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# **Children are made holy through marriage: Shaping Christian households in 1 Corinthians 7:12-16**

by

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*B.L Nkambule*

## **Dedication**

I dedicate this dissertation to Nomusa Kate Nkambule (1975—2002) and Cynthia Mlindi (1955—2019), I wish you were still alive to witness this milestone of my academic journey.

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## Key Terms

Holiness

Social identity

Identity

Paul

Household

Inclusivity

Children

Marriage

Unity

Community

Merger Model

Believers

Unbelievers

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# Chapter 1

## Introduction of the study

### 1.1. Introduction

This study investigates and rereads Paul's holiness language in 1 Corinthians 7:12-16 from a social identity complexity theory. In these verses, is Paul arguing that a believer is able to coexist with the unbeliever in peace and unity in the household, church, and community. 1 Corinthians is a letter in which Paul is giving his thoughts, addressing some issues, and answering a series of questions that have come to his attention within the Christian community at Corinth. These concerns and questions were brought to him, orally, by people in Chloe's household (1Cor 1:11) and an official letter written by the church at Corinth was also sent to him (1 Cor 7:1;8:1; 12:1). Therefore, Paul is writing this epistle to the church (*ecclesia*) in Corinth and to the other saints and believers to address these matters that have been brought to his attention. Wischmeyer (2012:160) is of the opinion that Paul is not only addressing the church in Corinth but the Christian community at large, extending to Ephesus, Rome, Philippians, and other church communities.

In 1 Corinthians 7, Paul is addressing issues regarding marriage. In Corinth marriages between believers and unbelievers (mixed marriages) were increasing, mixed marriages are not limited to marriages between believers and unbelievers. The believers (insiders) are described as 'clean and holy' sanctified by Jesus. Whereas unbelievers (outsiders) were the opposite; considered as 'unclean and unholy', a people without a God and hope, Ephesians 2:12-13. In the ancient Mediterranean world people were group orientated there was no place for individualism as the identity of an individual was embedded within the local community, family, religion, ethnicity, and tribe that one belonged to (van Eck and Kok 2010:12). In the context of van Eck and Kok's (2010:12) observation this means that also unbelievers and believers could not really mix and interact. For example, Jesus' interaction with the Samaritan woman, is one example that expresses the boundaries between two ethnic groups (John 4:1-26i), in this narrative the Samaritan

woman refused to give Jesus' water because Jews did not associate with Samaritans.

Therefore, could it be that these mixed marriages in 1 Cor 7:12-16 caused tremendous tension in the church and community, and that these marriages between believers and unbelievers could have meant that the joining in union of two individuals with different complex group identities and boundaries challenged identity structures. Importantly, could this have created ambiguity in the identity and status of children that come from such marriages, especially because the children seem to be 'connected' to the unbelieving parent rather than the believing parent. Is it that new social groups and complexities were being created by such mixed marriages possibly creating division and problems in their households.

Keener (2005:64) states that one of the problems that emanated from these emerging mixed marriages in Corinthians is that the believers wanted to abstain from sexual intercourse with their spouses. In Corinth these mixed marriages were not welcomed by some members of the church. Kenneth Baily (2011:206) states that there were some members of the church calling for the unbelieving spouses to be excluded from fellowshiping with the church through divorce so that the purity and holiness of the 'body' is maintained and protected. Divorce was a well-known common practice in Corinth and possibly several converts in the church divorced and remarried before their conversions.

In cases of divorce, contrary to modern-day society in South Africa where the children would usually go and stay with their mother's family when the parents legally divorce or separate, in Corinth the children or a child would go and stay with the father (MacDonald 2014:25). This meant that there were children from previous, mixed marriages that were brought into the new marriages whether between a believer and non-believer or between two believers. Keener remarks, "ancient laws grappled with the status of children in mixed marriages between such groups as Roman citizens and noncitizens, and various classes in Judaism" (Keener 2005:65).

Jerome Murphy-O'Connor (2009), details that "in somewhat less restrained language it seems fair to say that the net result of a century of critical endeavour has been to envelop this verse (1 Cor 7:14) in ever greater obscurity. The diversity of opinions is bewildering" (2009:43). MacDonald (2014) echoes the same sentiments as those of Murphy-O'Connor. This thesis is interested in adding to the discussion by arguing that Paul seems to promote peace and unity in the community where children from mixed marriages are seen and heard thus active participants in the building of a healthy community.

## **1.2. Motivation**

I am interested in exploring the identity and status of children within early Christian households, especially within the context where religious identities were contested. The focus had primarily been on Paul's view on marriage and his notion of holiness and purity; only a few have paid attention to the view of children and household issues that were influenced by Paul's words. Joachim Jeremias (1960:45) studying infant baptism in the first four centuries argues that this verse assumes that holiness is something that one can transfer to someone else without the recipient having faith, and or baptism, being essential (Jeremias 1960:45).

John Martens (2019:104) writes that 1 Corinthians 7:14 assumes that the believing spouse brings holiness to the whole family including the spouse that does not believe, male or female. Secondly, the holiness of the children is dependent on the believing parent. Conzelmann (1975:121) also proposes that this verse assumes that holiness is something that one can transfer to someone else without the recipient having faith, and without having to conduct any entry rituals such as baptism. The main question Conzelmann (1975:148) asks is, to what extent does this *holiness* sanctify the unbelieving partner and subsequently the children in such marriages. MacDonald and Vaage (2011: 534) are of the opinion that Paul is challenging the culture of both the Jews and Gentiles, for the husband as the head of the family is the one that decides which god is to be worshipped at a particular time for a certain need.

Kuyper's (1977:63), research in Levitical and other cultic texts, discovered that the term holy means being set apart for God's service. However, Kuyper (1977:63) argues that in 1 Corinthians 7:14, specifically, "the condition or state of holiness is not a static condition, but rather it embraces dynamic possibilities". Conzelmann (1975) and Martens (2019:104) agree with Kuyper (1977:63) by further noting that holiness in this context does not directly relate to salvation. Murphy O'Connor's argument that holiness in 1 Cor 7:12-14 relates to behaviour of the unbeliever as satisfactory to be regarded as holy accounts for the argument of dynamic possibilities of holiness argued by Kuyper (1977).

Ernest Allo (1958:166) argues that *akathartos* (unclean) and *hagios* (holy) are used in a ritualistic legal sense. However, scholars such as Anthony Thiselton (2000:523) and Murphy-O'Connor (2009:58) reject this argument because with this perspective Paul would have taught the Corinthians that unbelievers were unclean and could transfer their 'uncleanness' to the Christians, which is an incorrect teaching of Paul's theology and ethics. Margaret MacDonald and Leif Vaage (2011: 534) note that in this verse Paul is challenging the culture of both the Jews and non-Jews, the husband as the head of the family, *patria potestas*, is the one that decides the religion that the family will subscribe too. Paul utilises Jewish betrothal language, according to Gillihan (2000:729) the Qidduashin can be used to licit mixed marriages.

### **1.3. Aims and objectives**

The aim of this study is to explore how Paul's *holiness* language in 1 Corinthians 7:12-16 shapes and advocates for peace and unity in these 'new' Christian households of a believing and unbelieving spouse in Corinthians. This study explores the role these 'holy' children from mixed marriages had in the promotion of peace and unity in these Christian households and beyond. The objectives are as follows:

- To highlight the social categories and groups present in the Corinthian Christian community.

- To explain the different, if any, uses of the word *holy* in the Old and New Testament as an inclusive term that promotes inclusivity and peace.
- To portray that children from mixed marriages were active participants in the growth of the church and household because they were holy like their parents.
- To interpret 1 Corinthians 7:14 from a social identity complexity theory.

#### **1.4. Chapter outline**

This thesis is a literature-based study that utilises library material, mainly academic books and journals. This research paper is organised into six chapters:

- Chapter one is the introductory chapter, which outlines the motivation, hypothesis and aims and objectives of the study.
- Chapter two is the literature review, all theoretical perspectives in which 1 Corinthians 7:12-16 has been approached will be reviewed.
- Chapter three proposes social identity complexity theory as the plausible heuristic lens. This theory seeks to portray the nature of first century Mediterranean world.
- Chapter four discusses the authorship, date, and multiple social identities that exist in Corinthians.
- Chapter five is a study of the inclusive word 'holy' (ἅγιος) in other Old and New Testament passages.
- Chapter six applies social identity complexity theory to reconstruct Paul's rhetoric in 1 Corinthians 7:12-16.

#### **1.5. Hypothesis**

By using the social identity complexity theory as a plausible heuristic tool, is it plausible that Paul is using these emerging mixed marriages in 1 Corinthians 7:12-16 to explain the complexity, shape and dynamics of mixed 'Christian' marriages and households. Is it possible that Paul's *holiness* language of clean and holy does not only advocate differentiation, being set apart, with the unbeliever but simultaneously calls for the inclusion of the unbeliever in promoting peace and reconciliation in the household and community. Peace in the household of the believer and unbeliever could be cemented by the birth of children who are 'holy' like their parents.

Fundamentally, this inquiry is essential in promoting peaceful unity (not only in the

household) in a world filled with different beliefs and faiths; believers are also able to coexist with unbelievers.

## Chapter 2

### Literature Review

#### 2.1. Introduction

The purpose of this section is to evaluate and assess representative research that has been utilized in interpreting 1 Corinthians 7:12-16 by so doing representative voices and theories are summarised, controversial and contested areas are identified and any research gaps that might exist will be highlighted. I present the various scholarly interpretation of the passage, by critically discussing the existing perspectives.

#### 2.1. Theological approach

John-Charles Stay, Tanya van Wyk and Yolanda Dreyer (2019:1) in their interdisciplinary article titled *Holiness' and faith practice today: A contribution towards interreligious dialogue* present discussions to broaden the idea and application of 'holiness' to everyday faith practices, they define and note the following about holiness:

The notion of 'holiness' has a long history of interpretation. In many ways, it is an ambivalent term. On the one hand, it denotes moral integrity by distinction, or 'being set apart'. This 'distinction' brought with it a pejorative interpretation of 'holiness' as denoting some sort of hierarchical moral exclusivism, attainable only by a minority. However, holiness is an essential aspect of spirituality and in this regard, it has a rich and dynamic meaning.

(Stay, van Wyk & Dreyer 2019:1)

A majority of scholars that interpret 1 Corinthians 7:12-16 are quick to reference Hans Conzelmann (1975), a German scholar whom in the 1970's, attempted to answer some primary questions raised by this passage. Conzelmann argues that the use of *holy* in 1 Cor 7:14 is consistent and in line with Paul's theology. He rejects all notions and arguments, such as that by Gerhard Delling (1958:84-93), that suggest

that the passage is not within the context of Pauline theology, he argues that the explanations and accounts in 1 Corinthians 7:14 are inconsistent and unprecedented in Pauline theology, provide insufficient and unsatisfactory explanations. Agreeing with the argument of Conzelmann's (1975) Jerome Murphy-O'Connor (2009), argues that Paul use of holiness language in 1 Cor 7:14 is consistent when compared to how he uses it elsewhere in his other epistles. He stresses that Paul was not creating new language, theology, and ethics in 1 Cor 7:14 but rather this passage 'fits the context and harmonies with his habitual pattern of thought' (Murphy-O'Connor 2009:44). The title of Murphy-O'Connor's book indicates that in Pauline literature, 1 Cor 7:12-16 is one of the complex passages for interpretation, agreeing with Conzelmann (1975:121) who stated that 'its interpretation is difficult'.

According to Conzelmann (1975:122), the conception and meaning of holiness was already prescribed and enshrined in Paul by his Jewish upbringing. It does not make sense that Paul would deviate from his *Jewishness* only in this portion of text or address to the church in Corinth. From passages such as Acts 21:9; 22:1-2; and Philippians 3:4-6 it is evident that Paul, a Jew, does not deviate from his Jewishness. All that he was taught and knew when dealing with the Corinth community; he does not miraculously function by forgetting his complex Jewish background. In these passages, Paul acknowledges that he was raised in a Jewish family, and he performed all the necessary Jewish rites such as circumcision and baptism. Secondly, even after his Damascus conversion (Acts 9) he never deserted his Jewish upbringing and remained loyal to his roots.

Hans Conzelmann (1975) and Murphy-O'Connor (2009:45) are in agreement, both are arguing that it cannot be that Paul uses language, especially holiness language (*hagios* and *hagiazô* translated as holy), uniquely in this verse alone and does not use it anywhere in his other epistles in a similar or same manner. If *holy* is used uniquely in this passage, it would thus be incoherent with Paul's theology and ethics.

Murphy-O'Connor (2009) supports his argument on the following two bases: firstly, he stresses that Paul remained constant or regular within the theological framework

in which he understood holiness. In the epistles of Paul, the cognates of *hagiazô* carry the same meaning regardless of where you find them. There is much freedom in the way the word was interchanged in the epistles, at times within the same epistle such as 1 Thessalonians, where there is a connection with other common denominators. For example, *hagiazô* in Romans 15:16 is used in the same way as *hagiasmos* in 2 Thessalonians 2:13 and *hagios* use in Colossians 3:12–14 can be equated to that of *hagiosynê* in 1 Thessalonians 3:12–14. From studying the cognates of the word holy there is no development or maturity in the manner which Paul uses the cognates of *hagiazô* therefore, it is not likely that in 1 Cor 7:14 it is ‘miraculously’ different (Murphy-O’Connor 2009:46). Secondly, Paul in dealing with such a serious issue within the community, the last thing he would want is to be misunderstood. Therefore, it is highly impossible that Paul would give a key term that is new for his readers.

To the contrary, Alistair May (2004) argues that the use of *holiness* and *cleanliness* is unprecedented in 1 Cor 7:14. Everywhere else where *hagios* is used it always relates to believers and Christian community, secondly, it is used to differentiate believers (insiders) from non-believers (outsiders). He stresses that the traditional meaning of holy in the Septuagint means *set-apart* for the use of God, taking this definition into consideration, Paul noted that believers should be separated from what is ‘outside’ which is unholy that could profane them. To be holy does not only mean that you are an insider, but it also implies that one’s conduct should be aligned with one that is ‘separate’ from the world, is the behaviour that stresses holiness. He further argues that in 1 Cor 5:9-11 the ethical and ontological border between believers and non-believers does not necessarily prevent them from interacting with each other. However, it does permit exogamous marriages, one marrying out of his/her social group when we read 1 Cor 7:39.

Interestingly, to a certain extent Murphy-O’Connor (2009:45) seems to also agree with May (2004) that the use of holiness is unprecedented in this passage, but he chooses to say that holy is used in a ‘distinct manner’ instead of different or unprecedented. He writes that “elsewhere Paul uses *hagiazô* and its cognates only

those who were in a state of salvation” (Murphy-O’Connor 2009:45) however, from 1 Cor 7:12-16 it is clear unbelieving spouse is holy yet not saved. Conzelmann (1975:121) is also puzzled by this as he points out that 1 Cor 7:14, seemingly, paints a picture of holiness being ‘something’ that the believing spouse can transfer to the unbelieving spouse and children without the recipient having faith and without having to conduct any entry rituals such as baptism.

Murphy-O’Connor (2009:46) presents that in 1 Corinthians and other texts where Paul uses *hagiazô* and its cognates; he uses it in two main groups ‘In the first series “holiness” appears as an attribute to those who have been baptised into Christ’ Passages such as Romans 1:7; 6:22 and 1 Corinthians 1:2,9,30; 6:11 portray to us that faith, commitment, baptism, and separating yourself from a life of sin are essential in becoming holy. However, in 1 Corinthians 7:14 holiness could be understood in more inclusive terms taking a different approach from the ‘norm’.

Holiness is not given one and for all. It demands a continuous effort of fidelity which involved both truth and behaviour ... holiness for Paul is essential a dynamic concept. Those who in virtue of a divine call have been separated from the ‘world’ are expected to exhibit a pattern of behaviour that is the antithesis of their former conduct. The ‘holiness’ which is the fruit of love in action is what gives meaning to the qualification of the believers as saints.

(Murphy-O’Connor 2009:48)

Secondly, in 1 Cor 7:14 Paul suggests that the unbelieving spouse is made holy through the relationship he/she has with the believing spouse. Therefore, faith and commitment seem not to be a necessary requirement for holiness because the unbelieving spouse behaved in a suitable and acceptable manner, according to Christian standards, the unbeliever is thus holy. Murphy-O’Connor (2009:49-50) mainly argues that in 1 Cor 7:14 holiness is only linked to the behaviour of the unbeliever and not belief, because there is no moral development in holiness. He supports his argument by the fact that there is no evidence of the Corinth church being confused by what Paul said because it is plausible that they understood

exactly what he was saying. The same thing goes for their children, what makes them holy is their ethical and moral behaviour in the church and not being believers themselves.

*Teknon* does not tell us anything about the age of the children mentioned, but *Tekna hymôn* alludes to possible fact the children that are not yet old enough or mature to make any moral decisions (12 years and under). Secondly, it refers to children that are dependent on their parents, for example those that were not yet married (Murphy-O'Connor 2009:53). Regardless of the fact these children were not believers, having not accepted Jesus Christ as Lord and saviour, they were holy because of their behaviour and are thus accepted into the community of believers (Murphy-O'Connor 2009:53). The children are qualified as holy because their parents possessed the same behavioural attitude. Preserving marriages, especially mixed marriages, became vital for the inclusion of children. Ultimately, for the Christian community it would be beneficial in the future as the children would organically come to faith as they have been behaving as followers of Christ.

According to Conzelmann (1975:122) Paul is critically applying the concept of holiness, which is in accordance with his Jewish upbringing. The believer is above the world, set apart, there is no supreme power in the 'world' over the believer. The argument he advanced, based on the content of the passage, is that 'through the believing partner the marriage between a pagan and a Christian is withdrawn from the power of the control of the world' Conzelmann (1975:123). What this means, the believers reign supreme over any other thing in the 'world'. An unbeliever can live with a believer and remain the same, the status of the unbeliever will change as no alien power can overpower the believer.

Conzelmann's (1975) argument focuses on the strength of holiness as a strong force that covers and protects the believer from being contaminated by the unbeliever. May (2004:228) states that the insider (believer) getting married to outsider 'unbeliever' changes the status of the unbeliever to that of an insider by

virtue of being holy through marriage. Therefore, 1 Cor 7:14 is not so much about the unbelieving spouse but about the believing spouse, the strength, power, and dominion that Jesus has bestowed on him or her. The behaviour of the unbeliever will show that he or she has married a believer.

By interpreting 'holiness' in 1 Cor 7:14 with relation to behaviour, provides a plausible explanation that blends and complements 'Paul's habitual use of *hagiazô* and its cognates, which brings out the unity of vv. 12–16' (Murphy O'Connor 2009:53). I dispute the argument by Conzelmann (1975) and Murphy-O'Connor (2009) that the use of holiness in 1 Cor 7:14 is fully consistent with Paul's theology. Murphy-O'Connor (2009) also seems to contradict himself; he observes that holiness was linked to salvation in other Pauline epistles; however, in this passage only it has nothing to do with holiness but linked to imitating the behaviour of someone who is a believer. His argument that this passage can be fully integrated into Pauline theology and ethics is questionable, holiness is of a different nature the dream is that one day the unbelieving spouse and children would come to faith and perform all entry rituals such as baptism if necessary.

Conzelmann (1975) and Murphy-O'Connor (2009) assume that we know everything about Paul and the Corinthian community, meanwhile the truth is that we only have accesses to a small fraction to the context and Corinth church and community. We are thus unable to argue conclusively that the use of holiness is coherent with its use elsewhere. There is information about the church in Corinth that we do not know and might never discover, the dynamic and distinct manner in which Paul uses this term alludes to the complex Corinthian church and various understandings of holiness.

## **2.2. Halakic approach**

Yonder Gillihan (2002) is a prominent scholar that has produced an in-depth study of 1 Corinthians 7:14, by using a Halakic or Halakhic interpretation. Halakic refers to the collective body of Jewish religious laws, including the Torah, that direct the way a Jew is to behave in every aspect of their life, including who they are to marry and not

marry. Paul in 1 Corinthians 7:14 is using Pharisaic-Rabbinic laws regarding what constitutes a legitimate marriage to licit these emerging mixed marriages and the status of children produced from such mix marriages. For Gillihan (2002:714) the true value and meaning of the verse will only come to light when it is compared with rabbinic texts especially the 4QMMT. In 1 Cor 7:12-16 Paul is using Jesus' commandments and teachings against divorce, such as the one in Mark 10:1-12, casuistically related to mixed marriages. Interestingly, Gillihan (2002) does not shy away from addressing the questions relating to the status of children. He notes children had a status of *holiness* providing a basis for the need of mixed marriages to be preserved because this would mean that the children were being raised in a Christian manner, which would arguably not be the case if the couple were to divorce (Gillihan 2000:715).

