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Coming Out “Bible-Based” Identity Formation in 2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1

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In modern English usage ‘coming out’ is often associated with the idiom ‘to come out of the closet’, that is, ‘to admit (something) openly, to cease to conceal, esp. one’s homosexuality’ (Oxford English Dictionary). In this context, ‘coming out’ is generally understood as an essential step in the identity formation of those who have previously been ‘in the closet’.

In 2 Corinthians 6:17, Paul directs a word from the Jewish Scriptures at the Christians who live in Corinth: ‘come out from them, and be separate from them’ (drawing on Isa. 52:11). Like the process described above, the action that Paul is asking for is one which shapes the identity of those who decide to make it a reality in their lives. Straub explains that ‘identity is gained in *transitions*, that is to say, in the mental processing of transitions and transformations, not in fixed unchanging situations.’¹ In order to find out in what way Paul wanted the situation of the Corinthians to be transformed, however, we need to study the passage that 2 Corinthians 6:17 is part of, namely, 6:14-7:1.

2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1 is a heavily debated passage. Whether it was written by Paul has been called into question, precisely because it appears to display such a severe notion of ‘coming out’ that may not cohere with what Paul teaches on this matter elsewhere. We will discuss this and further reasons for arguing against the authenticity of the ‘fragment’ in the first part of the article. 2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1 has been called a ‘fragment’ because it seems to have little connection with its literary context. This issue will be addressed in section 2 below. However, sections 1-2 will also deal with several issues which shed light on the identity-forming aspects of 6:14-7:1, for example, the concept of cleansing oneself,² and the role of the Hebrew Bible in Paul’s concept of identity (of his churches and of himself).³ As

- 1 Jürgen Straub, *Personale und kollektive Identität: Zur Analyse eines theoretischen Begriffs*. In: Aleida Assmann and Heidrun Friese (eds.), *Identitäten*. Frankfurt 1998 (Erinnerung, Geschichte, Identität 3; S-TW 1404), p. 92.
- 2 See particularly n. 29 below.
- 3 On this, see especially section 2.1. Hays explains that ‘it does not surprise that Paul’s focus of reading concentrates so much on the relationship of the Old Testament to the church, because the controversies in the Pauline epistles concern

identity-work means not only to give shape to one's relationship to oneself but also to structure one's relationship to the world (so Straub⁴), a third section of the article will investigate the attitude to the world suggested in the 'fragment'. We will try to expound the initial appeal of the passage⁵ not to be 'mismatched with unbelievers', as this is taken up by the command to 'come out from them' which is at the centre of the 'fragment'. In a final part we will provide a number of conclusions regarding the relevance of 6:14-7:1 for understanding early Christian identity formation according to Paul.

1. *The Origin of 2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1*

A significant number of scholars have questioned whether Paul is the author of 2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1. We will briefly outline and discuss the chief reasons for their judgement.

the identity and praxis of the church' (Richard B. Hays, *Schriftverständnis und Intertextualität bei Paulus*. In: *Zeitschrift für Neues Testament* 14 [2004], p. 59). See also the detailed analysis of the citations from the Hebrew Bible in 6:14-7:1, in Christopher D. Stanley, *Arguing With Scripture: The Rhetoric of Quotations in the Letters of Paul*. New York/London 2004, pp. 217-30.

- 4 "Identitätsarbeit" [means] dem Selbst- und Weltverhältnis von Personen eine spezifische Struktur oder Form *zu verleihen*' (Straub, *Identität* [n. 1], p. 87; cf. 104).
- 5 The passage can be structured as follows: The opening exhortation not to be unequally yoked with unbelievers (6:14a) is emphasised by five rhetorical questions (6:14b-16a) and a statement declaring that believers are a temple of God (6:16b). Then a catena of Old Testament quotations is adduced, confirming the imperative of separation and connecting it with a promise. The section closes with a call to cleanse oneself from defilement and to make holiness perfect. It should be noted that 6:14-7:1 is an extraordinarily tight-knit unit. Scott suggests it 'might represent catechetical material from the classroom of the Apostle' (James M. Scott, *Adoption as Sons of God: An Exegetical Investigation into the Background of YIOΘEIA in the Pauline Corpus*. Tübingen 1992 [WUNT II/48], p. 218; followed by Paul W. Barnett, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*. Grand Rapids 1997 [NICNT], p. 341, n. 22). For a detailed discussion of the rhetorical structure of the passage, see Jan Lambrecht, S.J., *Second Corinthians*. Collegeville 1999 (SPS 8), pp. 122-25; Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*. Grand Rapids/Milton Keynes 2005 (NIGTC), pp. 492-96; cf. section 2 below.

1) The fact that 2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1 contains an accumulation of 10 *hapax legomena*⁶ has made some scholars question the authenticity of the passage.⁷

However, as three *hapaxes* are embodied in the quotations from the Septuagint⁸ and six are found in the Pauline corpus in other lexemes of the same *Wortfamilie*,⁹ we are finally left with only one *hapax legomenon* (i.e. Βελιάρ¹⁰). A high percentage of *hapax legomena* is, on the other hand, a common feature of outbursts of Pauline rhetoric¹¹ and may be due to the fact that Paul is searching for synonyms in the course of constructing a series of rhe-

- 6 The words which are noted to be otherwise absent in Paul are: ἑτεροζυγέω, μετοχή, συμφώνησις, Βελιάρ, συνκατάθεσις, ἔμπεριπατέω, εἰσδέξομαι, παντοκράτωρ, καθαρίζω, μολυσμός.
- 7 So, e.g., William O. Walker, *Interpolations in the Pauline Letters*. London 2001 (JSNTS 213), pp. 203-205.
- 8 The verbs ἔμπεριπατέω and εἰσδέξομαι are part of the LXX citations, whereas παντοκράτωρ has been taken from the literary context of the last quotation (2 Sam. 7:8) (cf. E. Earle Ellis, *Paul's Use of the Old Testament*. Grand Rapids 1957, pp. 178-79). Moreover, the opening quotation formula (καθὼς εἶπεν ὁ θεὸς ὅτι), which is said to be non-Pauline, has a partial parallel in 4:6 (ὁ θεὸς ὁ εἰπών), as highlighted by Margaret E. Thrall, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Second Epistle to the Corinthians*. Edinburgh 1994 (ICC), p. 29.
- 9 As traced by Gerhard Saß, *Noch einmal: 2 Kor 6,14-7,1: Literarkritische Waffen gegen einen "unpaulinischen" Paulus?* In: *Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft* 84 (1993), p. 38 n. 9: a) ἑτεροζυγοῦντες: σύζυγος and συνεργός appear in parallel in Phil 4:3; hence it is possible to assume a connection between συνεργοῦντες in 6:1 and ἑτεροζυγοῦντες (cf. Gal. 5:1). b) μετοχή see 1 Cor. 9:10.12; 10:17.21; later also συμμετοχος in Eph. 3:6; 5:7. c) συμφώνησις: see 1 Cor. 7:5. d) καθαρίσωμεν: see 1 Cor. 7:14. e) μολυσμός: see 1 Cor. 8:7. Martin points out that συνκατάθεσις (as well as συμφώνησις) simply follows the pattern of other Pauline compound words formed with the prefix συγ(μ) (Ralph P. Martin, *2 Corinthians*. Dallas 1986 [WBC 40], p. 192).
- 10 As a proper name, Βελιάρ (deriving from בְּלִיָּא, 'worthlessness' [BDAG³]) does not occur either in the Old Testament or the LXX, but is found as a personal name for Satan in later Jewish writings. On this basis, Saß argues that for a Jewish writer acquainted with the apocalyptic tradition, Βελιάρ is not an unusual word (Saß, *Waffen* [n. 9], p. 38). Cf. n. 28 below.
- 11 E.g., 1 Cor. 4:7-13 has six NT *hapaxes* and two Pauline *hapaxes*; 2 Cor. 6:3-10 (the verses preceding the present passage) has four NT *hapaxes* plus one Pauline *hapax* and four others found in Paul (or the NT) only here and in the comparable passage in 6:22-29, as noted by Gordon D. Fee, *II Corinthians VI.14-VII.1 and Food Offered to Idols*. In: *New Testament Studies* 23 (1977), p. 144. Furthermore, Smith attests some 160 Pauline/84 NT *hapaxes* in 2 Cor. alone (David Smith, *The Life and Letters of St. Paul*. London/New York 1919, pp. 685-87).

torical questions with the same bearing.¹² Detailed analysis shows that almost all terms of the 'fragment' appear elsewhere in Paul and are used in a similar manner.¹³

2) Some *theological ideas* in the passage seem to be non-Pauline:

Firstly, the separatist attitude towards unbelievers is said to contradict Paul's tolerance in 1 Corinthians (especially 5:10b).¹⁴

