story of salvation' and testimony to a 'political vision of a new ecumenical community' (233). One wonders, though, precisely what Koester means by 'ecumenical'.

The reader will find the final essay most interesting as it is Koester's personal reflections on his academic journey beginning with his interest in training to become a Lutheran ministry following his release from an American POW camp in Marburg (1945) to his doctoral tutelage under Bultmann, to his research post at Heidelberg with Bornkamm, to his current post at Harvard. As Koester finishes his recollections, he notes that he has come a long way from his early intensive interest in 'demythologizing' the NT to his most worthwhile contributions – 'bringing archaeologists and students of early Christianity together' (289). This collection of over twenty essays is a demonstration of Koester's lifelong dedication to the field of New Testament scholarship and is loaded with numerous insights that will aid those who wish to understand Paul and his world better.

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***Paul and Conflict Resolution:
An Exegetical Study of Paul's Apostolic Paradigm
in 1 Corinthians 9
(Paternoster Biblical Monographs)***

Robinson Butarbutar

Milton Keynes, England: Paternoster, 2007, xviii + 275 pp., £19.99, pb, ISBN 1-84227-315-9

SUMMARY

The author aims to reconstruct the dispute over idol-food in Corinth and to interpret the function of Paul's defense in 1 Cor 9 within the larger context of 8.1-11.1. He argues that the dispute was provoked by the development of disproportionate societal boundaries, which were especially difficult to maintain in Corinth because of the pressure of the Imperial Cult. Set within this dispute, Paul's defense is integral to the coherence of 8.1-11.1 and primarily served as a pattern of self-denial to be imitated and applied in the existing Corinthian dispute. He also demonstrates that Paul's paradigm maintains the potential today for disassembling conflict in the contemporary church.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Der Autor beabsichtigt, den Disput über Götzenopferfleisch in Korinth zu rekonstruieren und die Funktion der Verteidigung des Paulus in 1. Kor. 9 innerhalb des größeren Zusammenhanges von 8,1-11,1 zu interpretieren. Er argumentiert, dass der Disput durch die Entwicklung unverhältnismäßiger sozialer Grenzen provoziert wurde, die wegen des Drucks des imperialen Kultes in Korinth besonders schwer aufrecht zu erhalten waren. In diesen Disput eingeordnet ist Paulus' Verteidigung ein integraler Bestandteil der Kohärenz von 8,1-11,1 und dient primär als Beispiel der Selbstverleugnung, das im existierenden korinthischen Disput imitiert und angewendet werden sollte. Der Autor zeigt auch, dass Paulus' Paradigma immer noch das Potential hat, heute Konflikte in der gegenwärtigen Kirche auseinanderzuidividieren.

RÉSUMÉ

L'auteur tente de déterminer les circonstances et le contenu de la controverse sur les viandes sacrifiées aux idoles à Corinthe et s'interroge sur la fonction du chapitre 9 de la première épître, où Paul défend son ministère, dans son contexte discursif. Il considère que la controverse avait surgi à cause de l'émergence de barrières sociales disproportionnées que l'on avait du mal à maintenir à Corinthe suite aux pressions résultant de la propagation du culte de l'empereur. Dans ce cadre, la défense de l'apostolat paulinien fait partie intégrante du développement de 1 Corinthiens 8.1-11.1 : il sert essentiellement à donner un modèle de renoncement à soi que Paul invite ses lecteurs à imiter dans leur manière de gérer le conflit existant. L'auteur montre aussi que ce texte offre une voie d'approche capable de désamorcer les conflits au sein de l'Église aujourd'hui.

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This volume is the author's revised doctoral thesis com-

pleted at the South East Asia Graduate School of Theology. Butarbutar's primary objectives are to reconstruct the dispute over idol-food in Corinth and to interpret the function of Paul's 'defense' in 1 Cor 9 within the larger context of 8.1-11.1. Butarbutar also intends to demonstrate that the paradigm of self-denial presented in 1 Cor 9 maintains the potential today for disassembling any conflict in the contemporary church.