MacDonald and Vaage (2011:531) note that Gillihan (2002) is one of the few scholars who has focused on the rhetorical impact of 1 Cor 7:14. The arguments placed by scholars such as Conzelmann (1975) and Murphy-O'Connor (2009) that Paul, being a Jew and having a sound knowledge and understanding of Jewish religious laws, greatly influenced his interactions with people and the writing of his epistles is supported by Gillihan (2002) in his argument that the way that Paul utilises Jewish betrothal language, *Qidduashin*, in a new way to licit the mixed marriages (Gillihan 2002:729). He connects the *Qidduashin* and 1 Corinthians 7:14 by noting that :

קידושין 'Sanctifications,' refers to a man's betrothal to a woman; קידושין also refers to the betrothal gift, and to the act of licit betrothal itself. The noun קידושין is derived from the piel verb קדש one idiomatic meaning of which is 'to betroth' In m. Qidd. 2:1 we find a striking linguistic parallel to 1 Cor 7:14 as the verb to sanctify is used consistently to describe an act of licit betrothal

(Gillihan 2002:717).

The Qiddushin outlines that the sanctification is a betrothal idiom that notes that the female, wife, was the object that needed sanctification from the man (m. Qidd, 2:1-3:11) to licit the marriage. This is parallel to 1 Cor 7:14 where the believers sanctifies their unbelieving spouses, this passage when read in the context of Pharisaic-Rabbinic laws, it places the believer in the eyes of the dominant 'male' that sanctifies in marriage. Secondly, the *m. Qiddushin* 3:12 sheds some light on the worth and value of the children's status in 1Cor 7:14. The rabbis, in the *Qiddushin* 3:12, ruled that in every marriage between two insiders is a licit betrothal<sup>1</sup> קדושין because of this the children of such marriages will inherit the status of the father. Marriages between an insiders and outsiders are also deemed licit, because of sanctification, however their children will inherit an inferior status (non-Jew in the case of the *m. Qidd.*) Finally, getting married to someone that you are closely related to as stipulated by laws such as Leviticus 18:18-16 is forbidden by law without any reservations and the children of such marriages or relations were *mamzer* which according to Gillihan (2002:720) is the harshest penalty.

Gillihan (2002:719) observes that children did not have the same status as a result of the 'type' of marriage their parents were in. Although, both the endogamous marriage and exogamous marriage were holy, the offspring of the endogamous had a higher status than those from the exogamous as they carried a lower status. The children born from incest, Lev 18:18-116, were *mamzerim*. This means that the children were impure and were a great threat to the holiness of the land and even worse the temple proposes (Gillihan 2002:719). Furthermore, Deuteronomy 23:3, gives the extent to which these children and their generations were excluded from the holy assembly of the Lord. Gillihan (2002:721-728) details that in the 4QMMT and the *Jubilees*, similarly the *mamzer* were also prohibited from entering the temple of Yahweh and thus were not participants in the religious community.

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<sup>1</sup> Instead of the translation of קדושין as licit betrothal, by Blackman, Gillian (2009:719) prefers to use *holy* to emphasize, as he has argued that licit marriages are in fact holy.

Paul does not agree with the authors of the 4QMMT and the *Jubilees* regarding the status of children in intermarriage and *mamzerim*. According to Gillihan (2002:729), it appears that Paul's view of intermarriage resembles that of the *Mishnah*, a collection of Jewish oral traditions, although not in its final reduction at the time. Paul wrote to the Corinthians congregation around 53-55 C.E. He did not agree that the exogamous marriage brought about defilement of the children. Moreover, what is of importance is that he did acknowledge the boundaries that are set within the community of believers which separated the believers from unbelievers and Jews from non-Jews. Paul agreed with the rabbis that sanctification was present to sanctify the outsider thus making their marriage licit. However, Paul differs from rabbis regarding the status of children. He details that just because the children were born from exogamous marriages it did not mean that they had an inferior status in society compared to children from endogamous marriages, because children from both exogamous and endogamous were holy therefore they "have fully access to the temple constituted by the sanctified community" argues Gillihan (2002:729).

It is evident that for the children to be holy, both parents must first be sanctified. In cases where only one parent was sanctified, then the children would be impure. In the context of this passage, baptism was not found to be a requirement for the children to undergo in order to be holy, but it was solely dependent on the parents' sanctification. It appears that Paul took it for granted that the Corinthians would accept that the children from mixed marriages were holy (*agioi*) proposes Gillihan (2002:715). He states that in Corinth children were active participants in the community, they would have freely interacted within the holy community this means that their status of being *agioi* was accepted in the community. If the children were not holy, we can assume that they would not have been included or regarded as holy because they would have been accounted for as impure. It is highly likely that the children were being raised and taught Christian manner and therefore, qualifying the children to be able to be involved in the religious life of the community (Gillihan 2002:715).

Therefore, it appears that sanctification was not so much about the personal cause of the unbeliever but rather more about the marriage. The Corinthian congregation did not want to be in illicit marriages, this meant that sanctification was vital to licit marriages. Gillihan (2002:716) argues that sanctification was a requirement for marriages to be legal and acceptable. "In 7:14 the meaning of *hgiastai* is 'is sanctified' in the sense 'is eligible' for licit marriage to a believer" (Gillihan 2002:716).

### **2.3. Social-scientific approach**

In the recent years scholars such as, Caroline Hodge (2010), Margaret MacDonald and Leif Vaage (2011), Stephen Barton (2017) and John Martens (2019) have moved away from the usual approaches that were focused on attempting to resolve the inconsistencies and ambiguities. These modern scholars have come to realisation that we might never fully answer the questions such as 'to what extent is the pagan partner "sanctified in" the Christian partner? To what extent are the children holy? What is the relation between verses 14a and 14b?' (Conzelmann 1975:121) which has kept scholars such as Conzelmann (1975), Gillihan (2002) and Murphy-O'Connor (2009) busy for many years. It has been established that Paul's use of holiness language is unprecedented in this passage, what implications did this message have on the household, community, church and 'norms' are the questions that are currently asked by scholars. Furthermore, questions regarding the activity and status of children are also of interest.

Social-scientific criticism of the Bible is that phase of the exegetical task which analyses the social and cultural dimensions of the text and of its environmental context through the utilization of the perspectives, theory, models and research of the social sciences. As a component of the historical-critical method of the exegesis, social-scientific criticism investigates biblical texts as meaningful configurations of language intended to communicate between the composers and audience.

(Elliot 1993:7)

Barton (2002:278) observes that this definition provided by Elliot (1993:7), is useful as it tackles the essence of social-scientific criticism. Furthermore, Eliot (2001:9) studying the New Testament, holds that social-scientific criticism does not, as the term might suggest, only focus on the 'social' everyday life features that shaped the text and its content. It also studies the 'conditioning factors' meaning that the social, economic, political, and historic situations of the time the text was produced and what impact it had on the intended readers as it was vital for communication. Thirdly, it studies what the connection is between the language, genre, theology/ideology, and the social dimensions of the text.

Social-scientific criticism looks at the text holistically to try and understanding how the different elements in the text connect to each other, if they do. Nothing is studied in isolation, as every element combined gives us a picture(s) about the context of the text. Finally, Elliot (2001:10) proposes that social-scientific criticism focuses on the fact that the text was sent to communicate something to, or as a response to a situation happening in, the community (social and cultural context). Thus, texts were an 'effective vehicle of communication' (Elliot 2001:11) in the New Testament.

Stephen Barton (2017) uses the social scientific approach to argue that "for Paul, in 1 Cor 7:12-16, holiness is a matter of neither genealogical nor cultic purity. Rather, it has a boundary-transcending quality" (Barton 2017:33). From the beginning of the letter Paul is constantly referring and using holiness or sanctification in descriptive terms, therefore what can be concluded from this is that Paul is in the process of building identity formation to help the believers in Corinth of strive for holiness which breeds unity. A social scientific reading by Barton (2017:39) of holiness in 1 Corinthians expands holiness to unity: "oneness is a sign and sustainer of holiness" The opening greetings and plea by Paul, 1 Cor 1:10, is evident of the quarrel caused disunity in the church, therefore Paul is calling for the church to be united because of the shared practices and in Christ which should transcends all that prevents the church community from being united.

In Judaism, Holiness is a clear boundary marker, Martens (2019:105) outlines that in Pauline material holy describes members of the assemblies, for example in 1 Cor 1-2 it separates the members of the Christian community to those that are now, a boundary line is drawn. Furthermore David Horrell (2016:451) emphasises that holy also functions as a designation of identity. Barton (2017:40) expresses that 'holiness is a language and practice of membership and oneness which is unity' the *Shema* (Deuteronomy 6:4) is foundational in understanding the oneness of Gods holiness. Therefore, as God is one so is His holiness, which in this sense does not separate but unites all those who participate and imitate God. With regards to the mixed marriages in 1 Cor 7:12-16, Paul is against divorce in mixed marriages for the sake of the holiness and oneness that produces peace in the community.

Barton (2017:44) uses the social-scientific model of group membership to point out that Judaism and all other religions such as Christianity have necessary boundary markers to separate the insider from the outsider. Hodge (2010:16) agrees that purity language distinguishes the believers from the unbelievers. In ancient Israel holiness was a 'natural symbol' that divided between what is pure and impure, this included who one is to marry and not marry (Lev 19:19). Furthermore, in Judaism, purity was understood in terms of morality, rituals and lineage were important identity markers. The point that Barton (2017) is trying to bring across is that understanding holiness as separation and identity marker cannot be divorced. The true identity of a group comes into being when separated from the 'other' separation cannot be avoided in Judaism as it is essential for protecting the genealogical, ritual and moral purity. However, in the context of exogamous marriages in 1 Cor 7:12-16 purity by virtue of association is ripe and cannot be stopped.

What Paul says about how holiness is to find expression in constitutional matters like marriage rules, food rules and the practice of the group when they assemble as church are all expressions, in one way or another, of that basic eschatological orientation and christological allegiance. At some points, holiness is a matter of separation. At many more points, it is a matter of new-found, boundary-transcending oneness-in-multiplicity. But whether in practices of separation, or in practices of integration, or even in practices in the grey area along the lines of

demarcation, the 'norming norm' for Paul is the confession of the holy oneness of God, the lordship of Christ, and freedom in the Spirit.

(Barton 2017:55)

Barton (2017) is of great importance as it presents holiness in terms of unity however, it does not account for the practices in the household and the role of children in promoting this unity.

Little attention is given to the children even though this is the only passage where the children's place with community, household and marriage is directly noted.

Seemingly, children have been secondary to the research and not primary. Scholars only make mention of the children only because they are mentioned in the text.

Conzelmann (1975) argues that this passage speaks about children that come from mixed marriages. Murphy-O'Connor (2009:52) disputes this by noting that Paul refers to all children whether from endogamous or exogamous marriages, because children have not yet reached the age to proclaim their own faith and they are holy because they imitate the behaviour of their parents. Furthermore, Gilliahan (2002:719) argues that children that were born from mixed marriages carried a lower social status compared to children from exogamous marriages. Therefore, children were not equal. This raises the questions of how children shaped these Christian households.

## **2.4. Conclusion**

This literature review has portrayed the representative voices and research has focused on the ethical and theological dilemmas of the passage. Majority of the scholarly work has investigated what Paul means and where this notion of sanctification through marriage is derived from. The interpretations of the text from a historical-critical approach, rhetorical approach, ethical, socio-psychological, halakic interpretation attempt to answer some important questions regarding Paul's notions of marriage but have not yet accounted for the daily life of the children's family in these 'new' households. Social identity complexity helps investigating the identities of these emerging Diasporic Christian Hellenistic marriages and households.

## Chapter 3

### Theoretical Perspective: Social identity complexity

#### 3.1. Introduction

This chapter presents social identity complexity theory (SICT) as a plausible heuristic tool for interpreting 1 Corinthians 7:12-16. This chapter explains the emergence, development and models of social identity complexity theory. This theory explains the multiple cross-cutting identities and group memberships in which individuals are considered members. Moreover, it seeks to account for the fluidity of having multiple ingroup identities. Social scientific models of honour and shame and group boundaries and associations are discussed as vital first century Graeco-Roman world identity construction mechanisms. Secondly, social identity theory is discussed as a vital building block in the development of social identity complexity theory.

#### 3.2. Social-scientific criticism

Social-scientific criticism approach to studying and understanding the New Testament looks at the text holistically to try and understand how the different elements in the text connect to each other. Nothing is studied in isolation, as every element combined gives us a picture(s) about the context of the text. Finally, Elliot (2001:10) proposes that social-scientific criticism focuses on the fact that the text was sent to communicate something to, or as a response to a situation happening in, the community (social and cultural context). Thus, texts were an 'effective vehicle of communication' (Elliot 2001:11) in the New Testament.

It is safe to assume that one does not write or say something just for the sake of it, there is always a motive(s) behind every word and text. New Testament texts are no exception. 'Who said (or wrote) what?' 'To whom?' 'When?' 'Where?' 'Why?' 'To whose benefit and with what effect?' These are the questions that social-scientific criticism wrestles with (Malina 1996a:73; Soulen & Soulen 2002:75). By asking these questions, social-scientific criticism aims to find out what the audience heard and

understood when e.g., a letter by Paul was read aloud to the congregation it was addressed to. This 'who said what' question can be answered by learning about the social setting of the ancient world. Malina (1996a:73) outlines that the 'when' questions lead back to historical criticism, therefore historical approaches are important and do not function in isolation from social-scientific criticism.

Models and theories have an essential role to fulfil in social-scientific criticism, especially in the production of etic information (Dvorak 2007:260). Theories and models are important tools to be used for interpretation as they provide a framework for a conversation with the text. Meeks (1983:5) outlines that, without interpretation, we do not have facts, and thus meaning also cannot be established. A suitable and generally accepted definition of a model is that of Malina (1982:231), who states that a model is 'an abstract simplified representation of some real-world object, event, or interaction constructed for the purpose of understanding, control, or prediction'.

Lau (2010:9) argues that, without models, there is nothing we can do with the data that is found in biblical texts; interpreters would not be able to make sense of it since 'it is a comparative process'. Importantly, one needs to be cognisant of the process that is involved when making use of models, Dvorak (2007:260) and Lau (2010:9) state that the process should not be thought of as solely inductive or deductive but as abductive (also called retroduction) which includes both. The process involves the movement between 'deduction and induction, model and data, from evidence to hypothesis' (Lau 2020:9).

Elliot (1993:42) observes that New Testament studies make use of conceptual models as are prominent in social sciences. Conceptual models are used in research when analysing the behaviour, structures, and processes of a society. Precise attention is paid to the functioning of the society by studying the patterns or regularities that are present in human behaviour. Elliot (2001:42) states that theories and concepts are then used as means to try and explain these patterns. But conceptual models do not only have significant cognitive value, Esler (1995:4) states

that conceptual models are heuristic tools and not just mere ontological statements. 'They can serve as vehicles for discovery, trying out new points of view, asking new sets of questions' (Elliot 1993:44).

### 3.2.1. Honour and shame

Honour and Shame is one prominent model developed by Bruce Malina; it has significantly contributed to the understanding of 'context group'. Honour and shame were two very important cultural values for the Mediterranean person (Crook 2009:591). Malina defines honour as 'the value of a person is his or her own eyes plus the value of that person in the eyes of his or her social group' (2001:52). Crook (2009:593) notes that '*own eyes*' in the definition refers to how a person claims they worth.

Malina (2001:52) observes that honour is found where gender, authority, and status (in the society) of the person meet. Crook (2009:593) adds that respect is also pivotal. Honour enables one to be a 'part' of the society by being able to interact with other people who are superior, subordinate or of equal status in terms of the social status and in terms what the culture of the society has prescribed as appropriate (Malina 2001:52). One obtains honour through two possible means namely, 'ascribed honour' and 'acquired honour' (Malina 2001:52).

Ascribed honour is the type of honour that one is born with, Malina (2001:53) states that it is symbolized by blood, family reputation, wealth, gender etc. Children in the Mediterranean born into an elite family automatically have more honour than the one born into a poor family. This model has been used to illustrate that Joseph, father of Jesus, being a Carpenter (Mark 6:3) meant that he and his family were part of the 70% of people living under the breadline. This meant that Jesus did not have much ascribed honour unlike the sons of the aristocracy, religious and military leaders born into wealth (van Eck and Kok 2010: 17).

On the other hand, acquired honour is the type of honour that one receives by challenging and critically responding to other people, especially those that have more honour than you (DeSilva 2018:99). Malina (2001:53) states that it is through social contests in reputable public spaces where one can obtain a high level of honour. Acquired honour 'can be won and lost on a daily basis through acts of benefaction and the agonistic contest of challenge and riposte' (Crook 2009:593). Jesus might not have had a lot of ascribed honour, but he surely did have a lot acquired honour since he challenged people of great honour like Pharisees and Sadducees in reputable public spaces (DeSilva 2018:98). When a person's honour is challenged and he cannot respond he immediately loses honour and acquires dishonour or *shame*, Malina (2001:53) also calls it a disgrace.

One had the responsibility of always defending their honour at all costs as it was not about the individual but the group that one is a part of (van Eck & Kok 2010: 12). Challenging a person meant challenging the honour of the group, since optional groups shared a kind ascribed honour. "The head of both natural and optional groupings set the tone and embody the honour rating of the group" (Malina 2001:53). DeSilva (2018:249), studying the Gospel according to Matthew, argues that the notion that Jesus did not have much ascribed honour is debatable he "underscored Jesus' honour at the expense of the spiritual progenitors of the non-Christian Jews with whom the early church was in tension" (DeSilva 2018:249).

DeSilva (2018:249) notes that Jesus' miracles of healing and performing exorcism in the book of Matthew are seen as a gift that God gave him to serve as mediator. In the Greco-Roman world, generosity and being charitable were extremely honourable qualities that one could have (DeSilva 2018:250). Jesus had both qualities which were evident through his healing miracles and therefore his acquired honour also increased in society.

Matthew 1:1-17 provides the genealogy of Jesus to show his race, parents, and ancestors DeSilva (2018:249) states that genealogy tells us that Jesus comes from a

prestigious lineage. Jesus's connection to David and claims about his messiahship being the "Son of David" (Matthew 9:27) are means to show us the honour, family status, and identity that Jesus inherited. Furthermore, a prophecy from Micah (Matthew 2:5-6) is quoted to confirm that stature of Bethlehem, the dignified and honourable city in which Jesus was born . Most importantly, Jesus' ascribed honour comes from the fact that God, himself acknowledges Jesus as honourable at his baptism in Chapter 3 verse 17.

### 3.2.1. Group boundaries and associations

Malina (2002:608) observes that according to cultural anthropologists, ingroup and outgroup divisions are fundamental to Mediterranean views of the world. The Apostle Paul in Galatians 1:15 makes it clear that he is a staunch member of the Jesus group who is sent to preach to the uncircumcised (Galatians 2:7) in a similar manner that Peter was sent to those that were circumcised. Malina (2002:608) writes that this is one example of group boundaries 'we and they', the circumcised being Israelites and the uncircumcised are the non-Israelites. Malina (2002:608) clarifies that the word 'we' is both exclusive (I and they, but not you and inclusive (I, they, and you) and 'they' in this context could refer to the Israelite group and Israelites non-following-Jesus group. The main argument that Malina (2002) presents in his article is that New Testament writings are ethnocentric, therefore there is constant distinction between ingroup and outgroup persons, between insiders and outsiders.

First-century Mediterranean's knew other people "socially," in terms of gender-based roles, in terms of the groups in which a person was ever embedded, and with constant concern for public awards of respect and honour. I should like to call this way of understanding persons a scenario of the strongly group-bound individual, or strong group collectivistic person for short.

(Malina 1996b:35)

In the first century, a person was not a result of 'self' or what van Eck (2010:10) calls the *unattached individual*. A person was defined by factors such the family, town and

or religion that one belonged to the 'great chain of being' (Groenewald 2005:16). A person's worth and view of life was based on the group(s) that one belonged to, one could belong to more than one group. Jerome & Neyrey (2010:185) note that group-orientations were very strong for the ancients unlike us in the modern Western societies where individualism is important and valued. In fact, there was no place for individualism. Collectivism was the order of the day, the group offered protection, identity, and honour and in exchange one always had to be loyal to the group at all costs (Malina 1994:110).

Persons in Individualistic societies see themselves and others psychologically whilst those from collective societies, such as those in the ancient Mediterranean world, see themselves sociologically, referring to gender, geography, and gender outlines Malina (1996b:153). This points to us that individualistic and collective societies do not think of persons in the same way. The expectations of a person's role, function, behaviours, and attitudes are thus different. A child from birth is born into a certain group (e, g. family) and is expected to carry certain expectations and duties as they grow up because they are a part of the whole. Interestingly, Malina (1996b:35) argues that it is rather anachronistic to speak of first century individuals or person(s) reason being that in Hebrew, Greek and Latin there is no word for *person*, therefore, when he uses the term, Malina (1996b:153) means individual *human beings*.

In the ancient Mediterranean the goals of the group came first and were more vital than personal goals, this is not the case for individualistic societies where the personal goals of the individual precede other goals (Malina 1996b:154). This meant that others came first, as an active part of the in-group they had to support each other in the group at all costs. According to Groenewald (2005:18) the support given should be consistent and persistent even if it leads to the detriment of the one giving support as this was a matter of honour.