However, a tension between the positions of separation and association is already apparent in 1 Corinthians itself.¹⁵ Further, the nature of separation in 1 Corinthians 5:10b and 2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1 is distinctively different, as pointed out by Webb: 'Separation from the world (outsiders) in 1 Cor. 5:10b is a *complete removal* from even casual physical contact, while the nature of separation from the world/outsiders in 2 Cor. 6:17a is a *selective removal* from intimate contact (that is, only from certain covenant-forming relationships).'¹⁶ The former is condemned, the latter encouraged. Webb continues that in 1 Corinthians 5:9-13 nothing is said to prohibit a selective withdrawal from the world in a case where a serious covenant violation occurs.¹⁷ Equally, in 2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1 nothing is said to prohibit contact with pagans. The covenant language in the rhetorical questions and the two covenant formulas of the Hebrew Bible suggest that more is at stake than social contact.¹⁸ We can conclude with Webb that only if the two passages are speaking about the same kind of separation can a contradiction be inferred.¹⁹

Secondly, the notion of cleansing from defilement 'of flesh and spirit' (7:1) is regarded as contrary to Paul's own understanding of both *σάρξ* and *πνεῦμα*. Windisch argues that for Paul *σάρξ* is the seat of sin, and is to be

12 Thrall, Corinthians (n. 8), p. 29. See also Saß, Waffen (n. 9), pp. 39, 55.

13 Cf. Adolf Schlatter, Paulus, der Bote Jesu Christi: Eine Deutung seiner Briefe an die Korinther. Stuttgart 1931, 1956³, pp. 580-81; Fee, Food (n. 11), p. 147; Thrall, Corinthians (n. 8), pp. 34-35.

14 So, e.g., Ernest Bernard Allo, Saint Paul, Seconde Épître aux Corinthiens. Paris 1937, 1956² (EtB), p. 189; Christoph Heil, Die Sprache der Absonderung in 2 Kor 6,17 und bei Paulus. In: Reimund Bieringer (ed.), The Corinthian Correspondence. Leuven 1996 (BETHL 125), p. 725.

15 See the compelling compilation of the various aspects in 1 Cor. by C. K. Barrett, A Commentary on the Second Epistle to the Corinthians. London 1973, 1982 (BNTC), p. 196.

16 William J. Webb, Returning Home: New Covenant and Second Exodus as the Context for 2 Corinthians 6.14-7.1. Sheffield 1993 (JSNTS 85), pp. 190-91. Cf. Michael Newton, The Concept of Purity at Qumran and in the Letters of Paul. Cambridge 1985 (SNTSMS 53), pp. 112-13.

17 In fact, selective withdrawal is commanded (1 Cor. 6:18-20; 8:10; 10:14-22).

18 See section 3 for more details.

19 Webb, Home (n. 16), pp. 191-92.

mortified, not purified, whereas the divine πνεῦμα in Christians is not capable of defilement.²⁰

However, it seems mistaken to suppose that Paul was incapable of using flesh and spirit without giving them their full theological meaning. As Barrett points out, both are used in a loose and popular way in 2 Corinthians. In 7:5 Paul says ‘our flesh found no relief’, meaning exactly what he had said in 2:13, ‘I got no relief for my spirit.’²¹ Also in 1 Corinthians 7:34 πνεῦμα – in parallel with σῶμα²² – is ‘im anthropologischen Sinn gebraucht, als Beschreibung des Personorganen, das geheiligt sein soll (ἡ ἁγία). Daß dieses Verständnis auch hier [i.e. in 2 Cor. 7:1] naheliegt, bestätigt das die Aussage regierende ἑαυτοῦς.’²³

Thirdly, since the passage contains ‘des affinités de terminologie frappantes avec les textes des Esséniens’,²⁴ a number of scholars propose that we

- 20 Hans Windisch, *Der zweite Korintherbrief*. Göttingen 1924⁹ (KEK NT 6), p. 218. Cf. Paul W. Schmiedel, *Die Briefe an die Thessalonicher und an die Korinther*. Freiburg 1892² (HC II/1), pp. 253-55.
- 21 Barrett, *Second Epistle* (n. 15), p. 202. Cf. Schlatter, *Paulus* (n. 13), p. 579.
- 22 It is noteworthy that Paul uses σὰρξ expressly as a synonym for σῶμα (see, e.g., 1 Cor. 6:16; 15:39).
- 23 Saß, *Waffen* (n. 9), p. 40. (For further anthropological usage of πνεῦμα, see Rom. 1:9; 8:16; 1 Cor. 5:4; 14:14; 16:18; Gal. 6:18; Phil. 4:23; 1 Thess. 5:23 [together with ψυχή and σῶμα]; Phlm 25). This view has found many supporters before and after Saß; most recently: Harris, *Corinthians* (n. 5), p. 521; Johannes Woyke, *Götter, ‘Götzen’, Götterbilder: Aspekte einer paulinischen ‘Theologie der Religionen’*. Berlin/New York 2005 (BZNW 132), p. 291. For a less likely reading of μολυσμοῦ σαρκὸς καὶ πνεύματος as subjective genitives, see Gordon D. Fee, *God’s Empowering Presence: The Holy Spirit in the Letters of Paul*. Peabody 1994, p. 338.
- 24 As first noted by Karl Georg Kuhn, *Les rouleaux de cuivre de Qumran*. In: *Revue Biblique* 61 (1954), p. 203 n. 2.

are dealing with an Essene paragraph²⁵ or a Christian redaction²⁶ of it. Similarities that have been noticed include: dualism,²⁷ the name Βελιάρ,²⁸ the notion of cleansing oneself,²⁹ the concept of the church as God's

- 25 Most influentially, J. A. Fitzmyer, *Qumrân and the Interpolated Paragraph in 2 Cor 6,14-7,1*. In: *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 23 (1961), p. 280.
- 26 Victor Paul Furnish, *II Corinthians*. New York 1984 (AB 32A), pp. 359-83; Martin, *Corinthians* (n. 9), pp. 189-212; Friedrich Lang, *Die Briefe an die Korinther*. Göttingen 1986 (NTD 7), pp. 308-311.
- 27 Fitzmyer points to the triple dualism of 1. righteousness and lawlessness (1 Cor. 6:14b; 1QH 14.16; 1Q27 I.5-6), 2. division of humankind into two classes, i.e., (Sons of) light and (Sons of) darkness (1 Cor. 6:14c; 1QS 1.9-11), and 3. Christ ('God' at Qumran) and Belial (1 Cor. 6:17a; 1QM 13.1-4) (Fitzmyer, *Qumrân* [n. 25], pp. 273-76). However, the use of these dualisms is not confined to the Essenes. Rather, as even Fitzmyer himself admits, the 'opposition of light and darkness is only a natural one, and one found as a symbolic representation of the forces of good and evil in many literatures, among which we may mention the Old Testament itself (Is 45,7; Mi 7,8; Jb 29,3)' (Fitzmyer, *Qumrân* [n. 25], p. 274); it is also found in intertestamental Judaism (e.g. T. Levi 19.1) and even in Paul himself (e.g. Rom. 13:12; 1 Thess. 5:5). For a more extensive list of evidence of Pauline dualism(s), see, e.g., David E. Aune, *Apocalypticism*. In: Gerald F. Hawthorne, Ralph P. Martin, and Daniel G. Reid (eds.), *Dictionary of Paul and his Letters*. Downers Grove 1993, pp. 31-33; Harris, *Corinthians* (n. 5), p. 20.
- 28 However, the employment of the term Βελιάρ was not confined to Qumran, but 'a vogue word in the first century' (Barrett, *Second Epistle* [n. 15], p. 198; cf. F.F. Bruce, *1 and 2 Corinthians*. London 1971 [NCB], p. 215; Woyke, *Götter* [n. 23], p. 290 n. 10). Hence, a Christian writer like Paul may well have used this name (cf. Martin, *Corinthians* [n. 9], p. 200). Cf. n. 10 above.
- 29 Furnish believes that the idea of believers cleansing themselves is found nowhere else in the NT, but only in Qumran at 1QS 3.8-9 ('his flesh is cleansed by being sprinkled with cleansing waters') (Furnish, *Corinthians* [n. 26], p. 365). However, both in 1QS 3, namely in vv6-8, as well as in 2 Cor. 6:14-7:1, it is God's initiative (by his Spirit) that grants purification. In 2 Cor. 6:14-7:1 this is evidenced in the two covenant formulas (6:16: 'we are the temple of the living God, as God said, 'I will live in them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people' [cf. 1 Cor. 3:6; 1 Thess. 4:7-8]; and 6:18: 'I will be a father to you, and you shall be my sons and daughters' [cf. Rom. 8:15-16; Gal. 4:5-7]) and in the assertion that 'we have these promises' (7:1; cf. 6:1). It is within the intimate Spirit-created covenant-relationship with God that the Corinthian believers are transformed and empowered to live this purity. Such a relationship is based on and sustained by divine initiative ('indicative'), but it is complimented by the believers' letting themselves be drawn by the Spirit into the transforming relationships which empower them to abstain from unholy alliances and defilement ('imperative', as at 6:14 and 7:1; this more fully developed in Volker Rabens, *Transforming Relationships: The Spirit's Empowering for*

temple³⁰ and concatenation of texts from the Hebrew Bible.³¹ Over against this line of argument, it may be pointed out that the items in 2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1 seen as characteristic of Qumran are not exclusive to Qumran texts, and in many cases, indeed, occur elsewhere in the Pauline letters themselves.³² Furthermore, it is debatable how accessible the Qumran community was to non-members, and one may hence wonder whether ideas specific to Qumran penetrated Jewish life in Palestine or were even readily obtainable in the Diaspora.³³ Rather, 'die in der Tat auffallenden, aber nirgends wirklich zwingenden Kontaktpunkte zwischen der Qumranliteratur und dem Text sind nicht durch einen Einfluß Qumrans auf den Verfasser, sondern sehr viel eher durch eine Qumran und dem Verfasser gemeinsame Abhängigkeit von bestimmten allgemeineren frühjüdischen Traditionen zu erklären.'³⁴