The book begins by considering the cause of the idol-food dispute in Corinth. Extensively interacting with Corinthian scholarship both past and present, Butarbutar rejects those interpretations which suggest the dispute was instigated by the entrance of extraneous doctrine or economic polarization. Instead Butarbutar attributes the impetus behind the dispute to the development of disproportionate societal boundaries. Thus, the 'weak' and 'strong' identified degrees of acculturation. Whereas the 'strong' recognized the insignificance of man-made idols and God's neutrality toward the consumption of idol-food at public feasts, the 'weak' resisted eating such meat, participating at such meals and preferred that the 'strong' abstain as well.

But such was no easy task for the Corinthians. Indebted largely to Bruce Winter's reconstruction of the Corinthian dispute, Butarbutar astutely argues that the maintenance of boundaries by Christians in Corinth was especially difficult due to the presence of the Imperial Cult and its prominence during the celebratory events surrounding the Isthmian Games, when idol-food was frequently on the menu. Moreover, because public honor depended largely upon patron-client ties, and support of the Imperial Cult affected one's patronage, refusal to participate in the cult and at related meals had severe social ramifications for the 'well to do'. As Butarbutar explains, 'Although [the Corinthians] may not have been forced to participate in the worship of the Imperial Cult... they themselves must have thought about their role in the city where the cult was being promoted. This would surely have caused them to think about their involvement in the activities associated with the worship of the cult, including dining, and about any food associated in one way or another with the worship of idols' (82-83).

Following from this reconstruction, Butarbutar investigates the purpose for Paul's 'defense' in 1 Cor 9. Whereas Butarbutar recognizes that Paul was rebutting (or anticipating) criticism for his refusal to receive financial support, he principally emphasizes the illustrative purpose of Paul's apologia; Paul's defense is primarily a paradigm to be imitated, rather than an argument for legitimacy and therefore is integral to the coherence of 8.1-11.1. Paul's analogy consisted of three components: 'forgoing rights' (9.4-18), 'self-enslavement' (9.19-23), and 'self-control' (9.24-27). Thus, Paul desired that the 'strong' Corinthians apply these virtues in their existing dispute. The book ends with a helpful example of the application of Paul's paradigm in a contemporary dispute within the Batak Christian Protestant Church, Indonesia. Herein Butarbutar testifies to the (re)unifying potential

of Paul's self-denying model for congregations today.

There is much to applaud in the book. Throughout Butarbutar demonstrates disciplined scholarship satisfactorily responding to his predecessors, while persuasively arguing his thesis. The book is very well researched, meticulously footnoted, and contains an impressive bibliography consisting of most influential works regarding 1 Corinthians. Moreover, in somewhat rare fashion Butarbutar manages to demonstrate the direct applicability of exegesis to the contemporary church.

Butarbutar's most original idea, however, is also his most unclear. Concerning the basis for Paul's refusal of support, Butarbutar explains, '[I]t is the kind of attitude that Paul brings to his gospel preaching that causes his refusal to exercise his rights to live off the gospel. It is therefore strictly a matter of perspective towards the gospel itself that makes Paul conduct his gospel proclamation in the way he has done' (163-164). Precisely what Butarbutar intends by 'attitude' and 'perspective' remains blurred; nowhere does he elaborate for the reader what it is that Paul perceived the gospel to be that would require its free proclamation. Presumably, Butarbutar suggests that Paul preached without recompense in order to experience self-denial and suffering firsthand. These features comprise the very nature of the cross and, for Butarbutar, the messenger must imitate the message. Although an intriguing theological insight, Butarbutar must expound here, especially concerning why Paul accepted support from some churches but not others, which Butarbutar comments upon only briefly (207-208).

Very few typos exist in the manuscript, but it should be mentioned that parts of the book read more smoothly than others. Awkward sentence constructions run throughout and Butarbutar frequently omits the definite and indefinite article when one or the other should appear (see the first paragraph, p. 30). But these criticisms in no way impede the overall strength of the book. Any scholar or student interested in the idol-food dispute, or any pastor seeking a biblical model for conflict solution, will find this volume a helpful companion.

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The Pauline Canon

Stanley E. Porter

Pauline Studies 1. Leiden: Brill, 2004.

XIII + 254 pp. cloth. 68 EUR. ISBN 90-04-13891-9

SUMMARY

This collection of eight essays provides a fine introduction to the nature of the collection of Paul's letters in the New Testament. It examines the origin, the composition, the extent and the significance of the *Corpus Paulinum*. The nature of the questions addressed becomes apparent from the first quotation below. The essays reflect evangelical and non-evangelical approaches. It is the first volume in