Family or kin group was by far the most important and primary group where one was a member (Groenewald 2005:19) In the New Testament we see figures such as Jesus being called 'Jesus of Nazareth' or the 'son of Joseph', Simon is called the 'son of Jonah', and Paul is called 'Paul of Tarsus' because these were extensions of their family and place of origin. When asked 'who are you?' in the first-century Mediterranean context, the question is not asking about the individual (van Eck & Kok 2010:12). Rather, the question seeks a deeper understanding of who you are by asking where you come from, your parents, your history and, importantly, your family as this links you to a certain clan (in-group with certain values and principles) (van Eck & Kok 2010:12).

Dube (2018b:3) states that the Shona people in Zimbabwe use terms such as *makadini*, which means 'how is the life in you?', and *mhoroi*, which means 'I recognise or respect you'. The Zulu people in South Africa use the term '*sanibonani*' which is plural but also used to greet one person, usually an elder or stranger. By using the plural form, the greeter is not only greeting the individual but asking 'how are you and the family'. The greeted person, representing the group, will then respond with *siyaphila* which is plural for 'we are well', if that is the case.

Phillip Harland (2013) *comments: Claiming a place in ancient Mediterranean society*, writes that it is common for scholars studying group boundaries and associations in the ancient Mediterranean societies to classify associations based on their main purpose e.g. religious, by so doing he observes that this approach can be problematic. Thus Harland (2013:19) argues that it is the 'principal social network connections which formed the basis of an association's membership, and which continued to inform a group's self-understanding'. For Harland (2013:19) associations are the results of the various social networks in the societies.

He gives the following five sources that members of groups came from: (1) extended family or household; (2) ethnic or geographic origin; (3) living in the same neighbourhood; (4) occupational activities and (5) deities or ritual activities (Harland

2013:24). These social connections associations are not to be understood rigidly, there were other social connections, but he views these as the primary ones. Importantly there were many associations that drew membership from more than one of these sets of social connections.

The boundaries of an ingroup are fluid meaning that ingroups are not immune to change, in fact ingroups did change at times; at times, they would expand and other times it would contract. For example, Malina (2002:610) notes that people that come from the same town or village could be outgroups to each other because of the family or ethnic group they are a part of. However, once they go into another town 'foreign' from home they automatically become ingroups to each other, bound by the fact they come from the same town or village, thus having to support each other in a foreign land. For Malina (2002:611) language such as male and female, slave and free (Galatians 3:28), citizens and non-citizens (Acts 22:28), believers and non-believers (1 Cor 7:12) and unclean and holy (1 Cor 7:14) are clear boundary lines of ingroups and outgroups which were drawn by the ancients to differentiate between 'we' (exclusive) and 'they'.

To further his argument of Paul and his fellow New Testament writers being ethnocentric Malina (2002:611) notes that:

When Paul views the world as consisting of "Judeans and Gentiles," he not surprisingly articulates the distinction between his ingroup, and the outgroup based on ethnicity and rooted in geography. This insider/outsider division is a form of boundary drawing that constitutes a fundamental dimension of a group's purity system, enabling a place for everyone and everything, thus creating order.

(Malina 2002:611)

Gahl Sasson (2015) demonstrates that the meanings of some of the names of biblical characters such as Moses which means 'drawn from the water'; Abraham 'father to multitudes' and David who is God 'beloved' propel the biblical narrative and

provide insights into the nature of a character's personality, fate and also the identity of the character. Furthermore, according to Sasson (2015:229) in ancient Hebrew and other Semitic cultures the principal of *nomen est omen*, nominative determinism, was ripe. *Nomen nest omen* is the hypothesis that the meaning of a person's name shapes the persons character by being and doing what your name says, thus influencing one's talents and fate. In this case specifically, *28ome nest omen* is reflected throughout biblical narrative, as characters' names carry symbolic and direct meanings that serve as overtures to their stories.

Furthermore, since the name of a person is important and carries significance, *nomen est omen*, therefore, in a similar way, for Trebilco (2012:5) so is the development of the name of a group. This portrays that names are not merely for identification 'names announce to others and resonate to ourselves in a reflexive process who we are, or who we wish to see ourselves being' (Drury and McCarthy 1980:310). A groups name does not 'just' come to being out of nowhere, something must have happened that resulted in the formation of the group to be formed and the name that the group creates or adopts expresses the identity and group behaviour and attitude. For example, New Testament group names such as Christians, Christ Followers, Gentiles, Believers, and Disciples to name a few, draws boundaries lines with the out-group.

### **3.3. Social identity theory**

Social Identity Theory (SIT), informed and supported by the minimal group paradigm (MGP) experiments and hypothesis, is a heuristic tool that developed in the 1970s and 1980s by European social psychologist Henry Tajfel and he was later joined by his student John C. Turner. Social identity theory seeks to address and explain inter-group behaviour and social changes, this theory proposes through (1) social categorisation, (2) social identification and (3) social comparison social identity is formed, furthermore, these three stages are thus able to explain inter-group behaviour. The minimal group paradigm, prominent in the early 1970s by Tajfel and his colleagues in the field of social psychology, is an experimental method used to

study ingroup perceptions and behaviours. One example of these experiment was conducted by PJ Oakes and JC Turner (1980).

MGP experiments were conducted by having participants (children and adults have been used in these studies) divided into two or more random and meaningless groups or categories and are then asked to present a reward in the form of money or prizes to the other participants. For example, in one of the experiments participants were allocated into groups by flipping a coin (Hornsey 2008:205). The awards are anonymously presented in specially designed booklets, the participants were made aware of each other's identification e.g., a number or name of ingroup and outgroup. Rupert Brown (2022:371) notes that the results of these experiments reveal in-group bias, a higher reward was given to ingroup members thus supporting the ingroup. Importantly, Brown states that 'these experiments were the first to claim that mere categorisation into one group and not another is sufficient to trigger behavioural discrimination in the allocation of monetary rewards' (Brown 2022:371).

The fact that the participants do not know each other and have nothing in common other than a group name, the expectation is that in allocation of rewards there would be a level of fairness, at the discretion of the allocator, or random allocating of the prize is not evident. The experiments aimed at eliminating all factors that might influence participants decision based in history and context, however, with the limitations placed Matthew Hornsey (2008:206) states that experiments did not strip the psychology of the participants as their reaction and response of giving their ingroup members a higher allocation was expected. The results gave further questions and arguments to Tajfel (1971), he thus argued that the normal reaction of participants was that they assumed that they are competition with their outgroup producing *competitive group behaviour*, even though they were never told that they are in a competition.

Peter Burke and Jan Stets (2009) in their book *Identity Theory*, define identity as a 'set of meanings that define who one is when one is an occupant of a particular role

in society, a member of a particular group, or claims particular characteristics that identify him or her as a unique person' (2009:3). Philip Harland (2009:6) notes that in social sciences the concept of *identity* can be used in a collective 'we' sense and or individualistic 'I' sense. Regardless of the use of the concept, Michele Dillon (2014:275) maintains that identity is socially constructed thus easily influenced and not static but constantly changes because of the group that one identifies with in that moment. Kate Loewenthal (2014:318) studying the relationship between religion, identity, and mental health states that SIT is specifically concerned with identity because of group membership. In social identity theory individuals move from being individualistic to intergroup, meaning that the personal characteristics and qualities of a person are diminished, and the groups characteristics takes priority and becomes dominant thus shaping how one sees him/herself and other people.

Michael Hogg, Dominic Abrams, and Marilynn Brewer (2017:571) argue that social identity is 'self-defined and evaluated in terms of attributes shared with other members of a self-inclusive social category'. They point to the fact that it is the individual that sees the attributes, of the group, that he or she resonates with and then decides to join the group. Therefore, arguing that membership to any social group is a choice not a prescribed. It is usually assumed that members of a group, to a certain degree, think and act alike because of their common shared identity. The definition by Hogg, Abrams and Brew does not account for that fact that some group identities are prescribed at birth, for example, ethnicity and family name. The social scientific criticism model of honour and shame portrays that from birth one is already part of an ingroup and outgroup.

Richard Jenkins (2008:102) notes that through our everyday social interactions as social beings we identify ourselves and we are also identified by others, we see similarities and differences in so doing groups and memberships and ties are formed. Furthermore, without collectivism or groups we are unable to talk and even think about anything in sociological terms 'collectivity and collective identifications are vital building blocks in the conceptual frameworks of sociology and social anthropology' (Jenkin 2008:103). Social identity theory adopts social

anthropological, psychological, and sociological aspects of group behaviour and collective identifications.

Hinkle and Brown (1990:48) provide the following substantive explanation of social identity theory:

In this theory, it is argued that our sense of who we are stems in large parts from our membership of an affiliation to various social groups, which are said to form our social identity. This identity is thought to be maintained through evaluative comparison between in-groups and relevant out-groups. When these comparisons are favourable, that is, when some positive distinctiveness has been achieved, our social identity is said to be positive and, by implication, our more general self-concept. Since it is assumed that there is a general preference for a positive rather than a negative self-concept, this introduces a motivational element into our comparative activities; we will be more disposed to look for and recognize intergroup differences which favour our in-groups over out-groups.

(Hinkle and Brown 1990:48)

Trebilco (2017:9) adds that social identity theory argues that groups are constantly on the search for ways to increase the uniqueness of their groups positively. When group members compare themselves to the outgroups, they ensure that their distinctiveness is clear and at the utmost maximum. According to Hogg and Abrams (1988:23) in-groups also tend to evaluate their ingroup differences, especially factors that can increase their uniqueness. Furthermore, the ingroup gains positive distinctiveness by differentiating itself from the outgroup and subsequently gaining a positive social identity.

According to Burke and Stets (2009:118) the features that differentiate between the group members of the ingroup 'us' and outgroup 'them' also creates, to a certain degree, differentiation between the members of the ingroup. Although ingroup members are linked together by certain common features, there are still some

differentiations among them because they are also members belonging to other groups and not just one group. Hogg (2006:118) present what he calls the ingroup *prototypes* which helps us to understand the internal differences and thus determines how group members are to behave and interact. Prototypes refer to the attributes that capture the perceptions, attitudes, feelings, and behaviours of the group members, furthermore, 'prototypes describe categories and also evaluate them and prescribe membership related behaviour' (Hogg 2006:118). The individual is thus seen through the lens of the prototypes, giving him/her the attributes of the group. The individual is a part of stereotypical behaviour and language which are at the foundation of interactions, whether with the group or as an individual (Hogg 2006:118).

The first stage of social identity is categorisation, this initial stage entails the individual choosing a group to identify with which leads to depersonalisation once a part of the group. Hornsey (2008:208) is of the opinion that depersonalisation is one of the cornerstones of social categorisation. Kuecker (2014:70) explains that depersonalisation refers to the personal identity of the individual being subsumed by the features of the group joined or to view someone in the light of the category they are a part of, whether in a good or bad way. Social categorisation and depersonalisation lead to stereotyping and discriminatory intergroup behaviour (Tajfel, Billig and Bundy 174). Stereotypes form and increases the 'us versus them' mentality which needs to be maintained in the interest of the longevity and identity of the groups.

Seth Kissi (2017:97) notes that mostly negative stereotypes such as 'all Americans are loud' are used to describe the outgroup. Therefore, in this sense stereotypes are necessary to increase the groups honour and difference gap with the outgroup. Tajel and Turner (1986:281) from their experiments conclude that "the mere awareness of the presence of an out-group is sufficient to provoke intergroup competitive or discriminatory responses on the part of the ingroup" (Tajfel and Turner 1986:281) Discrimination towards the outgroup is an unavoidable reason being that the notion of 'we are better' or 'you are less than is created' whether said or not. Groups incline

to think of themselves as more positive and better than others, discrimination, and stereotypes thus account for such ingroup behaviour.

When categorization takes place you carry and embody the values, memories, behaviours, and all other defining factors of the group. Importantly, Tajfel and Turner (1963) argue that social categorisation changes and shifts the way people see each other, meaning that similarities in the group become more evident and the differences with the outgroup also become more evident. Categorisation does not only influence the way in which people see each other as argued by Tajfel and Turner (1963) it also alters how ones sees him or herself, and by so doing the individual starts to be more aware of his/her self-concept. The interpersonal and intergroup self-concept will be affected (Hornsey 2008:206).

Van Knippenberg (1984:561) is of the opinion that categorisation is essential in the process of forming social identity for two reasons. Firstly, it provides a platform for the individual to be able to find her/his place or standing in the group(s) that he/she has chosen to be a part of. Once an individual establishes his place in the group, he/she will always seek to contribute to a positive social identity image of the group, thus making the individual an asset (identification). Secondly, this process helps the individual to be able to identify the traits that others have prescribed to him/her because of the group to which one belongs. Furthermore, it also helps to identify how these traits will mould behaviour and it will also make him/her understand the reaction of others towards him because of inherited traits and behaviour. Social categorisation processes 'places' and gives the individual a voice in the group. Once a person has successfully categorised him or herself in a group the individual is thus able to identify with the group. Identification is the process which allows group members to share characteristics that place them together into a group that is different from others (Turner 1984:536).

### **3.4. Social identity complexity theory**

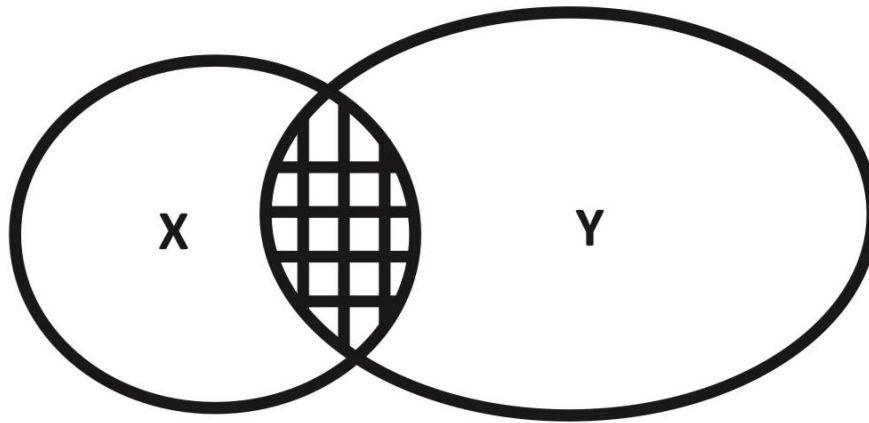
Social identity complexity theory emerged primarily from social identity theory and social categorisation theory was developed by Sonia Roccas and Marilynn Brewer (2002). Social identity theory only accounts for a single ingroup-outgroup membership and categorisation, it is unable to study the dynamics of multiple group membership. Social identity complexity theory acknowledges that individuals have multiple identities, these multiple identities come from the fact that individuals are members of various social groups which often differ in nature (Roccas and Brewer 2008:89). Therefore, this theory seeks to account for the fluidity of having multiple ingroup identities. This theory highlights that identity is not static and changes over time, therefore it deals with identity constructions that change over time (Kok 2014:1). Although an individual is a member of various groups, simultaneously, it does not mean that the multiple social identities are of equal importance at that moment, the dynamics of the context are of great importance in determining the social identity of the individual.

Roccas and Brewer (2002:88) note that some groups are rooted in other groups, for example, all judges are lawyers. Secondly, some groups may be completely orthogonal, for example being Christian and black and lastly other groups overlap slightly such as a being a corporate executive and women. This this portrays the fluidity of ingroup and outgroup relations, individuals simultaneously form both as ingroup and outgroup depending on the context. For example, if an individual is a female pastor, it means that when she is required to attend a pastors' ecumenical conference or fulfil her other responsibilities as a pastor it means that her male colleagues will form part of her ingroup in this context. In a different context and circumstances, such a women's seminar, which requires her to emphasise her identity as a woman her male colleagues will form a part of her outgroup in this case. This scenario where one's social groups and identities overlap or are nonconvergent points to the need for the social identity complexity theory 'how do individuals construct their social identities in relation to multiple, nonconvergent ingroup memberships?' (Roccas and Brewer 2002:89). There are four model presented by Roccas and Brewer (2002:90) of identity representation namely: intersection, dominance, compartmentalisation and merger model.

### 3.4.1. Intersection

In the intersection model an individual, simultaneously, recognises and appreciates all his or her multiple social identities, at the point where all the social identities intersect or meet a single ingroup representation is formed. This point of intersection forms a single strong ingroup identity. To fall into the ingroup categorisation, individuals must all identify with the same primary social identities. For instance, a student can define her primary social identity as being female studying at the University of Pretoria, residing in private student accommodation in Hatfield. The research by Roccas and Brewer (2002:90) portrays that this creates a *compound* identity, this means another female student also studying at the University of Pretoria residing in Hatfield but not in private accommodation could be regarded as an outsider because she would not share the compound identity marker that would identify her as an insider at the point of intersection.

The fact that she is not in a private accommodation automatically excludes her from being an insider, the intersection model is simple and not complex in creating social identities (Kok 2014:2). Roccas and Brewer (2002:90) note that individuals that engage in this model of creating social identity tend to be very exclusive in nature, the simplicity of inclusion and exclusion does not leave any blurred lines and it does not open much for interpretation. This model is illustrated in Figure 1, the diagram does not limit the social identities (X and Y) to only two identities as in reality one could possess more than two social identities.



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Adapted from Roccas, S., & Brewer, M.B., 2002, 'Social identity complexity', *Personality and Social Psychology Review* 6(2), 88–106. [http://dx.doi.org/10.1207/S15327957PSPR0602\\_01](http://dx.doi.org/10.1207/S15327957PSPR0602_01)

**FIGURE 1:** Intersection.

### 3.4.2. Dominance

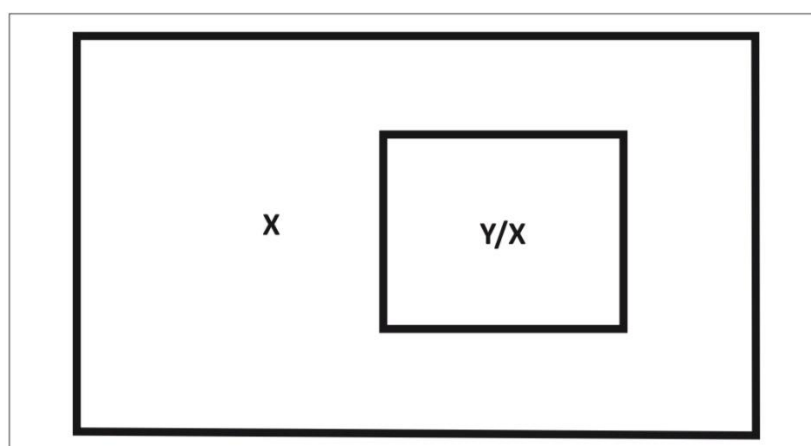
The dominance model is another model that deals with multiple different or competing social identities, this model places one major social identity as the dominant or supreme identity over the other social identities that an individual carries (Roccas and Brewer 2002:90). The dominance model ranks the multiple social identities, into a major and minor category, the major identity is thus dominant and becomes the identifier of the individual. Persons that have the same or similar dominant identity form part of the ingroup members and those that have a different dominant identity are regarded as the outgroup. Roccas and Brewer (2002) are of the opinion that:

In this model, the ingroup is defined as those who share membership in this primary ingroup category; all other category memberships are essentially not social identities at all but simply aspects of the self as a member of the primary group. In other words, alternative social identities are embedded within the primary group identification (as sources of intragroup variation) but not extended to those outside that ingroup.

(Roccas and Brewer 2002:90)

For example, a male university lecturer whose professional identity as a university lecturer is his dominant identity will view other lecturers, male or female, as belonging to his ingroup members. Being male, Christian, and African are aspects or attributes that describe the type of lecturer that he is. The fact that these characteristics describe him as a lecturer is the reason that him being a lecturer is his dominant social identity, see figure 2. Furthermore, Roccas and Brewer (2002:90) explain that the characteristics of the ingroup members are usually similar in the ingroup. It is unlikely but not impossible that members of the same ingroup would have totally different characteristics. An individual who does not identify with the dominant category will fall into the outgroup category regardless of the characteristics and other identities that the person possesses.

Brewer, Ho, Lee and Miller (1987:157) describe the ranking of major to minor identities as 'hierarchal pattern'; this refers to the process that individuals, subjectively, use to determine their dominant identity. According to Roccas and Brewer (2002:90) the hierarchal pattern develops further differentiation and preference of other individuals over others within the same ingroup. For instance, the male university lecturer may have a stronger bond and connection with other male university lecturers compared to his female colleagues. However, he will relate more with other female university lecturers than other males who are not lectures reason being that the males who are not lectures fall outside of his dominance identity.