Therefore, we can conclude that, although it cannot be proved that 2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1 is Pauline, it can even less be proved that the section could not come from Paul or that it must come from Qumran. In line with what has

Religious-Ethical Life According to the Apostle Paul. Paper Presented at the 18th British New Testament Conference, London 2000, pp. 10-16, esp. p. 16 n. 81; see also section 4 below). Therefore, we can conclude that as Paul allows for some element of human participation in the process of sanctification (cf. Rom. 6:19; 1 Cor. 6:18; 10:14; Phil. 2:12-14; et al.), there is no reason to suppose that the command to 'cleanse oneself' is non-Pauline (cf. Thrall, Corinthians [n. 8], p. 30; Harris, Corinthians [n. 5], p. 18; more generally, John M.G. Barclay, "By the Grace of God I am what I am": Grace and Agency in Philo and Paul. In: John M.G. Barclay and Simon J. Gathercole [eds.], *Divine and Human Agency in Paul and his Cultural Context*. London 2006, forthcoming).

- 30 For evidence from Qumran, see Fitzmyer, *Qumrân* (n. 25), pp. 277-78. However, Fitzmyer concedes in the same place that 'the same theme can be found also in genuine Pauline passages like 1 Cor 3,16-17 and Eph 2,21-22.' On the differences between Qumranic and Pauline temple-ecclesiology, see Thrall, *Corinthians* (n. 8), p. 30; Saß, *Waffen* (n. 9), pp. 43, 55-56.
- 31 Fitzmyer, *Qumrân* (n. 25), p. 278. However, Murphy-O'Connor argues that while 'the best formal parallel is certainly 4Q Testimonia,...it should be noted that this single sheet is a complete document in itself, and that nowhere in the published Essene documents is a series of OT texts cited in support of an argument as here and in Rom. [3:10-18; 9:25-29; 10:15-21; 11:8-10, 26, 34-35; 15:9-12]' (Jérôme Murphy-O'Connor, *OP, Philo and 2 Cor 6:14-7:1*. In: *Revue Biblique* 95 [1988], p. 57). For parallels in early Judaism, see, e.g., Jub. 1.15-26 (cf. the analysis in Saß, *Waffen* [n. 9], pp. 45-47, 61).
- 32 See notes 27-31 above. Cf. Thrall, *Corinthians* (n. 8), p. 34; Harris, *Corinthians* (n. 5), pp. 19-22.
- 33 Cf. Murphy-O'Connor, *Philo* (n. 31), p. 59; followed by Thrall, *Corinthians* (n. 8), p. 34.
- 34 Saß, *Waffen* (n. 9), pp. 43-44.

been argued above we will henceforth assume Pauline authorship³⁵ or at least Pauline redaction³⁶ of the passage.

2. *The Place of 2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1 in its Literary Context*

A number of theories³⁷ have been provided in explanation of the problematic integration of 2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1 in its present context.³⁸ They can be categorised as Pauline and Non-Pauline interpolation theories, non-contextual integration theories and contextually-based integration theories.³⁹ It is

- 35 So recently also J. Ayodeji Adewuya, *Holiness and Community in 2 Cor 6:14-7:1: Paul's View of Communal Holiness in the Corinthian Correspondence*. New York/Frankfurt 2001 (SBL 40), pp. 42-43; Frank J. Matera, *II Corinthians: A Commentary*. Louisville/London 2003 (NTL), pp. 159-60; Harris, *Corinthians* (n. 5), p. 25; Woyke, *Götter* (n. 23), pp. 289-94; pace Walker, *Interpolations* (n. 7), pp. 199-209; Erich Gräßer, *Der zweite Brief an die Korinther*. Gütersloh/Würzburg 2002 (ÖTNT 8,1; GTS 513), pp. 264-65; Stephen J. Hultgren, *2 Cor 6.14-7.1 and Rev 21.3-8: Evidences for the Ephesian Redaction of 2 Corinthians*. In: *New Testament Studies* 49 (2003), pp. 39-56; tentatively: Eve-Marie Becker, *Letter Hermeneutics in 2 Corinthians: Studies in 'Literarkritik' and Communication Theory*. Edinburgh 2004 (JSNTS 279), p. 67. On the older literature, cf. Heil, *Sprache* (n. 14), pp. 727-29.
- 36 Martin, though emphasising that it is not a case of direct borrowing, finds it doubtful that this paragraph came originally unaided from Paul. Rather, he reckons with Paul's use of a piece of tradition put together previously by a Christian of Essene background (Martin, *Corinthians* [n. 9], p. 193, building on David Rensberger, *2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1 – A Fresh Examination*. In: *Studia Biblica et Theologica* 8 [1978], p. 41).
- 37 Strachan speaks for a whole strand of scholarship when he states that 'any connexion of thought with what precedes and what follows is unrecognizable' (R. H. Strachan, *The Second Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians*. London 1951, 1954 [MNTC 7/2], p. xv). For more nuanced summaries of the problems of contextual integration, see, e.g., Furnish, *Corinthians* (n. 26), pp. 378-79; Franz Zeilinger, *Die Echtheit von 2 Cor 6:14-7:1*. In: *Journal of Biblical Literature* 112 (1993), pp. 73-74.
- 38 The terms 'cotext' and 'literary context' are used interchangeably throughout this article. Cf. Peter Cotterell and Max Turner, *Linguistics & Biblical Interpretation*. Downers Grove 1989, p. 16.
- 39 For details, see Furnish, *Corinthians* (n. 26), pp. 378-82; Webb, *Home* (n. 16), pp. 160-73; Reimund Bieringer, *2 Korinther 6,14-7,1 im Kontext des 2. Korintherbriefes: Forschungsüberblick und Versuch eines eigenen Zugangs*. In: Reimund Bieringer and Jan Lambrecht (eds.), *Studies on 2 Corinthians*. Leuven 1994 (BETHL 112), pp. 553-60; Adewuya, *Holiness* (n. 35), pp. 21-29.

beyond the purpose of this article to investigate each of these. Rather, as the interpolation and non-contextual integration hypotheses have already been successfully criticized in the past,⁴⁰ we will focus on two substantiated proposals of contextually based integration.

1) The most detailed study on 2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1 was published by William J. Webb in 1993.⁴¹ Webb develops Beale's contention that the inability of commentators to account for how 6:14-7:1 fits into the logical flow of the epistle is due to the lack of any serious attempt to study the quotations from the Jewish Bible in their original contexts. Beale argues that 'almost without exception, the six generally agreed upon OT references refer in their respective contexts to God's promise to restore exiled Israel to their land.'⁴²

Webb's model of the integration of the 'fragment' in its immediate context⁴³ comprises the following three points.

Firstly, Webb supports his focal theory, namely that *it is new covenant and second exodus/return theology which establishes the conceptual threads that tie 6:14-7:1 to its context*, by referring to Paul's citation of Isaiah 49:8 in 2 Corinthians 6:2. Not only does the use of Isaiah 49:8 forge strong verbal and conceptual ties with the Old Testament traditions of 2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1,⁴⁴ but with it Paul also sheds light on the nature of the salvation and acceptance (6:1-2) of which he speaks: deliverance, acceptance and welcoming to the homeland, *patterned after the exilic return*.⁴⁵ 'It is here in 2 Cor. 6.1-2,

40 See, e.g., Margaret E. Thrall, The Problem of II Cor. VI.14-VII.1 in Some Recent Discussion. In: *New Testament Studies* 24 (1977), pp. 138-44; Furnish, *Corinthians* (n. 26), pp. 378-83; Martin, *Corinthians* (n. 9), pp. 194-95; Webb, *Home* (n. 16), pp. 160-66; Adewuya, *Holiness* (n. 35), pp. 21-29; Harris, *Corinthians* (n. 5), pp. 22-25.

41 Webb, *Home* (n. 16). However, see also the slightly less elaborate Adewuya, *Holiness* (n. 35).

42 G.K. Beale, The Old Testament Background of Reconciliation in 2 Corinthians 5-7 and its Bearing on the Literary Problem of 2 Corinthians 6.14-7.1. In: *New Testament Studies* 35 (1989), p. 569, italics reduced.

43 While Webb has also furthered the understanding of the *remote* context of the 'fragment' (Webb, *Home* [n. 16], pp. 73-111), precedence is here given to his investigation into the immediate context.