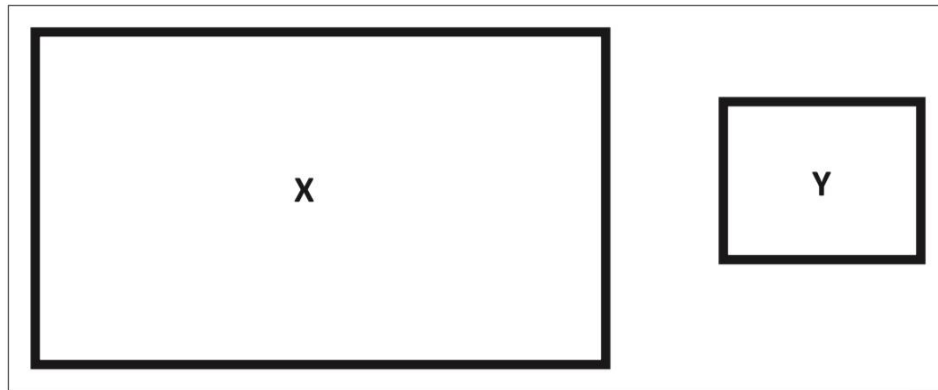
Adapted from Roccas, S., & Brewer, M.B., 2002, 'Social identity complexity', *Personality and Social Psychology Review* 6(2), 88–106. [http://dx.doi.org/10.1207/S15327957PSPR0602\\_01](http://dx.doi.org/10.1207/S15327957PSPR0602_01)

**FIGURE 2:** Dominance.

### 3.4.3. Compartmentalisation

In the intersection and dominance model the formation of the individual's social identity derives from the overlap or relation between the identities of the individual (see figure 1 and 2). On the contrary, in the compartmentalisation model 'social identities are context specific or situation specific' (Roccas and Brewer 2002:90). The fact that the compartmentalisation model is context-based means that it adopts a process of *differentiation and isolation* to activate the multiple identities of the individual. Unlike the model of intersection and dominance, although the individuals maintain their multiple social identities, in this model the individual does not embody all of his or her social identities simultaneously (see figure 3), persons constantly alternate primary identities, in one context a certain group membership is primary and in a different context another one of the individuals' multiple identities become primary (Roccas and Brewer 2002:91).

For instance, a Xhosa man that comes from a traditional family in one of the villages in the Eastern Cape relocated to Cape Town, city in South Africa, to pursue a career in environmental geology. He lives a Western life in Cape Town contrary to the life at home in the Eastern Cape, compartmentalisation arises when he gets home. He leaves his Western way of thinking and doing things, and goes back to his African 'roots' as the context in the village requires of him. Therefore, he changes between his social identities "in the home religious affiliation or cultural group membership may become the most important basis for shared identity and the social self" (Roccas and Brewer 2002:91). The multiple social identities are mutually exclusive as illustrated in figure 3, when in context X (e.g. Cape Town) the ingroup members might treat those in social identity Y (village in the Eastern Cape) and those in other contexts as outgroup members. Interestingly, Kok (2014:3) notes that in another context the members of the ingroup might be outgroups. The research by Roccas and Brewer (2002:91) discovered that ingroup members that share more than one of the social categories tend to view each other more positively, or inclusively, compared to those they only share one ingroup category with.



Adapted from Roccas, S., & Brewer, M.B., 2002, 'Social identity complexity', *Personality and Social Psychology Review* 6(2), 88–106. [http://dx.doi.org/10.1207/S15327957PSPR0602\\_01](http://dx.doi.org/10.1207/S15327957PSPR0602_01)

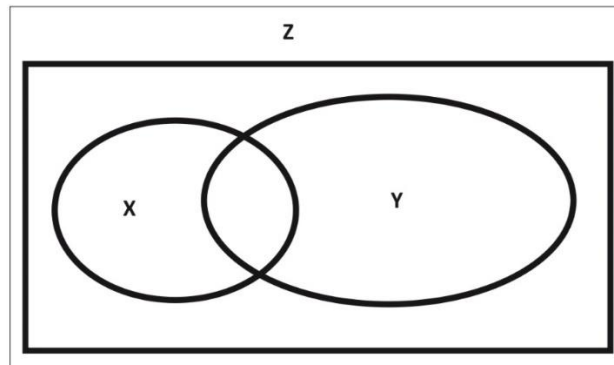
**FIGURE 3:** Compartmentalisation.

#### 3.4.4. Merger

The fourth model in social identity complexity theory that Roccas and Brewer (2002:91) present is the merger model. Unlike the other three models that I have discussed the merger model is nonconvergence nor is the identity based on the context. In this model 'all identities are embraced simultaneously and can coexist' (Kok and Swart 2021:3). This means that persons that share any of the important social category memberships are considered as members of the ingroup. Figure 3 expresses that the social identity of a person is the sum of all the persons group memberships combined (Roccas and Brewer 2002:91).

For instance, in applying this model a male minister of The Army Salvation (Christian church) who studied theology at the University of Pretoria is going to extend his social identity to all Christians regardless of denomination. His identification as minister crosses the gender boundary lines, furthermore, he does not only identify with theology scholars at the University of Pretoria but with all scholars regardless of study discipline. This model is the most inclusive and diverse as there are no strong ingroup boundaries, the more identities the individual has the more inclusive he is, an individual must only identify with just one identity to be a part of the ingroup. Therefore, 'all group identities are important and salient across all situations' (Roccas and Brewer 2002:91). Could the merger model be useful in analysing Paul's

holiness language in 1 Corinthians 7:12-16 to reconcile and promote peace and unity in the household of the unbeliever and believer?



Adapted from Roccas, S., & Brewer, M.B., 2002, 'Social identity complexity', *Personality and Social Psychology Review* 6(2), 88–106. [http://dx.doi.org/10.1207/S15327957PSPR0602\\_01](http://dx.doi.org/10.1207/S15327957PSPR0602_01)

FIGURE 4: Merger.

The four presented and described models of social identity complexity namely: intersection, dominance, compartmentalisation, and merger are 'strategies to resolving the inconsistencies between two incompatible beliefs or attitudes' (Roccas and Brewer 2002:91). The four models have their own degree of complexity, the higher the social identity complexity of a person a more inclusive social ingroup identity is constructed, differentiation is acknowledged and that expands the ingroup categorisation (Kok 2014:4). Lower social identity complexity is created when the diversity and differences are denied. In doing so Kok (2014:4) outlines that the complexity is simplified. These four models of identity representation can be useful in understanding the different, often conflicting, multiple-ingroup in Corinthians.

Roccas and Brewer (2002:91) summarise the four models of social identity theory as follows:

Intersection is the least complex form because it reduces multiple, potentially diverse, group identities to a single, highly exclusive social identity. Dominance is also on the low-complexity end of the continuum because it suppresses inconsistencies within a single ingroup–outgroup dichotomisation. Compartmentalisation represents the next level of complexity in that separate

identities are acknowledged and differentiated, but without any attempt at reconciliation. Merger represents the highest level of complexity because it preserves both differentiation and integration in an inclusive social identity.

(Roccas and Brewer 2002:91)

There are two important observations that Roccas and Brewer (2002:92) point out from their research. First, it is the fact that the nature of the social categorisation can also influence the level of complexity. For example, Afrikaners staying in the rich suburbs of Johannesburg, the group of Afrikaners could be rather small but may be viewed as a dominant social identity group (Kok 2014:4). The model could be less complex when compared to the model of intersection which is more inclusive categories. In this case, the dominance model which is more complex in nature than the intersection model could be less inclusive. This could also be the case with compartmentalisation mode, in certain contexts the individual can express their preferred compartmentalised social identity in a manner that is 'exclusive and dominating'. Therefore, in such cases the compartmentalisation model is less inclusive than the dominance model (see Table 1). Secondly Roccas and Brewer (2002:92) observed that different situations and circumstances may propel individuals to adopt different modes of identity representation at different times.

Model: Strategy of managing complexity	Degree of complexity
<b>Intersection</b>	Lowest in social identity complexity
<b>Dominance</b>	Low in social identity complexity
<b>Compartmentalisation</b>	Higher in social identity complexity
<b>Merger</b>	Highest in social identity complexity

**TABLE 1:** Degree of social identity complexity.

### 3.4.5. Relevance and 'use' in the New Testament

Social identity complexity is relatively a new social psychology theory, Jacobus Kok (2014) is the first scholar to use this theoretical perspective as a plausible heuristic

tool in New Testament interpretation. Social identity and social categorisation theory has been successful, and fruitful in explaining the group dynamics and identity constructions in the ancient Mediterranean world. However, these two social psychology theories are unable to account for the multiple identities and group categorizations.

For instance, John Elliot (2007) demonstrates that the term Ἰουδαῖος (Jew or Judean) is multifaceted and complex. Judaism was not just one 'thing' it was an amalgamation of various identity markers; this is visible through various forms it is expressed and interpreted (Arnal 2009:112). Importantly, Kok (2014:1) observes that the need for social identity complexity to be applied to New Testament studies is because we tend to view ancient Christian identity as though a 'Christian' identity was fixed, however there was fluidity which makes it more complex and dynamic. SICT is thus 'able to account for the dynamic multifaceted nature of ancient Christian identity' (Kok 2014:1).

One of the few users of this relatively new theoretical perspective is Kok and Swart (2021) apply the dominance model of identity representation in their 'aim to explore the social identity complexity theory of Onesimus in the letter to Philemon concerning his intersectional and cross-cutting identity as both a slave and "beloved brother" in Christ' (Kok and Swart 2021:1). Paul pleads with his friend and fellow brother in Christ, Philemon, to accept back his slave Onesimus into his household, no longer as just a slave but also as a brother in Christ.

#### 3.4.6. Transcending boundaries

As mentioned previously, from a social-scientific perspective ancient Mediterranean group boundaries and associations were a driving force in society (Malina 2002). An individual 'is' because of the group, this means that the group that an individual is a member of played a fundamental or dominating role in the social identity of that individual (Kok 2014:5). A person was defined by factors such the family, town and or religion that one belonged to, the so called "great chain of being" (Groenewald 2005:16). A persons worth and view of life was based on the group(s) that one belonged to; one could belong to more than one group. Jerome & Neyrey

(2010:185) note that group-orientations were very strong for the ancients unlike us in the modern Western societies where individualism is important and valued. In fact, there was no place for individualism. Collectivism was the order of the day, the group offered protection, identity, and honour and in exchange one always had to be loyal to the group at all costs (Malina 1994:110).

Being a member of member of a particular group (e.g., Jewish) drew clear boundary lines between the ingroup and outgroup. Kok (2014:5) writes those individuals in such a society had strong inclusive (shared with the society) and exclusive (not shared with the society) social boundaries, and identity markers that are formulated from the inclusive and exclusive boundaries. The ingroup was protective of their honour and exclusivity, this meant that members of the ingroup viewed the outgroup suspiciously to maintain their identity despite the fact that fluidity of social boundaries change over time because of the social changes in society. Jörg Frey (2012:65) writing on the *Jewishness of Paul* proposes that some of the Jews that lived in the Diaspora remained as an independent ethnic group with own rule and law, they drew clear boundary markers in the pagan society to maintain their identity. "Diaspora largely resisted assimilation to the pagan world and developed forms of an independent Jewish identity distinct from its surroundings" (Frey 2012:64).

According to Frey (2014:65) the diaspora had certain religious, legal, financial, and military privileges, for example, Jews had the privilege of observing the Sabbath, daily sacrifices, and own internal administration and jurisdiction. In maintaining their identity in the Roman Empire some of the Jews did not participate in the public and social life, according to Frey (2012:65) Jews dietary requirements are one way they limited social interaction with the non-Jews. Kok (2014:5) details that the maintenance of identity was essential for people who are called by God to be holy. Secondly, in the time of Paul Jews that married or had sexual intercourse with non-Jews were viewed negatively; this is evidence of maintaining clear boundary markers (Kok 2014:5).

In the New Testament, John 4:4-26, Jesus' interaction with the Samaritan women, is one well known example in the Gospels in which boundaries or barriers are evident between the Jews and other nations such as the Samaritans. According to Keener (2003) there are at least three significant barriers in the story: the socio-ethnic barrier of centuries of Jewish-Samaritan prejudice; the gender barrier; and a moral barrier imposed by this woman's assumed behaviour (Keener 2003:585). Jesus' continuous interaction and engagement transcended centuries of social, religious, and cultural boundaries (Kok 2014:5). Jesus embodied unity and peace, he did not allow centuries old boundaries to prevent him from interacting with those rejected and outcast, His healing miracles of the lame and sick (e.g., John 5:1-9) show Jesus doing what was unprecedented. Jesus himself laid the foundation and set the example for Paul. According to Kok (2014:5) the writers of John's Gospel remember and paint a picture of Jesus as a boundary-transcending man.

As mentioned earlier, Paul's extensive biography as a Diaspora Jew, later moving to Jerusalem, a conservative Judean environment, where he received education from Gamaliel and ultimately his Damascus experience (Acts 9) shaped his identity and worldview. From his extensive biography, I agree with Kok (2014:7) that 'Paul's social identity might have been rather complex in nature because of the diverse contexts to which he was exposed'. Therefore, Paul, like Jesus, was inclusive and boundary-transcending because of his social identity complexity. Paul in Philippians 3:4-6 details his former exclusive Judean identity as one that was circumcised on the eighth day, from the tribe of Benjamin and a Pharisee. However, in Galatians 1:11-12 Paul explains that the gospel that he preached is not from human origin but by revelation from Jesus Christ. Kok (2024:7) explains that this revelation opened Paul's eyes and transformed the way he saw boundary lines between the insider and outsider. The revelation and vision of new creation (2 Corinthians 5:17) reveal that Paul became inclusive and transcended boundaries instead of drawing boundaries.

According to Soards and Pursiful (2015:172) Galatians 3:28 is one the best-known and quoted verses in the New Testament in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. As an officer of The Salvation Army (pastor or minister) I have attended several ecumenical meetings

about peace, unity and reconciliation in the church and community at large. In the majority of those discussions and talks Galatians 3:28 would powerfully be used as a reference on social cohesion and inclusivity in the church. In this passage Paul abolishes social, economic, sexual and gender distinctions which were the distinction factors for the Jews. Those that have come into union with Jesus Christ, usually through entry rites such as baptism, are now marked in relationship with Him becoming 'all are one', thus transcending boundaries that once separated them.

Therefore, according to Kok (2014:7) a new social reality (merger model) comes to the surface where old social boundaries are regarded; this had social, economic, and political implications. Importantly, Kok (2014:7) is of the opinion that the abolition of boundaries 'in Christ' does not mean that the boundaries no longer had a function, rather they did not play the same role as before. What Kok (2014:7) means by this is that things such as circumcision were not exclusive boundaries markers disregarding the 'outsiders'. The disregarding of these exclusive boundary markers created a new form of unity between groups that did not agree (e.g., Jews and Samaritans). This new reality invites everyone to the table regardless of social strata and background, therefore making the merger model applicable and relevant. Paul, like Jesus, embraced the differences of people and that is one of the factors that enabled the growth of the ecclesia. "Different groups are reconciled to each other in a new overarching identity that incorporates the rich diversity of plurality with the new community" (Kok 2014:8).

Holiness transcends the boundaries, the fact the only one parent has to be a believer for the entire family to be included into community regardless of gender, or formal entry rites such as circumcision and baptism not being a requirement (1 Cor 7:14) speaks into the importance of unity in promoting peace and cohesion and the place of children in the community.

### **3.5. Conclusion**

Unlike social identity theory which only accounts and is applicable for single ingroup-outgroup membership and categorisation, social identity complexity theory goes a step further by acknowledging that individuals are members of various social groups. The social-scientific models of honour and shame, group boundaries and associations highlighted that those individuals from ancient Mediterranean world belonged to various social categorizations. A person's worth and view of life was based on the group(s) that one belonged to, one could belong to more than one group. The explored merger model of social identity complexity theory is the most inclusive and diverse as there are no strong ingroup boundaries, therefore, this model can be applied in reading 1 Corinthians 7:12-16 as holiness in the passage is extended to the unbelievers that are married to believers.

The succeeding chapter will cover the introductory features of 1 Corinthians, this chapter will serve as a vital building block for the exploring and analysing 1 Corinthians 7:12-16 placing the text within its broader context and situation.

## Chapter 4

### Authorship, date, identity complexities in 1 Corinthians

#### 4.1. Introduction

For a better understanding of the social groups and identities in 1 Corinthians the historical background or panoramic view of the text is essential. The text did not come out of 'nowhere' but is a result of the context and situations in the Corinthian Christian community. This chapter outlines the authenticity of the text by focusing on the authorship, date, place and writing of the epistle. Secondly, this chapter provides the historical setting of the city of Corinth as a colony of the Roman Empire. Lastly, this chapter outlines some of the complex social group identities that were present in Corinth as a Graeco-Roman city thus placing the role and value of children into context.

#### 4.2. Authenticity

##### 4.2.1. Authorship

The opening verse of the epistle tells us that Apostle Paul, as he refers to himself in the letter, is the author of the epistle and his co-sender is Sosthenes (1 Cor 1:1). Leon Morris (1971:26) notes that there have been some scholars in the 1970's and earlier have doubted and argued otherwise against 1 Corinthians being authentically Pauline. However, there are solid external (non-canonical texts) and internal evidence (canonical texts) that dismiss arguments that oppose the authenticity of the letter. Oda Wischmeyer (2012:160) states that what makes the letter authentic is not so much because of the greetings in the text but rather the many autobiographical passages 'v. supra' present in the text. The autobiographical material of Paul in 1 Corinthians makes the letter a fundamental source regarding his life and missional story (Wischmeyer 2012:160).

The First Letter of Clement, originally titled *Letter to the church in Corinth*, written to the church in Corinth from the church in Rome in the first century is one piece of external evidence. 1 Clement substantially mentions and refers to Paul, this is important because there has not been much doubt about 1 Clements' authenticity therefore Paul as the author is verified (Morris 1971:27). According to James Duncan (1995:2) 1 Clem 47.1-3 calls upon its audience to 'take up the epistle of the blessed Paul the apostle ... with true inspiration he charged you concerning himself and Cephas and Apollos, because even then you had made yourselves partisans'. He further notes that in the Muratorian Fragment 1 Corinthians is listed as the first letter of Paul, the mentioning of 1 Corinthians is evidence that the letter is significant. The internal evidence, like the external evidence, supports Paul as the author of the epistle. Paul claims authorship of the letter in 1 Cor 1:1, according to Wischmeyer (2012:160) "in the original epistle Paul wrote 16.21 in his own hand; for the rest, he dictated the letter". Moreover, this letter follows the structure of all Pauline epistles.

#### 4.2.2. Date and place of writing

The discovery of the fragments referred to as the *Delphic letter of Claudius*, which relates to Lucius Junius Gallio, are pivotal as Paul's missionary journey revolves around this letter (Thiselton 2000:29). The letter reports and details the proconsulship of Gallio, the probable date of the letter is 51-52 C.E. according to Thiselton (2002:29) this date is suitable as Gallio's brother, Seneca, returned from exile in 50 C.E. His return from exile promoted the notion for his brother to be made the proconsul. Roman governors and all other officials, including proconsuls, would be chosen before the 1<sup>st</sup> of April and would then have to take up their appointments from 1 July. Gallio was not able to complete his term due to health difficulties. This means that Paul was before Gallio for his hearing about the charges brought against him for teaching what is against the law (Acts 18:12-17) between July, when he arrived to take on his duties as proconsul, and September when he left due to ill health, of the year 51 C.E. This is significant as it correlates with Paul's arrival in Jerusalem later in the year as noted in Galatians 2:1.

Therefore, according to Colin Hemer (1980:18) the *Delphic letter of Claudius* and Acts 18 are essential to the conclusion that 'Paul was in Corinth from autumn to early summer of 52 C.E.' Having been in Corinth for 18 months (Acts 18:11) after the early summer of 52 C.E. Paul left Corinth. The mission he came to Corinth for when he left Athens was fulfilled (Hays 1997:5). Paul had established the Christian church through his teaching and preaching of the Word of God (Acts 18:1-11). The church was up and running hence it was time for him to leave Corinth to the next city, continuing his missionary journey and expanding Christian communities. The letter we know today as '1 Corinthians' was subsequently written sometime after his departure, scholars such as Murphy- O' Connor (1994); Thiselton (2000) and Wischmeyer (2012) argue that the probable date of writing is between 53-55 C.E.

According to 1 Cor 16:8 the most plausible place of writing of the epistle is Ephesus, in the epistle Paul writes that he will stay in Ephesus until the Pentecost. Acts 18:18-21 records that when Paul left Corinth he went to Ephesus where he stayed for a relatively long time, making this his third missionary journey (Wischmeyer 2012:161). Dunn (1995:14) states that external evidence, such as the Delphic letter of Claudius, correlates with what is said in the book of Acts. Ephesus was fundamental as it became the centre of his activity considering the duration of his stay there. Keeping in mind the chronology of Paul's missionary journey it is assumed that he only went to Ephesus once and stayed there from 53 to 55 C.E. In 1 Cor 16:8 Paul makes his intentions of leaving Ephesus to Macedonia known, therefore, making 55 C.E. the plausible date of writing in Ephesus. According to 1 Cor 5.7 "it is possible that it was written before the Feast of the Passover" (Wischmeyer 2012:161).

### **4.3. Identity complexities in Corinthians**

The Corinthian community was a complex community with various social groups and identities, primarily due to the migration to the city as expressed in the previous section. Michael Lipka (2009:167) makes the following observation regarding the complexity of social groups in Greco-Roman cities:

Roman religion was not independent of society. John Scheid has aptly remarked: “There was in fact no such thing as ‘Roman Religion’, only a series of Roman religions, as many Roman religions as there were social groups.” Defining social groups, however, is not always an easy task, especially in the Roman society of the imperial period, in which freedmen might overrule consuls and slaves turn into patricians, if backed by imperial support. Furthermore, a religious performant, though belonging to a specific social group in the broad sense, might conceptualize divine concepts differently according to the social sub-group in which he acted. These sub-groups were determined, for instance, by age, sex, descent, place of residence, profession, etc. Therefore, our categories must be necessarily broad, acknowledging social differences but allowing for exceptions.

(Lipka 2009:167)

It is not an easy task to define conclusively the various social groups in the Corinthian community, which means that the church consisted of people who came from different social groups and classes. An individual is born into a certain social context meaning that from birth an individual is automatically born into a social group and by virtue is assigned at least one social identity. The family that one is born into will determine factors such as the honour, status, obligations and participation and integration within the society (Milly 2016:225). Inequality is derived from these factors as individuals are not presented with the same opportunity within societies, thus creating social identity complexities present in Corinthians. 1 Cor. 1:26-28 provides context regarding the social status of the members of the church, Paul addressing the congregation reminds them not many of them in the church are of noble birth, wise, or powerful. This indicates that in the Corinthian Christian community members from the *elite and* upper echelon of society were also members of the church.

Witherington (2005:22) indicates that it is plausible that those persons Paul refers to as “powerful” have political power, this term could also be used to refer to those that are wealthy, the reason being that in 2 Corinthians Paul primarily deals with benefactor and patron-client relationships. It was not only the rich and influential that were members of the church, but the wealthy also played a fundamental role such as

providing meeting places in the homes. 1 Cor 1:28 and 1 Cor 11:22 points out and suggests that the Christian community in Corinthians primarily consisted of poor people<sup>2</sup>. 1 Cor 7:21-23 tells us that among the congregants and converts domestic slaves were also part of the church. From these demographics of the Corinthian Christian community it is apparent that the social status of the congregants in the church varied from the destitute to the wealthy or rather well-off. However, according to Witherington (1995:22) there were no Roman aristocrats in the church.

#### 4.3.1. Social identities

Corinth was a Greek city until Roman forces were commanded by consul L. Mummius to destroy and leave the city in ruins in 146 B.C.E. More than a century later after its destruction in 44 B.C.E. Julius Caesar went back to reconstruct and establish Corinth as a colony in the control of the Roman Empire (De Silva 2018: 486). The architecture, administration and governance of Corinth was like that of the other cities which were under the Roman Empire (Witherington 1995:6). In the 'new' city being reconstructed the Roman Empire moved the Caesar's veterans to Corinth to occupy the land as a reward of their faithful years of service. Furthermore, urban plebians, freed men and women that were once Roman slaves were also migrated to Corinth, Witherington (1995:7) is of the opinion that the moving of the commoners to Corinth was a way of clearing the disaffected and volatile elements of Rome. The migrated people found Greeks residing in Corinth, not everyone moved when the city was destroyed in 146 B.C.E., there are some that remained and continued to live in the ruins. These Greeks became foreigners in their own land, forced to adopt Latin as the new language although Greek was also spoken, the colonists and those that they brought became citizens and were given the rights and privileges of citizens such as voting and holding public offices.

#### Slaves

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<sup>2</sup> John Barclay (2019:244) writes that the term "poor" is vague and elastic, nonetheless, studying the Roman world he defines or described poor as those that earn enough income to survive. Barclay (2019:244) differentiates 'poor' from 'destitute', the destitute are those that cannot fend for themselves, including the beggars and orphans with no family support. 70% of the population were poor and destitute, both fall below the breadline. Therefore, the term poor is used to include describe both unless otherwise stated.

During the reconstruction of the city, the Roman empire took advantage of attractive and strategic location of the city as a metropolis *bimaris Corinthus* (Fitzmyer 2008:31). This means that Corinth became a vital city for trade and manufacturing, tourism, religion, and everyday social interactions thus, contributing significantly to the economy of the Roman rule. Corinth became the centre of the proconsul that was appointed by the Senate to govern the whole of the province of Achaia. Corinth was also the capital city of the province of Achaia. After classical Athens, Corinth was the second most important city in ancient Greece, but in the first century C.E. it would have been more important than Athens. Along with Rome, Alexandria, and Antioch on the Orontes (Syria), it would have been one of the four most important cities of the Mediterranean world (Fitzmyer 2008:21).

Corinth was a bustling centre for trade. Located on a narrow isthmus and commanding two daughter port cities (Cenchreae to the southeast on the Aegean, and Lechaion to the north, affording access to the Ionian Sea and thence the Adriatic), it was well placed to profit from trade between the eastern and western halves of the empire. Artisans flocked to Corinth to set up shop, whether they worked in bronze, pottery, glass, or leather (like Paul and Aquila).

(DeSilva 2018:486)

Trading meant that movement increased between nations, Aperghis (2005:57) notes that the argument that trade was primarily inter-regional is questionable because the Mediterranean seaboard was difficult and expensive. Trading increased development of cities and thus trading routes became important making cities the hub of economic activities. The Black Sea and the Mediterranean consisted of vital trading routes (Koester 2013:91). The increase of economic activities means that migration to this city was very high, constantly increasing the population, people from the ancient world came flocking into Corinth seeking better opportunities. This means that the aliens came with their own cultures, religions, and customs to Corinth. Koester (2012:157) notes that some of the migrants would even physically carry and move with their religious cults and deities to Corinth as it was done in other cities such as Ephesus. The many Graeco-Roman world gods 'now' represented in

Corinth were not just in the households of the aliens, but also public sites and shrines were built for the worship of the gods making these area centres of activities (DeSilva 2018:558).

Slaves, although obligated to publicly worship and venerate the gods of their masters, could have venerated their own gods in their private spaces, most likely the gods from their own homelands. Pausanias travelling through Corinth in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century C.E. provides a list of 26 sacred places he visited which include temples and altars. DeSilva (2018:490) notes that this is incredible as it shows the importance of life in the city. Amongst the sacred places Pausanias found are the cults of Aphrodite, Athena and also cults of Isis and Saraphis which are Egyptian. The temple of Demeter and Kore with a sanctuary of Askelpios were also present.

Fitzmyer (2008:31) is of the opinion that the migration to Corinth accounts for the similarities that link Roman Corinth to other cities such as Egypt, Syria, Asia Minor, and the rest of the eastern Mediterranean world. For example, archaeological evidence suggests that some of the buildings rebuilt were similar to buildings from the southern Italian cities; moreover, there is undisputed large volumes of Italian wares that were imported into Corinth. For Witherington (1995:8) this evidence gives a picture about the population and representations in Roman Corinth for at least the first 60 years of the first century in the common era. Therefore, this qualifies Roman Corinth as 'Graeco-Roman' as it 'more Greek than Roman, more Roman than Athens, if any city of the first century world deserved the hyphenated designation "Graeco-Roman" it must be Corinth' (Litfin 1983:213).

Households in the Greco-Roman context were sacred places and religious rituals were a part of the daily activities done in the household. All the members of the household (free or slave) were expected to participate fully in whatever was being done to honour the 'many gods' which Paul refers to in 1 Cor 8:5 (Hodge 2010:4). In the Graeco Roman world, religious life and family life were so integrated and thus could not be separated notes DeSilva (2018:488). It was believed that favour came

from the gods; when worshipped properly they would grant economic prosperity, civil order, and political stability. Caring for the gods was thus vital because all life came from the gods. Roman Corinthian households accommodated domestic, commercial, political, and social activities. People worked in households, some shops were attached to the houses, contributing to the economic production of the household. Honour and shame were central cultural values therefore entertaining friends as well as business and political associates to dine in the household increased the host's honour. (Hodge 2010:7).

The main reason for the influx of migration to Corinth is because of its attractive metropolis location and trade route. This means that people with different multiple identities in Corinth interacted daily, constantly trying to increase their honour and assets in the community. Relationships were formed with all kinds of people, especially Roman rule values and teaching became foundational in the community. Individuals did not embody only one identity but multiple identities. The diversity, multiple social identities because of the influx of Gentiles (non-Jews) in Corinth was thus the perfect place for his missionary work, of preaching and teaching of God's Word.

Once Paul left Corinth several dividing factors in the Christian community began to appear' members of the church became attached to certain leaders of the church. Some Christians followed Paul claiming that he was legitimate and only leader another group followed Apollos also claiming likewise, this resulted in tension and division in the church '*What, after all, is Apollos? And what is Paul? Only servants, through whom you came to believe...*' (1 Cor 3:5). There was unequal treatment of people at the Lord's table, other members of the church were also leading lawsuits against fellow Christians (1 Cor 6:1-11). Chapter seven tells us that there was division regarding what is appropriate sexual conduct for Christians, both in and out of marriage. Some of the church members wanted to divorce their spouses because of their newfound Christian identity (1 Cor 7:11). Ben Witherington (1995:74) observes that most of the problems that arose in the church were social and not theological. 'The Corinthians were behaving like most disciples of the ancient

Sophists and other teachers by indulging in boasting and preening as part of their status-seeking behaviour' (Witherington 1995:74).

One social characteristic that contributed to deep conflicts was the social norms of honour and shame in the Greco-Roman world. ... many of the Christ-followers continued to operate within their previous social realities even becoming members of the Christ-movement. This led to interpersonal conflicts, tensions in the community and crises of social identity.

(Lim 2017:194).

Therefore, Paul writes this epistle from Ephesus to address these social and theological issues that were brought to his attention. The epistle itself indicates that concerns and questions were brought to him orally by members of Chloe's household (1Cor 1:11). Secondly, an official letter (1 Cor 7:1) written by the church in Corinth was also sent to him. Dunn (1995:18) is of the opinion that 1 Cor 16:17 suggests that the letter was brought by Stephanas, Fortunatus and Achaicus when they came to visit him in Ephesus. Kenneth Bailey (2011:198) his book titled *Paul through Mediterranean eyes cultural studies in 1 Corinthians* argues that from chapter 1-6 Paul is responding to the issues brought to him orally. The repetition of the expression *peri de* (now concerning ...) from chapter 7 (1 Cor 7:25; 8:1; 12:1: 16:1) is a clear indication that he is responding to the letter. Therefore, we can conclude that from chapter seven Paul is only responding to the letter presented to him by the church, reason being that he does not use the expression anywhere else before this chapter.

The tone in which Paul addressed the church in 1 Cor 5-6 is different to that of 1 Cor 7:1 onwards (Paul displays disappointment, frustration, and anger in 1 Cor 5-6 this is seen through his exclamations such as 'And you are proud! ...' (5:2) and 'Do you not know ...' (5:6; 6:2,9,19). However, from 1 Cor 7:1-11:1 there is a shift from anger to 'extreme pastoral sensitivity' (Thistleton 2000:483). The argument presented by Kenneth Bailey (2011:198) that until the end of chapter 6 Paul is addressing the oral

queries and from chapter 7. He is addressing the written questions and concerns sent to him by the church supports the shift in Paul's tone. A plausible reason behind Paul's sudden change of tone could have been that until the end of chapter 6 he is addressing matters that should not be arising in the church as he might have previously dealt with these issues. From 1 Cor. 7:1 and in succeeding chapters it is for the first time that Paul is teaching and addressing these complex issues, hence the 'extreme pastoral sensitivity' that Thistleton (2000:483) talks about. The confusion and tension in the Church community, is of no surprise, because these complex social issues had an impact on everyone and not just the believers.

According to Wischmeyer (2012:160) Paul is not only addressing the church in Corinthians but to also the Christian community at large. This surprisingly wide circle of addressees makes it clear that 1 Corinthians should not only be understood in relation to the situation and actual addressees but claims general significance. The problems of the Corinthians are not simply 'personal' problems *of one community* which therefore are subject to Paul's pastoral discretion but concern all Christians and ought also to be made known to all Christians. Hence Paul was not thinking only of single communities and their problems but also of a 'Christian public' (Wischmeyer 2012:160). The issues in the church community in Corinth were not unique, Lim (2017:201) notes that Christian community in Galatians faced similar issues. The social identities (rich, poor, artisans, travellers, and migrants) are because of the political structures of the Roman imperial order.

#### 4.3.2. Political identities

Slavery, patronage, and imperial cults are the centre of politics in the Roman Empire. For example, Corinth as the centre of trade between Rome and the East. for the generated a lot of wealth, income, and power for the Roman officials. Richard Horsley (2004:11) observes that the Roman conquest brought instability and disruption to the locals such as those found in the Corinth, 'Roman imperial order was the violent disruption and displacement of indigenous peoples by Roman conquest, enslavement, and colonization' (Horsley 2004:11). A large number of ruthless people such as such the Caesar's veterans sent by Roman Officials to come

take control over conquered cities. Philip du Toit (2021:2) notes that the most extreme form of displacement was slavery once a city was captured, therefore, slavery became one of the fundamental building blocks of society.

According to Horsley (2004:12) slavery played a fundamental role in the expansion of the political economy of Roman politics. Slaves were everywhere working on the land that the Roman empire seized from peasants, the Roman economy depended on slave labour to such an extent that it became a standard in the Empire. “Slaveholding was thus not only the economic basis of the elite who dominated the Roman imperial order but also both the political-economic basis of the social order and the normative ideal of imperial culture” (Horsley 2004:13). The political landscape is complex, power was at the helm of the empire, having supreme control over everything and everyone was needed by the empire to further its agenda of conquering the whole world. The Roman officials knew and understood that they had to make slavery a ‘norm’ and a vital building block of society to maintain power.

The elite, who are the rulers, formed at maximum 2 percent of the population controlling the wealth, land, produce, slaves and peasants labouring on the land. Interestingly, there was no middle class it was just the elite and peasants (van Eck 2018:37). The elite being in controlling and enjoying a higher status means that they determined the quality of life and the social, political, economic, and religious experience of all the inhabitants under their control in the empire (Carter 2006:3). “The relation between empire and subjected people is one of power”. All matters of importance were in the hands of the elite, and no legitimate channel for political participation by the peasantry existed” (Horsley 1993:11). The patron—client relationship was one ‘tool’ used by the rulers to gain political support from others, van Eck (2018:40) explains that one elite would support another elite by giving him land or a political position with the expectation that he, the client, would be loyal and supportive to the patron when times of need or political agenda rises.

For example, Herod Antipas was given the position as ruler over Galilee by Caesar Augustus, van Eck (2018:40) is of the opinion that this was done to promote the socio and political interests of Rome. Elites did not only enter into client—patron relationship with elites only but also with the poor and peasants. This relationship benefitted both parties, but not in the same way, the ruler required of the poor to give him honour and status and in exchange the peasants would be given a better standard of living such as tax reductions. Patron—client relations were not about the client but more about the patron, the rulers used their resources to gain power over the poor yet making it seem as though their aim is to better the lives of the marginalized. Horsley (2004:15) states that the Roman Empire was held together by the various network of patronages that they have, moreover “patronage was the means by which prominent figures enhanced and maintained their wealth and prominence in cities such as Corinth or Ephesus” (Horsley 2004:15). The effective administration of the Roman Empire was a result of the patronage.

Roman imperial cults (temples, images, ritual etc.) were important and very effective in the maintenance of imperial order. As means of expanding and maintaining the imperial order, Horsley (2004:16) notes that the elite sponsored and developed the celebrations and honouring rites of emperor Augustus as a divine figure. This was primarily done through the setting up shrines and building temples in redesigned city centres, furthermore, they also funded the festivals and imperial games. According to van Eck (2019:40) the setting of imperial cults was necessary for the Roman rule to legitimize their rule as they forcefully invaded the cities and towns, claiming that they are divine and sent by the gods was one way of legitimizing their rule.

“Temples ... provide divine sanction and blessing, leaving the impression that a ruler has come to power by the will of the gods or a mandate from heaven” (Herzog 2005:153). This points us that temples were not so much about veneration and worship of the gods but where political tools to control imperial order. van Eck (2018:40) notes that the inscription of the faces of Roman emperors and officials, such as Julius Caesar, on coins was a political move for maintaining and controlling

communication, everything in the empire would 'scream' Pax Romana. Roman politics were intertwined with every aspect of life from family and household to social and religious expression. Although the religious expressions and cults were for political reasons for the Roma officials but for those under their rule it was not, for them it meant something more significant. Horsley (2004) observes that:

Not only is religion not separate from politics, but religious expressions include far more than personal faith, and can even include the architectural construction of the urban environment. Indeed, religious expressions can participate in the construction of political power relations.

(Horsley 2004:16)

Paul, and the Christ-followers, finds themselves in these religious-political complexity. Paul's letters such as 1 Corinthians can also be read as political letters against Roman rule and the imperial order. For du Toit (2021:1), Paul's letters are more about his relationship with the empire and not so much about his Judean heritage. The Roman rule ensured that the subjects honour, respect and are loyal to the imperial order. The first Christian communities are a product of this political identity, according to van Eck (2018:41) it is without any doubt that the Christian carried some of the practices and beliefs into their new faith, some did so consciously and others unconsciously.

In 1 Corinthians, from Paul's first long argument to his ecstatic "explanation" of the resurrection, Paul opposes his gospel to the Roman rulers and the imperial order. "The rulers of this age" have been outsmarted in God's *mysterion*, the apocalyptic plan for the fulfilment of history; having 'crucified the Lord of glory' they are "doomed to perish" (2:6-8). God has chosen the foolish and weak of the world, the very opposite of the powerful, nobly born, wealthy, and wise elite, who dominate the imperial order (1:26-27; 4:8-10). Those chosen ones, the saints, will soon participate in God's judgment of the (Roman) world order, whose form is passing away (6:1-4; 7:31). Meanwhile, the resurrected Christ is enthroned in heaven, preparing to destroy "every ruler and every authority and power" (15:24).

#### 4.3.3. Religious identity

##### A. Jews

Jewish identity and population are evident in Corinth, according to Ranon Katzoff (2019:217) that the population of Jews was sufficient to be noticed by Roman authors. It is highly possible that the majority of these Jews migrated from Rome so the Jews in Rome could have been rabbinic. Katzoff (2019:217) argues that the presence of Jews in Rome, and subsequently Corinth, is supported by practices of Jews practices in line with rabbinic literature.

When Corinth was reestablished as a Roman colony by Julius Caesar in 44 BCE after its destruction in 146, it was repopulated with the poor and freed slaves from Rome. It is reasonable to assume that the Jewish community in Corinth was founded by Jews who used this opportunity to abandon the impoverished areas in Rome. Another wave of Jews arrived in Corinth from Rome in wake of the expulsion ordered by the emperor Claudius around 50 CE.

(Katzoff 2019:233)

Roman author, Petronius Arbiter in his fictional Latin 1<sup>st</sup> century novel titled *The Satyricon* pens down 'the banquet of Trimalchio'. The banquet is important as it describes Trimalchio washing his hands and those of his guests at his banquet, Trimalchio further wipes his hands off on his slave's head, according to Katzoff (2019:220) this act hilarious and strange because the character of Trimalchio in the novel is Roman. This behaviour of hand washing and wiping at the banquet is not for hygiene purposes but rather as a ritual of some sort, probably Jewish inspired. There is no evidence in Greek and Roman scholarly work that suggests that the practice of washing of hands was done after using ablution facilities, however, Jewish sources do allude to such a ritual state (Katzoff 2019:222).

For example, in the *Satyricon*, when the diners entered the house of Trimalchio water was used to wash their hands and their hangnails were removed. This is a further indication of Jewish influence on the Romans, Martin Smith (1975:66) notes that the removal of hangnails for Romans was done at the barber and Jewish hand washing rituals stipulated that hangnails are to be removed before washing of hands because hangnails prevent purification hence done at the dinner table. I agree with Katzoff (2019) that it is highly unlikely that this 'unfamiliar' hand washing behaviour is coincidental. 'It is surely possible that Petronius observed Jews behaving in these ways in Rome or in southern Italy, where the plot of the *Satyricon* is set, and that he may have even asked Jews why they did so' (Katzoff 2019:225) and followed suit. This one example places Jews, Jewish thought, and influence in greater cities under the Roman Empire, in this case Corinth.

Judaism is as old as humanity, according to the canon, attempting to recall the primary social identity of Judaism would be futile for this study. Considering how social identity is not static and changes over time, the social identity of years before and after Second Temple Judaism is relevant for this study. The social identity of Judaism is based on four pillars namely: monotheism; election or ethnicity; Torah and land or temple, according to Cornelis Bennema (2015:30) these four pillars are what distinguish and establish the ingroup qualities of the Jews from the non-Jews. *Monotheism* is based on the *Shema* 'Hear O Israel, the LORD our God, the LORD is one' (Deuteronomy 6:4), there is only one God that is to be worshipped, honoured and venerated, Yahweh. Monotheism diverts from all the other Graeco-Roman religious expressions that are polytheistic in nature.