44 See *Ibid.*, pp. 145, 155-56, for details.

45 Though Webb does not utilize this term explicitly, one might designate Paul's use of the Old Testament traditions at this point as *typological*, since Webb makes clear that this return finds its roots deep in the movements of salvation-history (*Ibid.*, p. 145). On biblical typology, see, e.g., F.F. Bruce, *Typology*. In: James D. Douglas (ed.), *New Bible Dictionary*. Leicester 1982², pp. 1226-27; for examples of post-biblical typology, see, e.g., Volker Rabens, *Isaaks 'Opferung' und Christi Tod am Kreuz: Typologie in der Biblia pauperum*. In: Bernhard Greiner, Bernd Janowski and Hermann Lichtenberger (eds.), *Opfere*

through the apostle's identification with the *'ebed's* mission, that the second-Moses overtures in Isa. 49.1-13 converge with Paul's earlier self-portrait as a "new Moses" and anticipate the new exodus traditions found in the 6.14-7.1 fragment.⁴⁶

Secondly, Webb sees Paul's exhortation to receive God's grace, (home-coming) acceptance and (new exodus) salvation (6:1-2) to be underscored by Paul's drawing on the tenets of 'return theology', namely, removal of stumbling blocks ('we are putting no obstacles [προσκοπήν] in anyone's way', 6:3a),⁴⁷ and by his commending himself as a servant of God⁴⁸ 'in everything' (6:4a; 4b-10: through great endurance, in afflictions, hardships, etc.).⁴⁹

Thirdly, Webb argues that the contextual continuum of return theology is suggested in 6:11-13 through the scenario of Paul as father, waiting with an 'enlarged heart' to receive his children. It establishes an immediate parallel with 6:14-7:1, where Yahweh is presented as in a father-child relationship to the Corinthians. Webb mentions that the idiom 'our heart is wide open' (6:11) is never found elsewhere in Paul or the New Testament. In the Hebrew Bible, however, the idiom is used either (1) *negatively* of a proud person, with an enlarged or puffed up heart (Deut. 11:16), or (2) *positively* of a receptive person with an open heart towards something or someone (Ps. 118[119]:32; Isa. 60:5). Webb suggests that Isaiah 60:4-5 should be favoured over Deuteronomy 11:16 as the source for Paul's 'widening the heart' idiom.⁵⁰ Not only does Isaiah 60:4-5 have the advantage of a positive use of the idiom, but it also merges better with the father-child imagery in 6:13, provides a stronger contextual tie with the return traditions being developed in 6:1-2, and closely parallels the concepts found in 6:14-7:1 (especially the quotations in 6:17d ['and I will receive you'] and 6:18). Therefore, Webb concludes that as Paul is prepared to receive with an enlarged heart the returning Corinthians as his children, so will God receive them (patterned after the

deinen Sohn! Das Isaak-'Opfer' in Judentum, Christentum und Islam. Tübingen/Basel 2005, forthcoming.

46 Webb, Home (n. 16), p. 145.

47 Webb refers to Isa. 8:14; 26:7; 40:3-4; 42:16; 49:10-11; 57:14; 59:9-10; 63:12-13; Jer. 31:8-9; Ezek. 18:30-31; Psa. 105:37-38 (Ibid., pp. 147-149).

48 See Ibid., pp. 150, 155, referring to the parallels of 2 Cor. 3:1-6; 4:2, 5-6; 6:1-4 with Isa. 49:8-9. Cf. Beale, Background (n. 42), pp. 579-81.

49 Webb, Home (n. 16), pp. 145-47.

50 Webb takes issue in particular with Thrall, Problem (n. 40), p. 146, and Jérôme Murphy-O'Connor, OP, Relating 2 Corinthians 6.14-7.1 to its Context. In: New Testament Studies 33 (1987), pp. 237-38 (Webb, Home [n. 16], p. 170, building on Beale, Background [n. 42], pp. 576-77).

exilic return) as his sons and daughters (6:18; cf. Isa. 60:4: 'your sons shall come from far away, and your daughters shall be carried').⁵¹

Webb's carefully argued thesis needs to be commended, particularly for engaging seriously with Paul's utilization of the Jewish Scriptures in the line of his argumentation. Generally speaking, Webb's approach agrees with Watson's description of Paul's scriptural hermeneutic as aiming 'to show how the true meaning of scripture is its testimony to God's unconditional saving action, now realized in Christ.'⁵² More specifically, however, the question that arises is whether Paul as a rule pays heed to the literary contexts of his references to the Hebrew Bible and uses the passages accordingly. Space forbids us to attempt to provide an adequate answer to this comprehensive question. However, Pauline scholarship largely agrees that, although his exegetical methods are not those of modern critical scholarship, Paul was not an exploiter of proof-texts, but read the Scriptures as a whole.⁵³

Webb's case for the integration of 6:14-7:1 in its cotext via the second exodus theology inherent in Paul's quotations seems plausible and has been echoed in a number of publications.⁵⁴ However, one can still question whether Paul had the particular Old Testament texts specified by Webb in mind⁵⁵ (and whether he expected his Corinthian readers to know and take

51 Webb, *Home* (n. 16), pp. 151-57.

52 Francis Watson, *Paul and the Hermeneutics of Faith*. London/New York 2004, p. 514; cf. pp. 529-30.

53 *Ibid.*, p. 519-20; cf. Richard N. Longenecker, *Can we Reproduce the Exegesis of the New Testament?* In: *Tyndale Bulletin* 21 (1970), p. 16; Richard N. Longenecker, *Biblical Exegesis in the Apostolic Period*. Grand Rapids 1975, p. 206; Anthony Tyrrell Hanson, *The Living Utterances of God: The New Testament Exegesis of the Old*. London 1983, pp. 61-62; Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., *The Uses of the Old Testament in the New*. Chicago 1985, p. 226; G. K. Beale, *Did Jesus and His Followers Preach the Right Doctrine from the Wrong Texts? An Examination of the Presuppositions of Jesus' and the Apostles' Exegetical Method*. In: *Themelios* 14 (1989), pp. 89-96; Richard B. Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul*. New Haven/London 1989, p. 161. With specific reference to 6:14-7:1, see John W. Olley, *A Precursor of the NRSV? "Sons and Daughters" in 2 Cor 6:18*. In: *New Testament Studies* 44 (1998), pp. 207-208; David E. Garland, *2 Corinthians*. Nashville 1999 (NAC 29), p. 339 n. 981. Cf. Ellis, who concludes his discussion of the 'thus says the Lord' quotations (cf. 6:18) that 'Paul does not quote the OT in isolation' (Ellis, *Use* [n. 8], p. 112).

54 See, e.g., James M. Scott, *The Use of Scripture in 2 Corinthians 6.16c-18 and Paul's Restoration Theology*. In: *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 56 (1994), p. 84; James M. Scott, *2 Corinthians*. Carlisle 1998 (NIBC 8), pp. 151-58.

55 Olley thinks that the precise sources of the OT references cited are unclear (Olley, *Precursor* [n. 53], p. 206). Unfortunately, he seems to be unaware of Webb's work.

into consideration the various contexts of utterance and reference⁵⁶). For example, the third pillar on which Webb's model of co-textual integration rests, is built on the foundation that Paul receives his phrase 'our heart is wide open' (ἡ καρδία ἡμῶν πεπλάτυνται, 6:11) from the Old Testament. However, as there is no pressing reason for Paul to have had a specific text as his *Vorlage* at all,⁵⁷ the foundation seems far from solid. Moreover, the pillar may even start shaking when one realizes that Webb's proposed source, Isaiah 60:5, does not evidence Paul's idiom but says 'you shall be amazed in your heart' (ἐκστήση τῆ καρδίᾳ [LXX]).⁵⁸ However, the pillar may not come down because the Hebrew text does prove parallel to 2 Corinthians 6:11 (קַרְבַּי רַחֵם [MT]) and is even translated elsewhere in the Septuagint (Psa. 118:32) and by post-Pauline authors⁵⁹ with the very verb employed by Paul (πλατύνω).

Other scholars, however, suppose Psalm 118:32 LXX⁶⁰ or Deuteronomy 11:16⁶¹ to be the source for 6:11.⁶² The issue remains debatable, as does Webb's assertion that Paul employs Old Testament 'return theology' (Ezek. 20:34 in 2 Cor. 6:17d) in order to welcome the Corinthians 'home' after their coming out from idolatrous relationships. Paul does not seem to suggest either that he is removing stumbling blocks (6:3) so that the Corinthians are returning to any specific point such as 'home' (in fact, Paul explicates the immediate purpose of his removing of obstacles as 'so that no fault may be found with our ministry'), or that he himself represents 'home'.⁶³ Nonetheless, we can conclude that Webb's monograph has helpfully demonstrated

56 On the differentiation of these linguistic terms, see Roger Fowler, *Linguistic Criticism*. Oxford 1986, 1996² (Opus), pp. 110-16.