The pillar of *election and ethnicity*, Deuteronomy 7:6-8, God chose Israel as His people as the ones to carry out His mission throughout the world. Therefore, Judaism being born Jewish automatically meant being part of Gods plan for the world, setting His chosen apart from the other ethnic groups. Thirdly, only the Jews follow all that is stipulated in the *Torah*, it guided what it means to live a life that is covenantal with God primarily concerned with circumcision, Sabbath and food laws which are strong identity

markers and boundaries (Bennema 2015:30). The *temple* in Jerusalem was a place for God to be in commune and fellowship with His chosen, land geographically placed the kingdom of God. It is without doubt that early Christian identity of Christ-followers developed from a Jewish ethno-religious identity, the book of Acts 2 portrays that the early church commenced as a Jewish messianic renewal movement around 30 C.E. (Bennema 2015:29). The first members of the church were Jews who continued to visit the temple and synagogues performing all the necessary Jewish rites and practices (Acts 2:46; 3:1 etc.). Therefore, the early Christian movement can be considered a sect within Judaism because of its clashes over the four pillars of Judaism with religious leaders in Jerusalem and fellow Jews especially because the first leaders of the movement (Peter, James, Stephen, and Paul) were all Jews.

## B. Christ-followers

Kar Lim (2017) uses social identity theory (SIT) as a plausible heuristic tool to investigate how four major metaphors used by Paul in his letters to the Corinthians could have been essential in the formation of the Christian social identity of the Corinthians congregation. The metaphors are namely: family 'my brothers and sisters', familial 'in Christ Jesus I became your father', temple 'you are Gods temple' and body 'you are the body of Christ'. Importantly, Lim (2017:193) notes that Paul is writing 1 and 2 Corinthians about five years after the church was established, therefore, in this letter is he not so concerned with the primary formation of the Christian social identity, but he is rather concerned with the next state of the group formation where the church has now grown in numbers possibly having various household meetings. Through these four majors, relevant and contextual, metaphors, Paul is painting a picture of the type of social group the Corinthian Christians are supposed to be and maintain it. I will briefly outline three metaphors as means of shedding light on the social identity complexities struggles of the Christ-followers in Corinthians.

## Familial Metaphor

Paul uses the term ἀδελφοί translated as 'brothers and sisters' in his address to the congregants as means of reminding the congregants of their identity as belonging to one family (Lim 2017:132). 1 Cor 1:10 points that Paul wants this family to be in agreement with no divisions, united in mind and judgement. For example, Paul brings in the sibling imagery when addressing the abuse of Lords Supper by the wealthy and elite members to those in the lower strata of society in 1 Cor 11:33. Paul calls on the elite to treat everyone on the table as family, meaning that when celebrating the Lords Supper class, ethnicity, sex and status in society do not have a role, all are equal and important at the foot of the cross. Every time Paul uses the family metaphor in 1 Corinthians, he is promoting group cohesion (Lim 2017:133). It is very likely that the church was an alternative family for the Christ followers especially for the slaves, orphans and those from the lower classes of society. Being a 'brother or sister' could have meant that they have now found a new identity, they are seen and recognised and treated as they would have been treated by biological family if not better. Paul follows the example of Jesus, of bringing the outcasts to the table defying societal values and norms. Paul merges the Jews and non-Jews, rich and the poor in this community, thus creating a movement like no other, a movement that gives everyone a voice instead of taking it.

By addressing the Corinthians as brothers and sisters, Paul was driving home the point that they belonged to one another, and also to Christ. In this new family, all social and economic boundaries that divided the community were obliterated. All the ethnic boundaries that prevented it from growing were broken down. As brothers and sisters, they were to treat one another with respect and honour, protect one another, build up one another, and help the weaker and poorer brothers. The sibling image powerfully evoked the bonds of affection that bound the members of the community together. Any element that appeared to threaten this bond must be dealt with and removed what is fascinating is that does not ex is an automatic group categorization or boundary marker.

(Lim 2017:158).

The notion of 'brothers and sisters' family relationship were indeed a great challenge to the ἐκκλησία, especially honour-shame cultural values. ἀδελφοί language is a clear social identity boundary marker only used by the insider towards another Christ-follower (Lim 2017:163). In 1 Cor 5:11 Paul notes that brothers and sisters are not to associate with those that engage in sexual immorality, greed, worship idols, etc. Therefore, members of the outgroup pose a threat to the ingroup. With this in mind, Lim (2017:163) is of the opinion that the use of ἀδελφὸς and ἄπιστος in 1 Cor 7:12-16 is to develop boundary markers between the insider and outsider. What is interesting is that in this text Paul only refers to the believing husband married to an unbeliever as a 'brother' (1 Cor 7:12) but to the spouse of the unbelieving husband he refers to her as 'wife' and not as a 'sister' (1 Cor 14). I believe to a certain extent Paul himself acknowledges that women were believers but not their husbands were not considered 'full' members of the Christian family hence not called 'sisters'. As much the church was striving for a reformed identity, different from the society, it is without doubt that certain elements infiltrated the church thus creating complex identities in the Corinth congregation.

The sibling was an appropriate metaphor to shape, guide, and rebuke the community towards peace and harmony, honour and respect, and in their relations with outsiders. It ultimately drove home the point that the Corinthians belonged together as one and within this family of Christ, blood was indeed thicker than water.

(Lim 2017:164)

### *Temple Metaphor*

Corinth was a buzzing centre for cultic worship during the time of Paul primarily due to its strategic location. There were various temples and statues of Greek and Roman gods such as those of Apollo, Athena, Demeter and Askelpios. Moreover, the Egyptian cults of Isis and Sarapis were also present. The few temples and cults I have just mentioned are just a drop in the ocean compared to the reality and extent of variety of deities worshipped and venerated in such a small city. For example, according to Lim (2017:358) there were at least 24 shrines of Pausanias in Corinth. 'In Corinth, the

temple of Aphrodite played a very significant role in the civic life and identity of the city' (Lim 2017:368). Temples were powerful symbols of identity and expression, religion and centres of worship were vital and influenced every part of life and the activities of the city, a person arriving in Corinth could not miss it. 'Much of life in Corinth centred on the temples and their associated activities. Apart from being places of worship, temples were also centre for social activities, providing platform for expanding one's social network' (Lim 2017:358). Therefore, it is important to note that the Christ-followers, as members of the society being 'in' the world were not exempted from being involved in activities concerning the temples and shrines in Corinth.

It is evident members of the church community were eating food sacrificed to idols (1 Cor 8:7-11), however, this is something that they were unable to prevent as the meat sold to them was firstly sacrificed in the temples and shrines (1 Con 10:25). What is of concern to Paul is not so much the 'unavoidable' aspect but the fact that the Christ-followers were coming into Christian community with many of the pagan values and norms to be practiced in this space led by Jesus Christ. Their identity as Graeco-Roman was deeply entrenched in them; therefore, it is not surprising that they could carry this into the new space they find themselves in. Paul uses the temple imagery is used three times in 1 Corinthians 3:16,17 and 16:19) and two times in 2 Corinthians 6:16. Paul intentionally uses ναός, translated as temple, instead of ἱερόν, Lim (2017:361) notes that in the Gospels ναός is used to refer to the Holy of Holies whilst ἱερόν is used in reference to the temple in its entirety.

Moreover, the distinction in the use of the two terms is also seen in the Septuagint. However, this distinction is not conclusive, Matthew 27:5 narrates that Judas tossed 30 pieces of silver into the ναός, translating ναός as Holy of Holies in this passage would be incorrect because Judas could not have had access to the Holy of Holies (Lim 2017:). Therefore, we are unable to argue conclusively as to the nature of the event in which Paul uses the term in his letter to the Corinthians. Paul's use the term ναός in his temple metaphors when addressing the Christ-followers informs us that these are Jews of the congregation, as this term could potentially relate to the Jerusalem temple, where the presence of God resides. Therefore, Paul writing to the

Corinthians about their bodies being the temple of the Holy Spirit, is somehow arguing that the temple is now the church and not the temple in Jerusalem. For Beale, the physical temple is to disappear only to be replaced by a literal nonphysical temple, the Church, which is 'fulfilment of the end-time temple prophesied in the Old Testament' (Lim 2017: 364).

The church, being the body, carries the same virtue and importance as the temple in Jerusalem, this 'temple' being the church is more inclusive as non-Jews are welcome into the community. It is highly likely that Paul would refer to the Jerusalem temple to a dominant gentile audience that would not understand the significance of the Jerusalem temple, which means that it is possible that temple-replacement theology was taught by Paul and some of the Jews in the church. The use of οὐκ οἶδατε (Do you not know?) in 1 Cor 3:16 & 19 is evidence that the Corinthians were already made aware that they are God's temple. The pagan temples in Corinth were just as important to the gentiles as much as the temple in Jerusalem was to the Jews, similar activities such as worship and sacrifice were done at all temples, whether Jewish or not. Therefore Paul, creatively, appeals to both his Jewish and Graeco-Roman audience in using the temple metaphor (Lim 2017:366).

Temples as significant expressions had a fundamental role in the formation of identity, especially the Jerusalem temple in the formation of the Christian identity in Corinthians. The metaphors of the church being a temple set the ethos, values, status, and boundaries of the Christ-believers (Lim 2017:367). In the Greco-Roman world temples were central, not only for religious and economic purposes but also for advancing political propaganda of the Empire (Lim 2017: 368). Being involved in the temple cemented relationships between people and united all classes of people. For example, the temple of Aphrodite was pivotal in Corinth to such an extent that her image was on the coins on the Roman Corinthians. Therefore, according to Lim (2017:369) this portrays that the temple, and not palaces, were symbols of unity. Paul using the temple metaphor is reminding the congregants that they are to remain united because they are now the temple of God through Jesus Christ. The moment they act contrary to the values of unity they defile the church and thus destroy the purpose of

the church. 'Temples define the existence of the community, any destruction of an iconic symbol that fosters self-definition, pride, and identity of the community is viewed as a shameful and despicable act of desecration' (Lim 2017:369).

When speaking about the social identity of the Christ-believers with reference to the temple in Jerusalem, holiness and temple purity are central. The understanding of the Jerusalem temple is evident, therefore, holiness as separation from all that is profane is also known and done by the Corinthians. Holiness and purity are social boundaries that distinct the Corinthians from the rest of society and further establish the understanding of self and definition of what it means to being a follower of Christ.

As a temple where not only the God of Israel dwelt but one that comprised both the Jewish and gentile Christ-followers that were united in Jesus the Messiah, it was both sacred and distinct. By employing this imagery, Paul addressed the community of Christ-followers to be distinctive not only in the ethical and moral dimensions compared to other communities but also drew both Jews and gentile into relationship with one another. A positive group identity and moral standards that were compatible with their new status in Christ was now being promoted (Lim 2017:376).

### Body Metaphor

Paul uses the body metaphor (1 Cor 12-14) to address the issues regarding spiritual gifts, especially speaking in tongues. Martin (1975:571) notes that speaking in tongues was understood and being spiritually perfect, those that speak in tongues were spiritually mature. This resulted in the congregation understanding spiritual gifts in a hierarchical manner, they thought that speaking in tongues was the highest form of Christlike behaviour and function (Lim 2017:421). Moreover, for Lim (2017: 420) the value of honour and shame was linked with tongues, therefore it is plausible that those who spoke in tongues were those of a higher social status. One of the most famous metaphors of the body is found in Romans 12:4-5, where Paul speaks of the connectedness of the body and the needs for all parts for the entire body to function

well and be healthy, regardless of the size of the body part. Every person, body part, has an essential role of play in the church and community of believers. The body metaphor has been used in some of his other letters such as Ephesians 1:22-23 and Colossians 2:19.

Καθάπερ γὰρ τὸ σῶμα ἓν ἐστὶν καὶ μέλη πολλὰ ἔχει, πάντα δὲ τὰ μέλη τοῦ σώματος πολλὰ ὄντα ἓν ἐστὶν σῶμα, οὕτως καὶ ὁ Χριστός (1 Cor 12:12).

In 1 Cor 12:12 Paul makes a direct reference to Christ; he explicitly indicates that there is a relationship between the church and Christ (Lim 2017:423). This direct reference is important as it informs us that the church belongs to Christ, the church is to be accountable to Christ and not just each other as Christ believers, Christ as the head of the body is also the head of the church. Christ being the head of the church means that the moral and ethical foundation of the church in Corinthians is Christ. The second part of the metaphor, 1 Cor 12:14-17, stresses that the body is one with many parts, every part of the body is equally important and should be respected and honoured as every part of the body is able to do what meant to do, for example, the legs are not created to see but that is the function of the eyes. All the spiritual gifts that God gave them were important and all are needed in the building and edification of the church as the body of Christ. it is plausible that baptism and the eucharist were fundamental practices that were carried out in the church in promoting the unity and oneness in the Corinthians Christian community.

It is evident from the metaphors that the Christ-followers were constantly struggling with their identity, and it is important to remember that they are not coming from 'nowhere' before voluntarily choosing to following Christ. Some were Jewish or followed some Graeco-Roman religious expressions contrary to their newfound social group. The metaphors Paul applies are based on everyday interaction and acceptable behaviour, for example, in Graeco-Roman societies the relationship between siblings was one of the most important relationships one could have. Paul using the sibling metaphors is telling them to not lose their Graeco-Roman family values but to now

apply and treat those in relationship with Christ as their biological family. The honour and reverence they expressed at various temples should now be evident in the fellowship of believers, the church should unite and break social barriers as the temples did.

The address of issues and concerns by Paul in 1 Corinthians portrays that the Christ-followers were still struggling with their identity even after Paul left Corinth for Ephesus. The believers came with all their various social status(es), values and ways things are in the community and means of trying to find themselves, we unable to dispute that those social identities and religious expressions shaped the identity of the early church. 1 Corinthians is a letter of identity struggle and complexity, where are we in the community? Where do our children fit? Chris de Wet (2020) makes the following comment:

Early Christ followers were more “accommodating” of diverse cult participation and shaped their religious identity more instinctively as a habitus assists us in deconstructing traditional understandings of early Christianity as wholly unique and wholly different.

(de Wet 2020:57)

Children find themselves in such religious and identity complexity, without any doubt that the struggles of parents, Christ-followers, must have become those of the children as well. 1 Cor 7:12-16 is evident of the identity complexity of children in Christian community that is inclusive and accommodative as noted by de Wet (2020:57).

#### **4.4. Conclusion**

In this chapter, I have explained Corinth as a Graeco- Roman city under the influence and control of the Roman Empire. The prosperity, growth of the city and the great influx of people and traditions, due to migration amongst other factors, made Corinth the perfect city for Paul to preach and teach the Word of God. The

Roman Empire imperial order influenced the social, political, and religious complexity of Corinth which had an incredible influence in the birth of the church in Corinth. This chapter has outlined that the followers of Christ came from all walks of life and stratum of society, with strong religious expression beliefs and expressions and identities. It is evident the early followers of Christ simultaneously embodied these various complex identities in their newfound faith in Jesus Christ hence the address by the letters such as 1 Corinthians by Paul. The social, political, and religious identities of the Christ followers, and society at large, were interwoven.

Temples were powerful symbols of identity and expression, religion and centres of worship were vital and influenced every part of life and the activities of the city, a person arriving in Corinth could not miss it. 'Much of life in Corinth centred on the temples and their associated activities. Apart from being places of worship, temples were also at the centre of social activities, providing platform for expanding one's social network' (Lim 2017:358). Therefore, it is important to note that the Christ-followers, as members of the society being 'in' the world were not exempted from being involved in activities concerning the temples and shrines in Corinth.

## Chapter 5

### Holy(ἅγιος): A social identity marker

#### 5.1. Introduction

This chapter is focused on the term holy or holiness all its cognates traditionally understood as separation. I investigate representative verses in which qodhesh( שָׁדֵשׁ) and h́gios (ἅγιος) have been used in the Old Testament and New Testament, respectively, to shed light the motifs and themes of holiness. I discuss the inclusive nature of holiness as can be seen in texts such as Leviticus 19, the so-called Holiness Code, as a means of portraying its diverse use yet its consistency from the Old Testament to the New Testament. Holiness as a social identity marker is not only ascribed but also achieved.

#### 5.2. Old Testament: Qodhesh

Michael Harbin (2018:19) makes the following vital statement regarding the notion of 'holy' and 'holiness':

The theme of holiness is so pervasive in the Bible that it is difficult to provide an exact number of uses, although it is clearly in the hundreds. This massive quantity alone would suggest that holiness is an important topic; that it is set forth as the standard of living for God's people (Lev 19:2) sets it off as an imperative.

(Harbin 2018:19)

The Hebrew term שָׁדֵשׁ, qodhesh, and all its different cognates mean, but not limited to, 'apartness, holiness, and sacredness' (Zodhiates 1994:2360). However, Silva (2011:1299) holds that the etymology of the word is highly disputed. The word is multifaceted in meanings as it primarily meant 'to cut', Harbin (2018:19) is of the opinion that language develops from some concrete aspects to abstract meanings, likewise this term also developed from a physical sense 'to cut' to the abstract

concept of holiness 'set apart'. According to Henry (2013:401) the etymology of the word is irrelevant in the quest of investigating its dynamic meaning. In the Old Testament *qodhesh* is made use of in different ways, all relating to God. Therefore, holiness is not a human quality, without God there is no holiness. Christian & Soal (2022:2) add that holiness only comes from being associated with God, thus being set aside for God's special use. Primarily, in the Old Testament, holy and all its cognates is used as a descriptive term to describe God, the relationship God has with believers', objects, and places (Stay, van Wyk & Dreyer 2019:1).

In the Hebrew Bible, the essence of holiness is separation. According to Hyam Maccoby (1996:153) the separation spoken about in the book of Leviticus and Holiness Code must be differentiated from separations such as aristocracy, racism, pariah-status etc. Exodus 19:5-6 informs us that Israel was separated and elected by God to undertake the special priestly role, but no means does this election suggest that was only God of Israel and not the entire human race. Leviticus 11:45 is usually misunderstood to mean that God discarded all other nations when electing Israel, Maccoby (1996:154) writes that Leviticus 20:24-25 stresses that Israel is separated not just for themselves, they were just the first nation elected for this priestly purpose, through their holiness and relationship with God all other nations are to follow suit. 'The Israelites became a holy people not because they are any better than other people in the world', secondly, they have also done nothing from their own strength to be deemed holy it was God's special assignment for them (Maccoby 1996:157).

Jacob Milgrom (1991:726) strongly argues that separation from other nations, animals and food is not what brought holiness, separation is only the initial step to holiness. What brings holiness is the results that comes from being separated, living an ethical and morally pure life. Therefore, holiness enables one to imitate God because holiness is an extension of Gods divine nature. Christian and Soal (2022:1) express that the various uses of *qōdhesh* in the Hebrew Bible is primarily used to describe the places, deeds, items, people, times of worship (to name a few) that are in relationship with God. What is not of God, within the Jewish context, cannot be

deemed as holy thus holiness is an identity marker that unites all nations, groups and items and deeds that are of God coming into a sacred space.

In the Old Testament, holiness is used in reference to describe what is associated and in relationship with God, according to Christian and Soal (2022) some of those are:

Furthermore, according to Brown et al. (eds. 1907:871–872), *qōdhash* is used in several ways: God’s holy deeds (Ex 15:11); his holy word (Ps 105:42); his holy name (Am 2:7); holy places where God’s presence dwells (Dt 26:15; Jos 5:15; Ex 40:9); holy things at sacred places which have been set apart to God (Ex 30:10; Nm 18:17; Ex 30:25); holy people at sacred places (Lv 21:6; Jr 2:3); holy times of worship (Ex 16:23); and holy people and things, because of their ritual purity (1 Chr 23:13; 1 Sm 21:6). These uses of *qōdhash* indicate that the holiness of anything and anyone is a derived holiness from being in a relationship with God. Implicit in this principle of holiness by association with God is an obligation to demonstrate outward holiness and distinctiveness.

Christian and Soal (2022:2)

### 5.2.1. Holy Places and objects

The root word *שָׁדָק* (*holy*), in its adjectival or noun form, is firstly introduced in Exodus 3:1-6 as a descriptive term to describe the ground in which Moses is called forth by God to stand on without his sandals on. The occurrence of the root word, holy, suggests the divine presence of God which leads to separation which is boundary marker this distinguishes spaces where God is present to those in which God is not present (Davies 2006:441). From the passage there is potential danger that comes from holiness of God because of the commandment gave Moses to remove his sandals and to not come further from where he was standing, Moses responded by covering his face because he feared looking at God (verse 5-6). The usual exegesis of Exodus 3:1-6 such as that by Davies (2006:441) that the holiness of the mountain stopped Moses and others from coming near the mountain of God making the mountain a “taboo” and or “forbidden” is disputed by Gentry (2013:402).

He argues that God only prohibits Moses from coming near the bush, precisely the ground in which God speaks. The entire mountain is holy ground and not just where Moses is called to stand (Gentry 2013:402). The 'mountain of God' (verse 1) and 'holy ground' (verse 5) is the same space; this means that Moses is already standing on holy ground from the onset thus disputing the argument that the mountain of God is a "taboo space" (Gentry 2013:403). The fear that Moses experiences (verse 6) does not come from being on the mountain of God, but rather is prompted by the vision and voice of God. Therefore, for Gentry (2013:403) the "holy ground" in this narrative is an alternative expression for "mountain of God". The presence and voice of God ministering on the mountain makes it holy, therefore it is not about the mountain or place but about the presence of God. He expresses that the meaning of שָׂדֵה land, ground or space in Exodus 3 does not refer to an unreachable secluded place at distance or exclusive 'set part' space but rather refers to a 'place of meeting and of presence, the meeting of God and man' (Gentry 2013:403). It is more about the atmosphere, where Yahweh is present, than about the space.

Before Moses meets God, he is commanded to perform a common ritual of removing his sandals (verse 5), according to Alonzo Gaskill (138) the removing of garments in the Near Eastern was a way in which one portrayed preparedness to lose one's status and everything in life, he further proposes that shoes, specifically, symbolized possession (assets) thus removing your shoes meant divestment or de-possession. David Adamo (2017:3) further adds that the shoes are unclean and therefore nothing unclean can enter the presence of God, shoes are worn to protect one from dust and being injured but in the holy presence of God Moses is free from dust and possible injury. Moses removing his sandals was stripping himself of 'himself' by honouring that the land he is about to step on does not belong to him but God, therefore by doing so Gentry (2013:404) writes that Moses was entering into an attitude of consecration, respect, and reverence. In Joshua 5:15, Joshua is also commanded by the God to also remove his sandals just like Moses his predecessor. The place or space where the presence of God moves is deemed holy, separated from all that is profane.

After the Israelites left Egypt and crossed the Red Sea now in the wilderness, God commanded them to build the tabernacle (Exodus 25-27,35-40). A tabernacle meaning place or tent of meeting is a movable place of worshipping God which Israel is to move journey with on their journey to the promised land. The tabernacle is central and significant as the dwelling place of the presence of God, therefore, its construction was with precision and immaculate detail as God commanded Moses (Exodus 25:1-6). Johnstone William (2014:435) observes that following precise instruction in the construction is what enables Israel to become a 'holy people' of God. The furnishing of the tabernacle such as the ark of the covenant, table of showbread and golden lampstands situated in the most holy place speak about the extent that Israel is to experience the holiness of God. In the tabernacle purification, dedication, ordination, such as that of Aron and his sons (Exodus 30:22-33), anointing and consecration rites were conducted to present Israel as worthy to worship and minister as priests of Yahweh (William 2014:441). God shares his nature of holiness in the tabernacle by being in fellowship with the priests and Levites.

#### 5.2.2. Leviticus 19: Holiness as loving thy neighbour and resident alien

Leviticus 19 as part of the Holiness Code (Lev. 17-26) can be read and interpreted within a postexilic context, sometime before the building of the Second Temple. By so doing according to Hendrik Bosman (2018:571) Leviticus 19:18,33-34, love your neighbour and resident alien/foreigner, can be discussed within their possible literary and historical context. Therefore, arguing that the love thy neighbour commandment in these texts is driven by holiness. Holiness for (Bosman 2018:571) is thus not only ascribed through a divine decree but holiness also achieved by being obedient to God's commandments such as *loving your neighbour* as yourself. Holiness as loving all nations and persons plays a fundamental role in postexilic identity formation. There is a close connection between the Ten Commandments, Ex 20:1-21 and Leviticus 19 (although consisting of various instructions) as both narrate ethical instructions for daily life for the Israelites.

Bosman (2018:575) also observes that it appears as though Leviticus 19 is an expanded version of the Ten Commandments, although there has not been any scholarly agreement to fully support this observation. On the other hand, Rogerson (2014:43) details that it is evident that Leviticus 19 is a composition of collections of commandments and that 'it is also an attempt to redefine holiness'. Importantly, as a Holiness Code text, Leviticus 1-16 focuses on ritual impurity and then changes focus to ethical uncleanness in the following chapters 17-27, Milgrom (2000:212) writing substantively on this chapter is of the opinion that Leviticus 19 stands in the centre of the change in focus, moreover, Leviticus 19 is at the helm of the Pentateuch as whole and not just the book of Leviticus. "Chapter 19 is focused on what "holy practices" Israel should be doing, chapters 18 and 20 are concerned with what they should avoid" (Bosman 2018:573). There is no holiness without social justice as Leviticus 19 is called to treat others well without fraud (v13) or putting their lives in danger (v16) but with humility.

*You shall not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against the sons of your people, but you shall love your neighbour as yourself, I am the Lord (Lev 19:18).*

It is without doubt that this passage, Lev 19:18, is one of the most quoted and persuasive bible verses, this verse according to Bosman (2018:576) is foundation for all biblical law be in the Hebrew Bible, New Testament and Rabbinic literature. Therefore, essential in the interpretation of the Pentateuch and other related laws, especially in relation to ethics. In the Hebrew Bible, the term *'ahāb*, to love, usually refers to the intimate covenant relationship that God has with Israel, it is necessary to understand love in terms of a covenant relationship notes Bosman (2018:578). He derives this argument from that fact that *'ahāb*, to love, is not followed by a direct object but rather an indirect object shown by the preposition *l'* which means "you shall express love to". The subsequent phrase "as yourself" expresses the *Imago Dei* that Israel carries and that should be evident in their relationships with the neighbour. Bosman (2018: 578) warns that 'it is dangerous to misunderstand "love" in this context primarily as romantic or even charitable, because "love" in the Ancient Near

East was “wholly community-related and for that reason also a ‘political’ term” that resonated with loyalty and care.

Richard Friedman (2017:199), who I agree with, points out that the assumption and claim that *rēa* “neighbour” in this passage refers to insiders (fellow Jews or Israelites) is incorrect. He proposes that the use of the term neighbour in the Hebrew Bible is first used in Genesis 11 in the tower of Babel narrative, in this narrative it refers to the various nations and languages, thus being inclusive. Secondly, we find that in Genesis 38 Judah, an Adullamite, refers to Hirah, a Cannanite, as a neighbour. Therefore, according to Friedman (2017:212) when such texts are read in exclusive terms, referring only to ingroup ethnic members as a neighbour, the text is misread out of context losing the meaning.

*When a stranger resides with you in your land, you shall not do him wrong<sup>33</sup>. The stranger who resides with you shall be to you as the native among you, and you shall love him as yourself, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt; I am the Lord your God<sup>34</sup> (Lev 19:33- 34).*

The above quoted passage, Leviticus 19:33-34, is a continuation of the ‘love thy neighbour commandment’ from Leviticus 19:18 in this case particularly including the alien residents or stranger. According to Bosman (2018:579) it could be that the commandment to not mistreat the alien, verse 33, specifically refers to ‘economic exploitation’ reason being strangers could not own land and were thus economically excluded. The aliens are to be treated well by Israelites because they were once also aliens in Egypt (verse 34), they are to better the lives of the resident aliens and not make the aliens experience what they experienced in Egypt. When Israelites see and interact with aliens, they are to see *themselves* thus prohibiting them, Israel, from being oppressors as they were oppressed.

Bosman (2018:580) hold that the term *gēr* is usually translated as “resident alien” or “sojourner”, referring to a foreigner who lives inside Israel or later Jerusalem.

Therefore, when interpreting the passage within the postexilic context, it is highly likely that verse 34 is not as inclusive as one might think. The argument is that 'love commandment' verse 34 does not include all foreign nations but only limited to those in Israel, hence the translation of 'resident alien' (Bosman 2018:580). Furthermore, the reason that the text might only refer to aliens in Israel is because there is a 'shared connection and mutual responsibility of human being living in the community of faith'. During the postexilic period Israel consisted of a mixed society with various ethnic groups, and Israel was thus inclusive. Bosman (2018:580) argues that this influenced the identity and approach of Israel towards resident aliens.

'The instruction to take care of the resident alien or stranger does not endanger the holiness of Israel, since it becomes a prerequisite for its holiness' (Bosman 2018:581). This means that holiness in Leviticus 19 does not only come from cultic practices such as sacrifices to the temple, however, holiness comes from obeying the love commandment of caring for the resident alien. Importantly, considering the Holiness Code, Esias Meyer (2015:489) is of the opinion that aliens and Israelites are called into holiness for the purpose of coexisting and not necessarily being 'one happy family' in relationship, the aliens were not vulnerable objects for charity, but were involved in the economics and social everyday interactions who had to follow all the instructions that were present in the Jewish community they were a part of.

Bosman (2018:583) proposes that holiness is redefined in Leviticus 19, the Holiness Code, in chapter 1-16 holiness is reached by performing certain cultic practices and rituals officiated by the priests and Levites. From chapter 17 and following chapters holiness is obtained through obedience to all the commands and the decrees of the Lord. Positive social behaviour and interactions such as love for the neighbour and resident alien are what make one holy, holiness is thus a lifestyle. The destruction of the temple in Jerusalem in 586 B.C.E. and Judeans being deported into exile had an incredible impact on the understanding of holiness, they were unable to sacrifice and cultic purity practices in the "Holy Land". Paavo Tucker (2017:585) argues that the identity of YHWH and his relationship with Israel, now determines holiness. 'Holiness

is not possible not only through separation but by a new form of inclusion-by imitation God new inclusive social relations became possible' (Bosman 2019:585).

The Holiness Code and Leviticus 19 commanding Israel to love (care and be loyal) the neighbour and the resident alien creates certain boundary markers, identity and existing social groups are challenged. These love commandments reveal to us the depth and extensiveness of holiness, in the context of social identity, holiness in Leviticus 19 can be considered as an identity marker, the care and loyalty is only for resident aliens residing only in Israel or Jerusalem. Therefore, without the call of holiness there would no relationship between the Israelites and resident aliens. Holiness makes them one ingroup only in terms of co-existing. For example, whenever another group out of Israel threatens the resident alien, Israel should act at the best interest of the resident alien. Holiness, as complex as it might be, calls for unity in the faith community irrespective of differences. Holiness as identity marker includes and does not necessarily 'separate' or 'cut off' the resident neighbour.

Loving the neighbour and the stranger involves special kinds of creative acts that open up new and transformative spaces and relations in all regions of social life, usually divided by race, economic class, gender orientation and religion. Holiness is thus achieved not through exclusion or separation but by an inclusive attitude, thereby including those who are different from you.

(Bosman 2018:587)

Leviticus 19, an essential part of the Holiness Code, stresses that loving the neighbour and resident alien is one of the acts of obedience through which holiness can be achieved by Israel. Striving and living in peace and unity with the resident alien and neighbour is what produces a holy nation. In this case, holiness is not about being 'separate' from the neighbour and resident alien who might subscribe to a different culture, religion, and tradition than Israel, but it is linked to the African concept of *ubuntu*, respecting and treating the next as you do to yourself. Unlike in the exilic period where holiness was granted by divine decree by cultic officials, in the post-exilic period, holiness is available to all of

Israel by being obedient to God commandment such as those in Leviticus 19. Can it be that Paul, writing 1 Corinthians 7:12-16, understood holiness in inclusive terms as argued by Bosman (2018). How much of influence and teachings of Leviticus 19 and the Holiness Code was Paul exposed to?

### 5.3. New Testament: Hágios

There are three words in the Greek language that mean 'holy' the words are: ἱερός, ὅσιος and ἅγιος, these three adjectives are used by writes of the New Testament (Brown 1976:223). The first adjective, ἱερός, means 'holy, taboo, the divine power or what was consecrated to it, for example, sanctuary, sacrifice, priest' (Brown 1976:223). In the quest of searching for the meaning of ἱερός in New Testament, only three references are applicable. Firstly, according to Titus 2:3 the term describes a holy person, or something deserves veneration (Yahweh), secondly, in 2 Timothy 3:15 holiness describes sacred writings such as the Torah. Lastly, in 1 Corinthians 9:13, τὰ ἱερά, and Romans 15:16, ἱεραροῦντα, the reference relates to performing actions that are sacred such as going and playing a role when sacrificing at the temple (van der Merwe 2017a:1). Holiness in these passages follows are more traditional understanding of holiness in line with the Old Testament.

The second adjective, ὅσιος, is used eight times in the New Testament (van der Merwe 2017a:1), these adjective proposes that holiness has an element of humanity responsibility in achieving morality. According to Zodiates (2000:3741) ὅσιος means holy 'righteous, unpolluted with wickedness, right as conformed to God and his laws'. Covenant relationship with God is essential to holiness, one must behave righteously as that deems one as loyal, it is important to emphasise that there is no holiness out of the boundaries of salvation (van der Merwe 2017a:2). The Hebrew word שָׁדֵךְ is translated as ἅγιος (*hágios*), which is the mostly used term from the three terms discussed, in the Septuagint and subsequently the New Testament, *hágios* is also defined as 'set part, sanctified, consecrated and saint' (Zodhates 1992:70).

Therefore, Ἅγιος in the New Testament is the equivalent of qōdshesh, and although it is sometimes used in a cultic sense (Mt 4:5; Ac 6:13; 2 Pt 1:18), it is mostly employed to describe those who are in a saving relationship with God (cf. 1 Co 1:2) (Christian and Soal 2022:3). Holiness in the New Testament just like in the Old Testament, Leviticus 19, requires of Christians to live obedient and ethical lives in Christ. Passages such as Ephesians 1:4 and Colossian 3:12 point out that salvation is paramount to holiness, without salvation there is no holiness and separation, or distinctiveness as preferred by Christian and Soal (2022:4). In summary, ἱερός indicates what has been consecrated and ὁσιος refers to purity and/or incorruptibility, ἄγιος denotes devotion to service' (van der Merwe 2017a:2).

Moreover, Christian and Soal (2022:4) observe that in the Old Testament the focus is on ritual or ceremonial purity, and it moves to moral or ethical purity in the New Testament. They note that the main reason for this shift is because people functioned under the law in the Old Testament to functioning under grace in the New Testament. Therefore, grace expands the implications and expectations of holiness, holiness is thus a response to Yahweh's nature and grace. Fundamentally when ἄγιος is predominately used in the New Testament is usually relates to the trinity (Father, Son and Spirit), van der Merwe (2017a:2) holds that the spiritual growth in holiness happens only when the Holy Spirit is at work in the life of the believe.

In the New Testament, the cult is no longer the sphere of holiness – the sphere of holiness is the prophetic expression of the Gospel. The sacred is no longer connected to things, places, or rites, as in the Old Testament. It is now connected 'to the manifestation of life produced by the [*Holy*] Spirit.

(van der Merwe 2017a:2)

A 16<sup>th</sup> century writer by the name of Teresa of Avila developed an inclusive understanding of holiness as *friendship with Christ*. She challenged notions of 'ranks in holiness', that placed the ordained and religious on a higher holiness pedestal (Soughers 2016:1). For example, in the Old Testament where the High Priest and other priests would be superior. Teresa Avila argued that holiness is for everyone

men, women and ordinary lay, the undeserved favour (grace) of God gave Christ for all to have friendship with him. The degrees to holiness and friendship are open to anyone willing to repent and walk in obedience (Soughers 2016:4). Paul confessing and depending on the name of Christ lived life evident of friendship with Christ and subsequently holiness.

### 5.3.1. Gospels: Objectives of holiness

From the three adjectives of 'holy' presented in the New Testament, the Gospel according to John uses ἅγιος (John 1:33; 6:69; 14:26; 17:11; 20:22) and the verb ἁγιάζω (10:36; 17:17). van der Merwe (2017a:2) notes that use of this specific adjective and verb cements the theological environment in which holiness is to be interpreted in. Therefore, in the Gospel according to John, serving God by believing and imitating His Son Jesus Christ yields holiness. Importantly, van der Merwe (2017a:2) observes that in this gospel all the holiness adjectives describe the Father, Son and Spirit and the verbs are linked to the mission of Jesus which is bringing salvation to all through proclaiming the good news.

As explained that the adjective (ἅγιος) in Gospel of John refers to God, we find one such reference in Highly Priestly prayer, John 17:11, describing God as the 'Holy Father'. This description of God fitting in the Gospel of John reason being that it is also evident in early Jewish milieu (Keener 2003:1057). In the Old Testament and Jewish prayers God is addressed as the 'Holy One' such as in (II Macc xiv 36) and Isaiah 43:15, therefore the use of this adjective in the gospel informs us that God is the foundation and measure of holiness. The 'Holy Father' makes it possible for Jesus and the disciples to be consecrated and sanctified so that they become like Him (van der Merwe 2017a:2). In the prayer Jesus pleads to God to 'protect' his disciples in the 'name of God' (John 17:11), within the literary context of this passage it is the holiness of the 'Holy Father' that will protect the disciples in the world from all that might hinder the disciples from fulfilling the mission (van der Merwe 2017a:3).

According to van der Merwe (2017a:7) in the Gospel according to John there are four objectives of holiness 17:20-23. The first objective of holiness he presents is unity that must reign in the lives of the followers of Jesus '*that they may all be one*' (17:20). Unity had to be shared reality of the believers, just as the trinity is united and one so should the believers, van der Merwe (2017a:7) states that unity should be cemented by John 15:9-17, unity in holiness is achieved by abiding in Jesus and loving one another (obedience and). Loving God, Jesus and one another is the initial step towards holiness, love, and obedience to the commandments of Jesus are essential to unity, without these two characteristics followers will not be able to continue the mission of Jesus (van der Merwe 2017a:7). Theme these of holiness as unity is recurring in the Gospel of John as we have seen in the Leviticus 19 as presented by Bosman (2018), unity is thus a vital theme as marker of holiness in both the Old and New Testament.

The second objective, linked to unity, is the result of the first objective, for the believers to be united in Jesus and one another, they must be made holy themselves '*You, Father, are in Me and I in You, that they also may be in us*' (17:21). Therefore, holiness is there to make the disciples holy to resemble the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Once believers are holy, they are then able to be in unity with the trinity before being in unity with each other. The believers being elevated to the unity with God before others, without being connected to the true vine, John 15, they will not be able to able to do anything which is being holy and united.

The third objective for holiness is '*so that the world may believe that you have sent Me (Jesus)*' (17:21). When the believers live in unity, objective one and two, this objective becomes a reality as the character of the Christian believers will make the world see that believers are 'different' and sent by God. This objective for holiness proves the hypothesis of van der Merwe (2017a:8) that the purpose of Jesus has become that of the disciples as well because holiness is linked to the mission of Jesus and that of the disciples. Just as the father has sent Jesus, so Jesus is sending the disciples to advance the salvation mission. John 1:9 describes Jesus as

the light that has come to the world to enlighten everyone, this means that the mission of Jesus on earth is bring salvation and revelation about the glory of God.

The fourth objective of holiness is glorification of the divine (God), according to van der Merwe (2017a:8) in John 17:4 Jesus sends back a report to God about the mission that God has given him, Jesus states that he has glorified God by completing the mission he was sent to do. Likewise, the disciples will also see the glory of God by doing what they have been sent to do by Jesus (17:24). Paul in 1 Corinthians 6:19 writing to the believers that they bodies are the 'temple' of the Holy Spirit supports this objective, believers are to glory God through their bodies. Regardless of the way the body metaphor might be applied, whether referring to the physical body of an individual or the community as a collective body believer living unity, the body should glorify God because 'bodies are considered to be part of Christ' (Punt 2005:380). In summary, John regards holiness in the following three ways:

1. As a matter of identity—to be identified and united with a specific God.
2. As a matter of character— to imitate the life of a specific person, the Son of this God.
3. As an empirical matter of revelation, salvation, and glorification—in which the holiness of Christian believers has a revelatory-salvific effect, through the critical involvement of the Holy Spirit.

van der Merwe (2017a:8)

### 5.3.2. Holiness: *Imitatio Christi*

#### 5.3.3. Holiness as community

John, an elder statesman of the early church, most probably writing to the Christian community at large pens down in 1 John 2:15-17 the following words about loving the Father and the world:

*<sup>15</sup>Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. <sup>16</sup>For all that is in the world – the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride in possessions – is not from the Father but is from the world. <sup>17</sup>And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever (1 John 2:15-17).*

1 John 2:15-17 is one of the passages that portrays the shift of focus to moral holiness in the New Testament from ritual. In this passage John, arguable son of Zebedee, pleads to the church to live a life that is evident of full salvation. For John this translates to not 'loving the world and its things' as this hinders full salvation and holiness of the church. When the church loves the world it is unable to love God, Christian and Soal (2022:4) argue that the love of the world and God are mutually exclusive, where holiness and distinctiveness is present 'worldliness' does not have a place. They further note that to be holy and distinct an attitude of obedience is necessary at all costs. Hence the commandment in 1 John 2:15, it is very easy to misinterpret this text when read from *face value* as van Eck would say. For the church to move towards moral holiness, the church is commanded to be separate, for John, holiness is separation between God and worldliness.

Mounce and Mounce (2008:1000) point out that the word for love used in verse 15 is *agapaō* and not *agapē* this is significant as *agapaō* means to delight or set store upon as noted in John 3:19 and Hebrews 1:19, and *agapē* speaks of the unconditional and devoted love that is usually used in direct reference to God. Therefore, John is not saying that the church should hate, which is antonym of love, the world but should not rather find delight in the world. Secondly, to understand verse 15, the meaning of term 'world' must be understood in context if we misinterpret the term, we deprive the passage from speaking to us and we end up speaking into the text. Christian and Soal (2022:4) note that the Greek term for world, *kosmos*, is used interchangeably in the following ways:

- With reference to the universe, heavens, and or earth (e.g., Matthew 13:35; Acts 17:24).