57 So Barnett, *Corinthians* (n. 5), p. 335 n. 5.

58 Apart from that, one could argue on grammatical grounds that the reason for amazement in Isa. 60:5 is not the return of the sons and daughters (60:4), but the fact that 'the abundance of the sea shall be brought to you' (60:4), as this is connected to ἐκστήση τῆ καρδίᾳ via a causal conjunction (ὅτι). Cf. John D.W. Watts, *Isaiah 34-66*. Waco 1987 (WBC 25), p. 295, on the Hebrew text.

59 See Webb, *Home* (n. 16), pp. 153-54, for details.

60 E.g. Gräßer, *Korinther* (n. 35), p. 254; tentatively: Harris, *Corinthians* (n. 5), p. 489 n. 12.

61 Cf. the scholars mentioned at n. 50 above, and, more recently, Ben Witherington, III, *Conflict and Community in Corinth: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on 1 and 2 Corinthians*. Grand Rapids/Carlisle 1995, p. 403.

62 However, Thrall now supports Webb (Thrall, *Corinthians* [n. 8], p. 470).

63 Cf. Harris, *Corinthians* (n. 5), p. 23 n. 47; pace Webb, *Home* (n. 16), pp. 158, 178; however, see Webb's discussion on pp. 47-48. Additionally, Garland points out that Ezek. 20:34 and its cotext (esp. 20:38) indicate that the phrase 'I will receive you' contains a note of warning rather than welcome (Garland, *2 Corinthians* [n. 53], p. 339).

that new exodus theology forms a conceptual link with the cotext of 2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1.

Webb's model can be complemented from the perspective of the *strategic rhetorical-pastoral placement* of the passage in the train of thought of 2 Corinthians. To this we now briefly turn.

2) Hughes, Saß, Lambrecht and others⁶⁴ have elucidated the integration of 6:14-7:1 in its cotext from a rhetorical perspective. Three major points can be distinguished:

- (1) Both 6:13 and 6:14a have verbs in the second person plural imperative: the transition between them is not so abrupt after all. (2) 7:2-4 is not only the continuation, but also the resumption of 6:11-13. This seems to indicate that there was always an interruption after 6:13. (3) If we admit that it was Paul himself who was responsible for the interruption in 6:14-7:1, then the clause "I have (already) said" (7:3), which refers back to 6:11-12, becomes perfectly understandable.⁶⁵

Lambrecht further notes that, in a similar manner to many other authors, Paul (consciously or subconsciously) takes up in 6:14-7:1 and its cotext a number of words used not long before (σάρξ and φόβος in 7:5, possibly influenced by 7:1; δικαιοσύνη in 5:21, 6:7 and 6:14; φόβος κυρίου in 5:11 and φόβος θεοῦ in 7:1). Lambrecht contends that this is yet another indication that 6:14-7:1 can hardly be separated from its cotext.⁶⁶

As far as the argumentative structure of 6:14-7:1 and its cotext is concerned, Saß points out that 6:12-13 and 7:1 have a 'framing function': while the statements 'you are restricted in your affections' and 'I speak as to children' prepare for the brusque dualism of 6:14-15, the 'beloved' (ἀγαπητοί) in 7:1 anticipates the conciliatory tone of 7:2-4.⁶⁷ Furthermore, we may add that 6:14-7:1 appears to contain the explanation of *how* the Corinthians are to open their 'heart' for Paul and his co-workers (6:12-13), namely, by doing what they ask.⁶⁸

64 Philip Edgcumbe Hughes, *Paul's Second Epistle to the Corinthians: The English Text With Introduction, Exposition and Notes*. Grand Rapids 1962, 1971 (NICNT), p. 244; Thrall, *Problem* (n. 40), p. 111; Saß, *Waffen* (n. 9), pp. 48-52; Lambrecht, *Corinthians* (n. 5), pp. 122-25; Zeilinger, *Echtheit* (n. 38), pp. 71-80; Garland, *2 Corinthians* (n. 53), pp. 327-28; et al.

65 Lambrecht, *Corinthians* (n. 5), p. 122.

66 *Ibid.*, p. 122. Cf. Saß, *Waffen* (n. 9), p. 50.

67 Saß, *Waffen* (n. 9), p. 49.

68 Cf. Scott, *Use* (n. 54), p. 96; Lambrecht, *Corinthians* (n. 5), p. 122. Saß argues that if 6:14-7:1 had not its present place in the argument, 6:1 would stand in isolation, and it would be at least striking that 2 Cor. 1-9 would miss 'jede allge-
meinere Ausführung zum Imperativ, der sich aus dem Evangelium ergibt' (Saß,

Saß seems to find it difficult to give sufficient explanation for why Paul takes up the subject of apostolic suffering in 6:3-10.⁶⁹ At this point, however, it is possible to develop an interconnection of the rhetorical approach of Lambrecht and Saß, and Webb's thesis. Webb demonstrates how Paul's commendation in his sufferings as servant of God (θεοῦ διάκονος) in 6:3-10 is determined by his identification with the Suffering Servant, who proclaimed the "'Come out!'"-message' to the Israelites (Isa. 49:9; 52:11; cited in 2 Cor. 6:17). This notion of suffering is also connected to Paul's relationship with the Corinthians, which Saß understands to be the thematic net of the context of 6:14-7:1.⁷⁰ As Paul's authority as an apostle was at stake in Corinth,⁷¹ he implicitly claims in the catalogue of tribulation that the sufferings of Christ are reproduced in an apostle who is true to Him.⁷² Against the background of this defence of his apostolic authority, Paul's appeal to the Corinthians to be separate from the world becomes even stronger, because 'to the extent that they distance themselves from the apostolic word they are slipping back into the world.'⁷³

Although the new exodus (Webb) and the rhetorical (Lambrecht, Saß, et al.) proposals discussed above are not capable of explaining every detail of the perplexing position of 6:14-7:1 in 2 Corinthians, they nevertheless have provided sufficient grounds for arguing for a contextual integration of 6:14-7:1. Therefore, in agreement with these two approaches, we conclude with Saß that 'Paulus macht mit diesem in sich abgerundeten, aber doch zugleich auch kunstvoll in seinen Kontext eingewobenen Text den Korinthern deutlich: Mit ihrem Verhältnis zu ihm, dem Apostel, und seinem Evangelium steht zugleich ihr ganzes Leben vor Gott und in der Welt auf dem Spiel.'⁷⁴

Waffen [n. 9], p. 52). However, this reasoning appears vague, especially regarding the fact that one can find 'imperatives' in 5:20; 6:1, 13; 7:2; 8:8-11; 9:6-7, 13.
69 Consequently, he appears to see 6:3-10 as a digression in the development of Paul's argument (see Saß, Waffen [n. 9], p. 51).

70 Ibid., e.g. p. 62.

71 In the Corinthians' eyes, Paul did not match up to the/their marks of true apostleship, namely signs, wonders and mighty works (2 Cor. 12:12). Cf. section 3.1 below.

72 Cf. Paul W. Barnett, Apostle. In: Hawthorne et al. (eds.), Dictionary (n. 27), p. 50; cf. 2 Cor. 1:5.

73 Schlatter, Paulus (n. 13), p. 576.

74 Saß, Waffen (n. 9), p. 63. Cf. section 3.1 below.

3. 'Do Not be Unequally Yoked with Unbelievers' (6:14a)

In the literary critical analysis above we have established the likelihood of Pauline authorship/redaction and the contextual integrity of 2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1. On the background of these findings, we are now in a position to deal with some of the interpretative questions posed by the 'fragment', namely, the meaning of ἄπιστοι ('unbelievers') and ἑτεροζυγέω ('to be unevenly yoked') in verse 14. The results of this investigation will be paradigmatic for the understanding of Paul's intended meaning of the whole passage, because, for one thing, Paul edits the source of his central appeal 'Come out from them!' to match grammatically the gender of ἄπιστοι (he changes the ἀντῆς of Isa. 52:11 to ἀντῶν in 6:17). Thus, in order to determine what is meant by 'coming out' we need to ascertain from what kind of relationships with what kind of people Paul wants the Corinthians to abstain.

3.1 Who are the 'Unbelievers'?

The two most prominent identifications by modern scholarship of 'the unbelievers' in 6:14 comprise the following:⁷⁵

a) 'Unbelievers' as False Teachers/Apostles.

Referring to Gnlika, Collange asserts that in respect to ἄπιστος 'chez Paul, le sens primitif de "infidèle", "unglaublich" est encore très perceptible.'⁷⁶ Therefore, he and others argue that 'quel que soit le sens [ἄπιστοι] avait dans sa source, c'est bien ainsi que Paul le comprend en l'appliquant à ses adversaires.'⁷⁷

The fact that it seems to smooth out the abrupt transitions between 6:14-7:1 and its cotext speaks in favour of this identification of the 'unbelievers' with Paul's opponents. Paul pleads for the Corinthians to open their hearts as his is open; to make room for him means not to be mismatched with 'unbelievers' (i.e. his opponents).⁷⁸ However, while this interpretation indeed

75 For a summary and critique of further views, see Webb, Home (n. 16), pp. 184-99; Garland, 2 Corinthians (n. 53), pp. 331-32.

76 Jean François Collange, *Énigmes de la deuxième épître de Paul aux Corinthiens: Étude exégétique de 2 Cor. 2:14-7:4*. Cambridge 1972 (CMS 18), pp. 305-306, citing Joachim Gnlika, 2 Kor. 6:14-7:1 im Lichte der Qumranschriften und der Zwölf-Patriarchen-Testamente. In: Josef Blinzler, Otto Kuss and Franz Mußner (eds.), *Neutestamentliche Aufsätze*. Regensburg 1963 (FS Josef Schmid), p. 91.

77 Collange, *Énigmes* (n. 76), p. 306. Cf. Michael D. Goulder, 2 Cor. 6:14-7:1 as an Integral Part of 2 Corinthians. In: *Novum Testamentum* 36 (1994), pp. 47-57; Zeilinger, *Echtheit* (n. 38), pp. 79-80; Scott, *Corinthians* (n. 54), pp. 152-53.

78 So Rensberger, *Corinthians* (n. 36), pp. 30-31.

provides a bridge for the perceived gap between 6:13 and 6:14, it unfortunately falls short of explaining the shift from 7:1 (where ethical purification is the topic, and not [false] apostleship) to 7:2 (which references the apostle-church relationship).⁷⁹

Also, the polemical statements scattered throughout 2:14-7:4 aimed at Paul's opponents (e.g. 2:17; 3:1; 4:5; 5:12) do not give sufficient support for the false-apostles view, because the closest polemic against Paul's opponents is evident only in 5:12 (some 23 verses before 6:14).⁸⁰ Nonetheless, 6:14-7:1 may have an *indirect* relationship to Paul's opponents without taking ἄπιστοι to refer to false apostles. Webb contends that the false apostles probably argued that the replacement of the Mosaic law with a law 'written on the heart' by the Spirit would only lead to lawless behaviour. Therefore, if the 'fragment' were intended to counter the Corinthians' lawless behaviour, it would also indirectly address the charges of these Judaizers.⁸¹

However, the presence of Judaizers at Corinth is debatable, and even if there were Judaizers among Paul's opponents,⁸² it is unlikely that Paul would address them as 'unbelievers'.⁸³ Sumney reasons that there is no evidence in chapters 1-9 to assume a Jewish origin for Paul's opponents. Rather, some data points in the direction of *pneumatikoi* ('Spirit-people', cf. 1 Cor. 2-3 etc.) opposition in Corinth.⁸⁴ This conjecture is supported by the fact that the central issue in chapters 10-13 seems to be the proper manifestation of the Spirit in the apostles' lives,⁸⁵ a topic likely to be raised by 'pneumatics'. The tendency of the church is not legalism, but lawlessness (ἀνομία 6:14). Their concept of freedom which grants licence for everything becomes a danger.

79 This is also admitted by Rensberger (*Ibid.*, p. 31). It could be argued, however, that if Paul's opponents in 2 Cor. were pneumatic enthusiasts who proclaimed 'All things are lawful for me' (cf. 1 Cor. 6:12), a call to cleanse oneself from every defilement (7:1) would mean 'closing the heart' to libertine opponents (cf. 7:2).

80 Cf. Webb, *Home* (n. 16), p. 192.

81 *Ibid.*, p. 192.

82 Most recently Harris has argued for two sets of opponents in 2 Cor.: Corinthian 'proto-Gnostics' and Palestinian 'Judaizers' (Harris, *Corinthians* [n. 5], pp. 80-87).

83 Cf. Saß, *Waffen* (n. 9), p. 53: 'Nicht nur die Bezeichnung von *Judenchristen* als Ungläubigen, sondern auch die Gleichsetzung von *Judenchristen* mit Gesetzlosigkeit und Götzendienst wäre singular.'

84 Jerry L. Sumney, *Identifying Paul's Opponents: The Question of Method in 2 Corinthians*. Sheffield 1990 (JSNTS 40), pp. 127-147.

85 Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 190. Sumney thinks that chs. 1-9 and 10-13 are two separate letters but that Paul faced the same opponents in both of them.

In the context of this danger, Paul may have *indirectly* countered his opponents' theology by his appeal for cleansing and partial separation.⁸⁶

We can conclude that while an indirect counteraction of Paul's opponents' contestations may constitute a possible background of Paul's paraenesis in 6:14, it has become clear that an identification of the 'unbelievers' with false apostles is difficult to sustain. Further weaknesses of the false-apostles theory will become evident when it is contrasted with the second major interpretative option of ἄπιστοι in the next section.

b) 'Unbelievers' as Pagans Outside the Church.

In contrast to the above hypothesis stated by Collange and others, Paul nowhere uses ἄπιστοι for his Christian opponents,⁸⁷ but always with the denotation of unbelievers.⁸⁸ Significantly, this is also true for the other occurrence of the term in 2 Corinthians, namely at 4:4, where 'those who are perishing' (4:3; cf. 2:15) and who have not 'turned to the Lord' (3:16) are being described.⁸⁹ Likewise, in the context of the strong dualisms in 6:14-16, the employment of ἄπιστου/ἄπιστος in 6:14 and 6:15 is not suited to the restrictive subcategories required by the false-apostles theory. In accordance with the picture of two extreme camps painted in these verses, it appears that Paul again uses ἄπιστοι with reference to non-Christians.⁹⁰ Moreover, the spatial concept (and the 'direction' of the imperative) that is suggested by

86 Cf. Jérôme Murphy-O'Connor, *OP, The Theology of the Second Letter to the Corinthians*. Cambridge 1991 (NT Theology), pp. 69-70. Cf. n. 79 above.

87 On the differences between 6:14-7:1 and the description of the false apostles in 11:2-4, 13-15, see Thrall, *Problem* (n. 40), p. 144; Webb, *Home* (n. 16), pp. 191-92; Thrall, *Corinthians* (n. 8), p. 27.

88 Cf. Linda L. Belleville, *2 Corinthians*. Downers Grove/Leicester 1996 (IVPNTCS), p. 177; Harris, *Corinthians* (n. 5), p. 499; et al. Woyke expresses that the pairs of opposites (πιστός and ἄπιστος, etc.) in 6:14-16 'in der Tendenz Heils- und Unheilsbereiche beschreiben' (Woyke, *Götter* [n. 23], p. 321). According to Webb, the defining sense of ἄπιστοι is not the issue, since the sense could be 'unbelievers' while the referent be the false apostles. Indeed, Rensberger correctly argues that 'those who reject the Gospel of Christ and the Apostle of Christ belong in the category of "unbelievers" whether nominally Christians or not' (Rensberger, *Corinthians* [n. 36], p. 30). Over this there is no dispute. The real question is, however, whether this is Paul's *normal* referent use of the term. It is therefore of paramount importance to note that – in agreement with Pauline semantics in general – within the Corinthian correspondence the ἄπιστοι referent is consistently used of a group outside the church, i.e., pagans or heathens (Webb, *Home* [n. 16], pp. 194-95). Although this 'statistical' evidence of Pauline usage does not provide decisive evidence, it nevertheless clearly adds to the likelihood that 'pagans' are the point of reference in 6:14.

89 Cf. Murphy-O'Connor, *Context* (n. 50), p. 237.

90 Cf. Webb, *Home* (n. 16), pp. 195-96; Belleville, *Corinthians* (n. 88), p. 177.

the formulation 'Come out from among them' indicates that Paul visualizes the Corinthians as being in the midst of a larger entity that is surrounding them (i.e. paganism⁹¹). Had Paul wanted to ask for separation from the perhaps handful of false apostles, a formulation as in 1 Corinthians 5:2 and 13 ('Drive out the wicked person from among you') would have been more fitting.⁹²

Finally, Webb observes critically that the false-apostles interpretation has little choice but to take the 'idols' (εἰδωλα) in the final rhetorical question 'What agreement has the temple of God with idols?' (6:16a)⁹³ in a non-literal, metaphorical sense.⁹⁴ Webb, *per contra*, is convinced that 'idols' should be understood in a literal sense. For one thing, the contrastive appellation 'living God' versus '(dead) idols' is used idiomatically in the Hebrew Bible, intertestamental Judaism and the New Testament in relation to *literal* idols.⁹⁵ Secondly, Webb states that all of the twenty occurrences of the εἰδωλ-stem in the accepted Pauline epistles, sixteen of which are found in 1

- 91 Webb points out that the interpretation of ἄπιστοι as pagans is also favoured by the OT-traditions in the catena. For example, the OT referents to 'Babylon' in quotation 2 (2 Cor. 6:17a-c) and the 'heathen nations' in quotation 3 (2 Cor. 6:17c) are most easily identified with non-Christians broadly, that is, all people beyond the covenant people of God. Particularly the parallel imperative 'touch nothing unclean' relates better to the separation from the worship of pagan gods (corresponding to the practice of cult religions at Corinth) than to separation from false apostles (Webb, Home [n. 16], pp. 194, 198).
- 92 Cf. Saß, Waffeln (n. 9), p. 53.
- 93 It has been contended repeatedly that the fifth rhetorical question functions as a climax of the preceding pairs of opposites (e.g. Fee, Food [n. 11], p. 158; Paul Brooks Duff, *The Mind of the Redactor: 2 Cor. 6:14-7:1 in its Secondary Context*. In: *Novum Testamentum* 35 [1993], p. 176; Lambrecht, *Corinthians* [n. 5], p. 124: 'conclusion and...transition'). However, Woyke has recently put forward that the reference to 'idols' should instead be read as an appendix (Woyke, *Götter* [n. 23], pp. 319, 321, drawing on Rensberger, *Corinthians* [n. 36], p. 34).
- 94 In fact, proponents of this interpretation even underscore the non-literal sense of εἰδωλα on the basis of the metaphorical and spiritual notion of the counterpart 'temple of God' (e.g. F.W. Grosheide, *Tweede Brief aan de Kerk te Korinthe*. Kampen 1959² [CNT 8], p. 191, as mentioned by Webb, Home [n. 16], p. 193). However, Webb reasons that such logic is faulty since one need not imply the other. For example, in 1 Cor. 6:19 spiritual temple imagery is used to counter literal sexual immorality. Accordingly, he concludes that the figurative temple imagery is not determinative (Webb, Home [n. 16], p. 193).
- 95 Webb mentions Jer. 10:8-10; 2 Kgs. 19:4, 16; Isa. 37:17; Bel. 5, 6, 24, 25; JosAs 8:5-6; 11:9-10; 19:5-8; Acts 14:12; 1 Thess. 1:9; et al. (Webb, Home [n. 16], p. 193 nn.3-6).

Corinthians,⁹⁶ refer to literal idols (Col. 3:5 and Eph. 5:5 explicitly indicate by means of a parenthesis that a metaphorical meaning is in view).⁹⁷ Methodologically speaking, these observations of Webb clearly point towards a literal usage of 'idols' in 6:16, but they cannot settle the issue. Rather, the literary and cultural contexts of Paul's employment of the term in 6:16 should provide the decisive indicia for identifying the reference point of 'idols'. In this regard, however, Webb rightly contends that the literal-idols referent in 6:16 is well-suited to the pagan cultural context of Corinth,⁹⁸ especially as Paul repeatedly addresses the Corinthians' relation to idol-worship in his letters. Also, the strong conceptual affinity between pagans and idols sufficiently carries the argument of the terse rhetorical contrasts in 6:14-16.⁹⁹ We can infer from these indications that 'idols' in 6:16 *may* have been intended to refer to literal idols.¹⁰⁰ If this interpretation is right, it creates further difficulties for the false-apostles interpretation and provides additional support for the identification of the 'unbelievers' as pagans.

On the basis of how Paul employs the term in his letters in general and in 2 Corinthians 6:14-16 in particular, we hence conclude that it is most natural to understand Paul's use of 'unbelievers' in 6:14 to refer to pagans outside the church.

3.2 What is the 'Unequal Yoke'?

As indicated in sections 1.2 and 3.1.b above, there are good reasons to understand the appeal 'do not put yourselves into an unsuitable yoke'¹⁰¹ (Μῆ

96 1 Cor. 5:10, 11; 6:9; 8:1, 4, 7, 10; 10:7, 14, 19, 28; 12:2.

97 Webb, Home (n. 16), pp. 193-94 (cf. Garland, 2 Corinthians [n. 53], p. 332; Harris, Corinthians [n. 5], pp. 500-501). Webb further argues that even if one would take 'idols' in a non-literal sense, the association of idol imagery with Jewish false apostles is nevertheless problematic. See his discussion in Webb, Home (n. 16), p. 194. Cf. n. 83 above.

98 On this, see further Timothy B. Savage, *Power through Weakness: Paul's Understanding of the Christian Ministry in 2 Corinthians*. Cambridge 1996 (SNTSMS 86), pp. 49-51.

99 Webb, Home (n. 16), p. 198. Cf. Harris, Corinthians (n. 5), pp. 500-501; cf. n. 91 above.

100 See Woyke, who thinks that evidence for making a decision 'wird aus dem Kontext nicht ersichtlich'. He thus remains agnostic as to which reference of εἰδωλα is intended (Woyke, Götter [n. 23], p. 309).

101 This translation is suggested in G.B. Winer, *A Grammar of the Idiom of the New Testament*. Andover/London 1872⁷, p. 221, as quoted by Harris, Corinthians (n. 5), p. 499.

γίνεσθε ἑτεροζυγούντες, 6:14) not to be directed against casual contact. Rather, Paul is speaking against forming covenant-like relationships with pagans which in turn violate the church's existing covenant with God. This is supported by the fact that the meaning of ἑτεροζυγέω as relating to covenant-forming relationships is clearly established by the synonyms which follow in the series of rhetorical contrasts (μετοχή, κοινωνία, συμφώνησις, μερίς and συγκατάθεσις, 6:14-16) and the two covenant formulas within the Old Testament catena (6:16, 18).¹⁰² On this basis we can agree with Harris, who concludes that 'the Corinthians were to avoid any public or private relationship with unbelievers that was incompatible or that would compromise Christian standards, Christian adherence to monotheism, and Christian witness.'¹⁰³

However, perhaps we can be slightly more specific than that. Taking into account that the last rhetorical contrast (i.e. 'What agreement has the temple of God with idols?', 6:16) is probably climactic¹⁰⁴ and thus significant for the interpretation of the whole passage, the activity referent of 'do not be unequally yoked' may include the following forms of physical-literal and metonymical idolatry:¹⁰⁵ maintaining membership at a local pagan cult,¹⁰⁶ attending ceremonies performed in pagan temples, pagan worship in the

102 Webb, Home (n. 16), p. 201. That more than casual contact is in view is further suggested by Paul's OT-source, namely the Kil'ajim law against crossbreeding (Lev. 19:19; cf. Deut. 22:10; Philo, Spec. Leg. 4.203).

103 Harris, Corinthians (n. 5), p. 501. Cf. Belleville, Corinthians (n. 88), p. 181.

104 Cf. n. 93 above.

105 As indicated in section 3.1.b, there is suggestive evidence for understanding εἰδῶλων as a reference to literal idols, so that for the interpretation of ἑτεροζυγέω particularly those options come in view which embrace either direct worship or bowing down to literal idols (physical-literal idolatry) or indirect worship of literal idols through related activities at pagan temples (metonymical idolatry) (as differentiated by Webb, Home [n. 16], p. 202). A yoking purely associated with doctrine, as proposed by Fitzmyer, may hence contradict the evidence within the 'fragment' (Fitzmyer, Qumrân [n. 25], pp. 271-80). – Woyke argues that 'der Fokus eher auf der Rede vom Tempel als auf den εἰδῶλα liegt, das operative Konzept der Paränese mithin nicht Idolatrie, sondern Verunreinigung ist' (Woyke, Götter [n. 23], pp. 299-300, cf. 301, 320-21). However, even if the focus of 6:16a were the 'defilement of body and of spirit' (7:1), the most natural application of Paul's command not to be mismatched with unbelievers (6:14a) in its present context in the 'fragment' seems to be the prevention of lasting covenant-forming relationships in the context of the *cultic* life of the city (cf. Barnett, Corinthians [n. 5], p. 345; Garland, 2 Corinthians [n. 53], p. 343; n. 91 above). On defilement, see further n. 111 below.

106 So Harris, Corinthians (n. 5), p. 501.

home,¹⁰⁷ joining with pagans in temple feasts¹⁰⁸ and visiting sacred temple prostitutes.¹⁰⁹ Such interactions may be classified not only as metonymical idolatry, but also as severe violations of one's covenant with God, resulting in lasting and bonding relationships with 'unbelievers', and for that matter, with 'Belial', 'darkness', 'lawlessness' (6:14-15), and, of course, 'idols' (6:16).¹¹⁰

Thus, when Paul calls the Corinthians to 'come out from them' (6:17), we suggest that he wants them to leave all covenant-forming alliances with unbelievers in a cultic and 'defiling' (7:1)¹¹¹ context.

4. 'Coming Out' – Conclusions and Further Observations

Our exegesis of 6:14-7:1 has demonstrated that it is reasonable to read the passage as Pauline creation or redaction and as an authentic part of 2 Corin-

107 Cf. Hughes, *Corinthians* (n. 64), p. 245; Barrett, *Second Epistle* (n. 15), p. 196; Martin, *Corinthians* (n. 9), p. 197.

108 So Hans Lietzmann, *An die Korinther I/II*. Tübingen 1969⁵ (HNT 9), p. 129; Fee, *Food* (n. 11), pp. 140-61; Webb, *Home* (n. 16), pp. 209-11; Saß, *Waffen* (n. 9), p. 54; et al.

109 So Schlatter, *Paulus* (n. 13), p. 578; Barrett, *Second Epistle* (n. 15), p. 196; Colin G. Kruse, *The Second Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians: An Introduction and Commentary*. Grand Rapids 1987 (TNTC), p. 139; Murphy-O'Connor, *Philo* (n. 31), p. 68; Webb, *Home* (n. 16), p. 204; et al. Though on its own too narrow, it is possible that entering into marriage with pagans may also be an *indirect* activity referent of Paul's command (see, e.g., Hughes, *Corinthians* [n. 64], p. 245; Martin, *Corinthians* [n. 9], p. 197; Webb, *Home* [n. 16], p. 209; Belleville, *Corinthians* [n. 88], p. 178; Garland, *2 Corinthians* [n. 53], p. 331). See Webb, *Home* (n. 16), pp. 205-209, for a thoroughgoing discussion of this interpretative option.

110 Cf. Webb, *Home* (n. 16), p. 214. Webb believes that particularly joining with pagans in temple feasts and visiting sacred temple prostitutes have 'a sufficiently high emotive impact to account for the intensity of the fragment'. At the same time, Woyke is right to caution that one should beware trying to abstract 'aus dem Fragenkatalog eine systematische Sicht des Paulus über den Zusammenhang des dämonischen Gegenspielers Christi, Beliar, mit den von Heiden in Kultbildern verehrten Gottheiten' (Woyke, *Götter* [n. 23], p. 321; pace Fee, *Food* [n. 11], pp. 152-60; et al.).

111 The NT *hapax legomenon* μολυσμός denotes something that makes a person ceremonially or morally unclean and therefore unfit for worship. In each of its three LXX occurrences it is linked with the defilement of idolatry (Jer. 23:15; 1 Esdr. 8:80; 2 Macc. 5:27; cf. the cognate verb μολύνω, 'defile', in 1 Cor. 8:7) (Harris, *Corinthians* [n. 5], p. 512; cf. Garland, *2 Corinthians* [n. 53], p. 343).

thians. Sufficient grounds for arguing for a contextual integration of the 'fragment' have been provided by the observation that second-exodus typology ties the passage to its cotext. Paul, identifying with the Suffering Servant, calls the Corinthians to come out of their covenant-like bondage with pagans and their idols. Via the link of sufferings, which authenticate Paul as a true apostle of Christ, Paul ties the 'exodus-call' in 6:14-7:1 to the subject of apostolic ministry (the thematic net of the cotext of the passage). On account of this prevalent hot potato in Corinth, 6:14-7:1 stresses that the church at Corinth 'konnte sich nicht mit Paulus einigen, wenn sie sich mit der Welt verbrüderern wollte.'¹¹²

What does this imply for our understanding of identity formation according to Paul? As we have seen above, the two core aspects of identity singled out by Straub are people's relationships to themselves and to the world.¹¹³ Straub further explains that 'Der qualitative Identitätsbegriff bezieht sich immer auf den Rahmen oder Horizont, der einem Menschen eine bestimmte *Lebensführung* ermöglicht, seinem Tun und Lassen Sinn und Bedeutung verleiht. Ebendadurch erscheint das Verhalten als *orientiertes Handeln*, als ein Handeln, das Prinzipien und Maximen folgt.'¹¹⁴

In 2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1 Paul offers identity formation to the Corinthian believers by asking them for selective separation from their pagan surrounding (6:14, 17, enforced by the ingroup/outgroup differentiations in 6:14-16; 7:1).¹¹⁵ Paul takes the 'orientation' and the 'principles' for this action that he demands from his Bible (Isa. 52:11; Jer. 51:45). As we have seen, he reads the Scriptures in the light of the Christ-event. It is from this starting-point that he determines the relationship of the church to the world.

This hermeneutic is also applied when Paul speaks to the second aspect of the Corinthians' identity, namely their self-understanding. Accordingly, Paul treats 6:16bcde, 17d-18 without distinction as promises that have found

112 Schlatter, Paulus (n. 13), p. 576.

113 See n. 4 above; cf. Jan Assmann, *Das kulturelle Gedächtnis: Schrift, Erinnerung und politische Identität in frühen Hochkulturen*. Munich 1992, p. 137.

114 Translation: 'The qualitative concept of identity always refers to the framework or horizon which enables a particular *way of life* for a person, which lends sense and meaning to all of his or her undertakings. Precisely in this way behaviour appears to be a *directed action*, an action that follows principles and maxims.' (Straub, *Identität* [n. 1], p. 91).

115 See the discussion at 1.2; cf. Garland, *2 Corinthians* (n. 53), p. 322. For a social identity perspective on self-categorization and stereotyping, see Philip F. Esler, *Conflict and Identity in Romans: The Social Setting of Paul's Letter*. Minneapolis 2003, pp. 21, 26.

their ‘Yes’ in Christ (2 Cor. 1:20).¹¹⁶ Paul conveys that the new exodus has come to pass and that now the Corinthian Christians *are* the temple of the living God, God dwells among them, Yahweh is their God, they are his people, they are welcomed by him, God is a father to them and they have become his sons and daughters.

This revised self-understanding is the basis of the ethical imperative to ‘come out’ (*διὸ ἐξέλθατε*, 6:17).¹¹⁷ However, it seems that for Paul, identity means much more than reflecting on one’s relation to oneself (or one’s group in the case of corporate identity) and to the world. Rather, Paul’s ‘bible-based’ identity-forming statements above relate a third dimension that comes into play. Namely, it is the new covenant relationship to God that is the primary factor in the Corinthians’ identity formation. While it is important that the Corinthians *understand* themselves as God’s temple, God’s children, etc., the fundamental formative force in the Corinthians’ lives is the *experience* of having individually and corporately entered into a loving family-relationship with their heavenly Father (6:18; cf. Rom. 8:15-17; Gal. 4:6) and the reality of being indwelt by God as his people and his temple.¹¹⁸ It is the experience of these *intimate relationships* (to God as father, to fellow church members as brothers and sisters) that transforms and empowers the lives of the church-members in Corinth.¹¹⁹

116 Scott explains that for this reason, ‘*κἀγώ*, in v. 17d does not have consecutive force (“then, I”). Since it is based on the continuative *καί*, of the Septuagint *Vorlage* (Ezek. 20:34), *κἀγώ*, more likely resumes the promises in v. 16def, which formally correspond to those in vv. 17d-18b.’ (Scott, Adoption [n. 5], p. 209; cf. Harris, Corinthians [n. 5], p. 506).

117 For a recent approach to identity and ethics in Paul that emphasizes human self-understanding, see Troels Engberg-Pedersen, Galatians in Romans 5-8 and Paul’s Construction of the Identity of Christ Believers. In: Tord Fornberg and David Hellholm (eds.), Texts and Contexts: Biblical Texts in Their Textual and Situational Contexts. Oslo 1995 (FS Lars Hartmann), pp. 502-503; idem, Paul and the Stoics. Edinburgh 2000, e.g. pp. 7, 10, 39, 128-29.

118 On the often overlooked dimension of religious experience in the early church, see, e.g., James D.G. Dunn, Jesus and the Spirit: A Study of the Religious and Charismatic Experience of Jesus and the First Christians as Reflected in the New Testament. London 1975, e.g. pp. 223-25; Volker Rabens, The Development of Pauline Pneumatology: A Response to F.W. Horn. In: *Biblische Zeitschrift* 43 (1999), pp. 172-73; Klaus Berger, Identity and Experience in the New Testament. Minneapolis 2003, e.g. pp. 203, 206.

119 On the transforming and empowering nature of relationships, see n. 29 above, and, e.g., Robert A. Hinde, *Towards Understanding Relationships*. London 1979 (EMSP 18), pp. 4, 14, 273, 320-22, 326; Willard W. Hartup, Relationships and their Significance in Cognitive Development. In: Anne-Nelly Perret-Clermont, Robert A. Hinde and Joan Stevenson-Hinde (eds.), *Social Relationships and*

Accordingly, Paul's call to 'come out' of covenant-forming relationships with unbelievers in a cultic context is based on the preceding new covenant relationship to the 'Lord Almighty', their 'Father' (6:18), which empowers and requires this action.¹²⁰ In line with Straub, the 'directed action' (*orientiertes Handeln*) of the Corinthians thus results from and is motivated¹²¹ by their new identity, and it receives further formation by their selective separation from the world. In other words, the new being and belonging¹²² of the Corinthians enables them for and finds its expression in 'coming out'.

Cognitive Development. Oxford 1985, pp. 66, 75-80; Dorothea Sattler, *Beziehungsdenken in der Erlösungslehre: Bedeutung und Grenzen*. Freiburg 1997, pp. 190-97; Patricia A. DeYoung, *Relational Psychotherapy: A Primer*. New York/Hove 2003, pp. 32-33, 152, 184-85, 209.

120 Obedience to the call for separation is hence not the beginning of or entry into this relationship (cf. Scott, Corinthians [n. 54], p. 156; Harris, Corinthians [n. 5], p. 507).

121 Cf. Assmann, *Gedächtnis* (n. 113), p. 132.

122 They are the temple of God (6:16) and they belong to God as their father (6:18), to righteousness, light, Christ (6:14-15) and to one another as God's people and his dwelling place (6:16).