- In John 3:16, the word *kosmos* is to refer to humanity/mankind, 'for God so loved humanity...' Jesus died for the sins of mankind and not necessarily the plants and trees.
- According to 1 John 5:19 the *kosmos* 'lies in the power of the evil one' which is directly opposite to Yahweh.
- It is used as an idiomatic expression to describe the tongue in James 3:6.
- *Kosmos* has ethical meaning to describe moral corruption (Ephesians 2:2; James 4:4)

Therefore, according to Christian and Soal (2022:4), 1 John 2:15-17 *kosmos* 'world' is used in an ethical sense to address moral corruption. Marshall (1978:142) is also of the opinion that in the epistles of John the term world 'signifies more usually mankind rebellion against God'. 1 John 2:16-17 is the first of two reasons of why the church is not to love the world, the first reason is because the world is not from God (verse 16) and secondly because the world will pass away (verse 17). John by saying that 'all that is in the world is not of the Father' (verse 16) is not talking about or referring to God's creation (stars, moon, mountains, sun, water etc.) as this would be contradictory to Genesis 1 thus becoming untheological. Moreover, it not even referring to money or materialistic but 'John's concern is the believers love for the ways of the world, because it typifies a rebellious attitude towards God' (Christian and Soal 2022:4). Rebellion brews unholiness and thus lacking distinctives becoming like 'the rest'.

Holiness and distinctiveness require a radical separation from worldliness in the form of sinful desires, attitudes and behaviours. In other words, Christians must separate themselves from unholy desires (e.g., gluttony), unholy things (e.g., sexually immoral movies, magazines, social media) and unholy attitudes and behaviours such as pride and arrogance which often lead to being 'lovers of self' (2 Timothy 3:1–9).

(Christian and Soal 2022:5)

Holiness as a lifestyle, being distinct from moral corruption, for everyone in friendship with Christ is evident in verse 16, '*the desires of the flesh, eyes and pride in possessions*' must not be evident to the holy. Christian and Soal (2022:5) note that these desires repel one from God as these desires draw one to moral corruption. Secondly, Christians are not to love the world because it will pass away with all its unethical desires (2:17). Those that love God also love holiness and will keep, fulfil, and observe all the decrees and commandments of the Lord. From 1 John 2:15-17 holiness should infiltrate every aspect of the life of the Christian, change in behaviour will also change the way the believers interact with other individuals and groups. Interestingly, as noted love in this context means 'to delight in' therefore these does not mean that believers of Christ must not behave as if they are not 'in the world'. This text does not suggest that holiness of Christians comes from not interacting with other people, regardless of faith practices.

Holiness does not prevent those that have separated, those that know what is right and wrong, from being in community with other people, holiness therefore, refers to complete integrity 'in the world'. Holiness gives the believer a character like that of Jesus, who lived in community with everyone to gain them from God. Jesus went into the homes of the tax collectors, interacted with the Samaritan women, healed many people where he passed yet that never changed his holiness and character 'in the world'.

#### **5.4. Conclusion**

The argument above suggests that holiness is God's primary attribute, who is the God of both the Jews and non-Jews or gentiles. This chapter has highlighted that holiness is an attribute, state of being and a process, it is not just one or the other. Holiness is a process, something that happens, an event rather than an entity, a call rather than a cause, a promise rather than a presence' (Urbaniak 2016:1) Holiness does not change from the Old Testament to the New Testament because God does not change, there is a however a shift of focus from ritual or ceremonial purity to moral or ethical purity because of God's grace to mankind. It is not surprising that the New Testament writes were greatly influenced by Jewish religions and culture and

laws because the early followers of Christ were Jews themselves. This strong Jewish influence can be seen in the writings of Paul.

The commandment in Leviticus 19 to 'love thy neighbour and resident alien as you love yourself' is important as it tells us about the inclusivity of holiness, 'The instruction to take care of the resident alien or stranger does not endanger the holiness of Israel, since it becomes a prerequisite for its holiness' (Bosman 2018:581). Therefore, it is plausible that Paul in 1 Corinthians 7:12-16 is arguing for holiness in terms of inclusivity for marginalized children from mixed marriages. The believers are unable to obtain holiness if they themselves are unable to care for their 'own'. Therefore, it is not about the unbeliever but more about the believers prerequisite to holiness.

## Chapter 6

### Exegesis of 1 Corinthians 7:12-16

#### 6.1. Introduction

This chapter applies the social identity complexity theory developed in chapter three to reconstruct Paul's rhetoric in 1 Corinthians 7:12-16. The merger model is applied due to its applicability and relevance to this study. I discuss how Paul in 1 Corinthians 7:14 is using 'holiness', social identity marker, as a rhetorical device to advocate for unity within the complex social categories in Corinth without moral status. In this chapter, I argue that children were holy through marriage and play a fundamental role in the Christians household and Jesus movement at large.

#### 6.2. Children in community

Navigating the lives of children in the household churches of Paul (e.g., Corinth and Galatians) can be difficult because Paul does not directly say much about children in his letters, especially 1 Corinthians. However, this does not mean that children were not present, the lives of children speak to us in many ways (Martens 2019: 94). Sherry Fox (2005:62) conducted research in which she excavated and analysed human skeletons as part of her comparative study of health in the ancient cities. She compared the archaeological evidence, mainly human skeletons, of Paphos and Corinth during the Hellenistic and Roman periods. Martens (2019:94) hold that the study by Fox (2005) is important because it informs us about the realities of the lives and death of children during these two periods. From the analysis of the human remains and other archaeological pieces of evidence Fox (2005:76) concluded that Corinth (30.9%) had a greater number of children who were 12 years and younger compared to Paphos (20.4%).

This means that infant mortality in Corinth was higher than in Paphos; therefore, more children made it into adulthood in Paphos. The figures may be higher as it is possible that the deaths of some children might have not been recorded. Secondly, the mortality rate for adults was higher in Paphos, compared to Corinth for both

males and females this means that the living conditions in Corinth were harsh for children and much more conducive for adults. Seemingly, children in antiquity were vulnerable. What is of interest is that through such research we can see the presence of children in the community, especially Corinth. According to Martens (2019:94) we are in no position to use the research by Fox (2015) conclusively, but this research gives us a perspective and window into the world of children.

The gospel according to Mark, written to a Jewish audience, consists of some stories in which children are the main characters, like that of Jairus's daughter (5:21-43), Herodias's daughter (6:14-29) and the narrative in which children are brought before Jesus to lay his hands on them (10:13-16). According to Sharon Betsworth (2019: 77) children in Mark's Gospel are not *less than* their parents or adults, this means that children received the same or similar treatment compared to that of adults. Jesus interacts with children in the same way he did with adults, he blessed children, healed those that were sick and exorcised children with demon possession. 'Overall, the Gospel of Mark puts forth a positive portrayal of children and Jesus' interactions with them' (Betsworth 2019:77). Although Paul does not directly say much about children, it is unlikely that Paul would divert from the teachings and interactions of Jesus with children.

The worship of Roman and Greek gods in public and private spaces, such as in the household, is something that screams aloud in the Roman Empire. There were some Greek and Roman gods and goddesses such as Demeter that were in public spaces that were compulsory for everyone to pay homage and honour to. In the Roman context, I believe children were involved and taught how to perform certain religious ceremonies and rites from an early age. Jesus' interaction with children is evidence that children were in public spaces and thus were considered to be active members of the community, especially in relationship building and formation of social identity. The presence and participation of children was seen in the household which marked with the rites of passage, especially when the children were getting older. For example, Betsworth (2019:79) states that during these household ceremonies boys and girls were part of the choir and would also help the priests during ceremonies.

In household codes such as Ephesians 5:21 and Titus 2:1-10 it is apparent that children were not just present but were important and valued, especially in the Christian household. The way children were treated cannot be distinguished from the way in which slaves were treated, for slave parents and children played a significant role in the growth of the early Christianity without carrying honour or any other favourable social status argues MacDonald (2014:3). It is apparent that the Christian church was a social group that gave children and slaves identity and a place of belonging which recognised their value as Jesus did.

Moving children to the centre of the interpretation of household ethics in the New Testament brings one to the heart of church communities; these groups combined elements of household and school existence. Ultimately, a focus on children leads to greater understanding of how early Christians combined their faith commitment with family life; they challenged but also adopted many features of the society in which they lived.

(MacDonald 2014:3)

Therefore, in Corinthians 7:14 the reference to holy children is a way of acknowledging and recognising the part that children played in the advancing of Jesus Movement (Martens 2019:109). Children having an identity marker meant that they belonged and formed a part of the 'whole' without the children the unity would have not fully come to pass, these children mentioned (male or female) are agents of change. This is of no surprise looking at how Paul saw everyone regardless of status. The presence of children in these mixed marriages are unifying as the children represent both of husband and wife regardless of other social categories.

### **6.3. Paul: Identity and holiness**

Paul as an apostle of Jesus Christ is one of the many disciples of Jesus that John 17 speaks about as argued by van der Merwe (2017a). Paul is given the responsibility to continue to the mission of salvation and consequently holiness. How did Paul think

of himself is a question that fascinates many, if not all, Pauline scholars such as James Dunn (1999), John Pilch (2005) and Luca Marulli (2011). For me the question regarding Paul's identity is prompted by the various social and religious complex identities he encountered during his journey. For Dunn (199:174) this question is important in the discussion of the early Christ movement and early Judaism as it sheds light on Paul's position within society. Paul, born as Saul, was first and foremost a Jew from the diaspora. From the guidance and teachings of Gamaliel he became a zealous Pharisee who unleashed his fury on all those diverted from the Jewish faith such as those belonging to the Way (Acts 9:2). Acts 9 gives an account of his conversion, on his way to Damascus he was struck by a light from heaven which converted his faith to becoming a firm believer in Christ as the Messiah. Dunn (1999:175) observes that 'the transformation of Saul the Pharisee to Paul the apostle inevitably involved some transformation in self-identity'.

It is therefore without any doubt that his background and history influenced his being as an apostle to the gentiles. What is crucial is that Paul never abandoned his homeland and traditions of Israel; he continued to affirm who he was even after his conversion. According to Marulli (2011:85) he can be described as a 'godly Jew living out true Judaism'. Lietaert Peerbolte (2012:1) outlines that it is fascinating that Paul in starting the Christ centred religious movement involved a combination of continuity and discontinuity of Hellenistic Judaism and other pagan ideas. This continuity is seen in the fact that Paul's ethics do not differ extremely from what is present in his context. For example, his thoughts and ideas were consistent with household instructions. Paul places emphasis and does not deviate from values such as '*autarkeia*, *enkrateia*, and *eusebeia*' which are important to his context, but rather offer a 'fresh' Christlike perspective on these values (Lietaert Peerbolte 2012:1). As seen in the previous chapter on the identity complexities of the Corinthians, Paul's use of metaphors such as 'your bodies are the temple of Living God' further reflects the consistency of Paul's emphasis on religious values.

Paul's Jewish-Christian identity is crucial in trying to understand his notion and view of holiness; his ethics and moral framework is shaped by the Torah and other Jewish

literature therefore shaping his theology. Paul's history and identity was important as a follower and believer in Jesus, according to (Marulli 2012:85) this is supported by fact that Jesus did not eradicate Paul's past rather he used his complex past in advancing the proclamation of the Gospel. I directly quote the below paragraph by Lietaert Peerbolte (2012:1) because it catches the essence of Paul's life and mission in Christ as an Israelite, Benjaminite, Hebrew, Jew, Pharisee, and zealot for God as argued by Marulli (2011).

Christ groups from the outside world as well as from the past, equate the Christ groups with Israel itself, and use traditional Jewish values of 'holiness' and 'righteousness' in a new context. Where sanctification was a common ideal for Torah-obedient Jews, it also became the ideal for adherents of Jesus Christ. The exact way to lead a 'holy life', however, had to be reconstructed according to the different contexts in which people lived and behaved, and thus there is a certain contingency to Paul's moral admonitions. Paul was convinced that in Christ Israel had received its new form, and pagans were welcomed to Israel. This changed the status of the Torah but did not change the ideals of righteousness and holiness. What sometimes is being regarded as 'Christian ethics' in Paul is nothing less than Jewish morality rephrased in a new, Christ-oriented context.

(Lietaert Peerbolte 2012:1)

I agree with Lietaert Peerbolte (2012:1) on his above comments as this defines Paul as a Torah-obedient Jew who is godly living. Paul's position as an ἀπόστολος 'apostle' (e.g., 1 Corinthians 1:1; 4:9; 9:1–2, 5; 15:9) is an important claim and statement as the primary meaning of the word is envoy, sent to proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ. In the Old Testament we find Yahweh 'sending' out numerous envoys and prophets to Israel (e.g., Isaiah 48:16; Jeremiah 14:14-15). Likewise, Paul is also sent to the non-Jews to proclaim the gospel. According to Wagner (2002), supported by Lietaert Peerbolte (2012:6) this suggests that there is sufficient evidence that Paul was also influenced by deutero-Isaiah and trito-Isaiah, the Greek verb that Paul that uses for good news, εὐαγγελίζω, was probably taken from the Septuagint of Isaiah 40:9;52:7;60:6;61:1. Moreover, the vocabulary of Paul in Galatians 1:15-16 especially him saying that God is the one that 'set Paul apart' is

important because Paul in this passage is paralleling his call and being 'sent' to that of Jeremiah and Isaiah. By so doing he is intentionally placing himself within the prophetic tradition, Lietaert Peerbolte (2012:6) observes that Yahweh is the one that sent the prophets, so he is also sent by same God who has decided to make himself known through Jesus Christ.

Paul's theology and biography is evident in his epistles, for Paul the new Israel was the Jews and Greeks as one united people, the prophecies of Isaiah 66:18 '*... the time will come to gather all nations and tongues. And they shall come see the My glory*' was being fulfilled in the time of Paul through his preaching of salvation to all nations. Therefore, 'the ethos Paul demands of the followers of Christ comes close to the Holiness Code of Leviticus' (Lietaert Peerbolte (2012:7). Holiness is thus something which is carried by those that strive for salvation, sanctified by Jesus by being in relationship with Him. Holiness is an identity maker for Paul as it was for Israel differentiating them from all that is profane, but is now linked to morality.

In Matthew 15:1-14 the Pharisees came to Jesus and accused him of breaking the traditions and commandments of the elders because he and his disciples did not wash their hands before they ate. Jesus explained to them, quoting Isaiah 29:13, that it is of no use to follow all the commandments and traditions while our hearts remain far away from Yahweh. Inner Purity is what we should be concerned about, what defiles the body does not come from eating non-kosher food but rather the actions and speech of an individual and group (Matthew 15:11,20). Therefore, Jesus himself directly states that holiness or moral purity comes from change of behaviour and character towards everyone, Jew and non-Jew. This only happens by being obedient to God by loving everyone.

#### **6.4. Holiness as an inclusive identity marker**

Paul, in his 1 Corinthians 7:14-16 address, acknowledges the various social groups and identities that are represented in the Christian community; exogamous marriages is one example. The migration to Corinth due to its strategic location as a

metropolis, under the control of the Roman Empire, produced a diverse Corinth. The diversity of the city meant that interactions between different social outgroups was unavoidable, this means that not all the 'unbelievers' addressed in the passage are from a single social category or ethnic group, some were Greek, Roman, Syrian, non-Jews etc. Secondly, we are unable to conclude with certainty that all the 'believers' that Paul is referring to are Jews; however, we cannot dispute that many of them were. Making these ethnic assumptions blocks a complete or holistic picture of the diversity of the Christ movement in the city from coming across.

Fitzmyer (2008:30) holds the following view regarding the social identities in 1 Corinthians:

Paul's first letter to the Corinthians seems at times to be coping with secular thinking among the members of the Christian community there, thinking that is at times akin to Epicurean teaching, Stoic tenets, and the rhetoric of the Sophists. That elements of such popular Greek philosophy and secular education were affecting the Christians of Corinth, along with the Roman culture that predominated, it to be expected, because of the heritage of Greek culture and philosophy that would have been there.

(Fitzmyer 2008:30)

Social identity complexity highlights that although an individual is a member of various groups, simultaneously, it does not mean that the multiple social identities are of equal importance at that same moment, since the dynamics of the context are of great importance in determining the social identity of the individual. These comments by Fitzmyer (2008:30) show the interconnectedness of social groups and individuals in Corinthians. Those members of the Christ movement did not necessarily dissociate themselves from their other social groups but rather embraced all their identities simultaneously. The Jew, non-Jews, travellers, Greeks, Romans etc. coming from different social spectrums formed members of the Jesus Movement in Corinth. We cannot assume that their identity as members of the Jesus movement was the most important identity for all members, or it shared similar importance when compared to their other political and social identities.

Ascough (2016:81) outlines those members of the outgroup and Christ ingroup members in Corinth had similar and shared many characteristics and associations. He further states that groups consisted of males and females who came from various social strata. According to Ascough (2016:81) the households of Stephas (16:15), Crispus (Acts 18:8) and Phoebe (Romans 16:1-12) civic officials such as Erastus (Romans 16:23) including the slaves (1 Corinthians 7:21-24) would meet regularly to engage in cultic activities in venerating eastern deities. The eastern deities were an identity marker in the Graeco-Roman world that connected people regardless of other group associations that individuals were connected to.

The various Christ groups imitated and adapted practices that were from other associations, the Christ groups only gave a fresh expression to the practices of the time (Ascough 2016:87), social identity complexity seeking to account for this fluidity in the Christ group notes that the embracing of these association and practices such as benefaction and patronage and meals ( 1 Cor 11:17-34) is a contributor to the growth of the Christ group as it embraced all wanting to be a part of the moral movement. Likewise, holiness as a social identity marker connects and unites the believers and unbelievers.

Powerful spaces of the civil life such as temples were important in identity formation as these spaces united both the Jews and non-Jews as centre of social and cultic activities (Lim 2017:368). Members of the Jesus movement were not exempted from participating in other cultic activities as it was a civil duty. However, it is important to note that the Pauline Jesus movement in the diaspora differed from other religious groups because it was against idol worship (Witherington 1995:405). As previously expressed, in John 2:15-17, that members of the Jesus movement are 'in the world' but should not 'love the world and its things that are passing', so that they do not profane themselves and the ingroup. It is evident that the identity marker of *holiness* that they associate with does not prevent them from being in community with other people; holiness therefore, refers to complete integrity 'in the world' which Jews, non-Jews, believers, and unbelievers can embody.

The merger model of social identity theory is neither nonconvergence nor is the identity based on the context. In this model 'all identities are embraced simultaneously and can coexist' (Kok and Swart 2021:3). This means that persons that share any of the important social category memberships are considered as members of the ingroup. Therefore, persons, like the apostle Paul, who adopt this paradigm are the most inclusive and thus have the highest social identity complexity.

Paul had experiences of being a Judean in different contexts that ranged from having received an education in Tarsus as a Diaspora Jew, being exposed to Hellenistic philosophy and being a rather conservative Pharisee in Jerusalem as well as a Christ-following Jew with an openness to include non-Jews. This does not represent compartmentalising social identity, but rather a merger social identity characterised by social identity complexity.

(Kok 2014:8)

#### 6.4.1. 1 Corinthians 7: 14

Holiness in the New Testament is not so much an exclusive identity marker only for the Jews but rather an inclusive social identity marker for both Jews and non-Jews. Therefore, Paul in 1 Corinthians 7:14 uses holiness, a social identity marker, as a rhetorical device to advocate for unity within the complex social categories in Corinth. Temples, for example, in the Corinth community were unifying individuals from those traveling into Corinth to Greek inhabitants. We tend to think that the identity of believers was 'fixed' and singular, social identity complexity reveals that this is not the case and when applied the multifaced nature of ancient Christian identity is revealed (Kok 2014:1). According to social identity complexity theory, the context does not determine the most important (if any) identity of the individual. In 1 Corinthians 7:12-16 for Paul the belonging and being connected to the Jesus movement was the most important identity of an individual regardless of context. It was the Jesus movement category that informed how a believer is to react and behave in other social categories and associations.

In 1 Corinthians 7:14 the sanctification of the unbeliever by the believer gives the unbeliever an inclusive identity marker of *holy* thus making the unbeliever a member of the same group. According to the merger paradigm of social identity complexity theory, two groups or individuals only need to have one social category in common to be members of the same ingroup. Therefore, in this case *holiness* is the identity marker which both unbelievers and believers have in common, hence believers are commanded to not divorce but to live in unity and harmony in the household because this would break the household and create further disunity which Paul is trying to mitigate. Therefore, understanding holiness as a status identity is consistent with Paul's habitual language in 1 Corinthians as an epistle that promotes unity and peace. Paul's *holiness* language of clean and holy does not only advocate differentiation, being set apart, from the unbeliever but simultaneously calls for the inclusion of the unbeliever in promoting peace and reconciliation in the household and community.

### Marriages

With regard to the mixed marriage relationships, Adewuya (2016:48) is of the opinion that the believers converted to Christianity after getting married and it was the personal choice of the unbeliever to remain with the believer. From the passage it is apparent that the unbeliever tolerated the conversion of his or her spouse. Adewuya (2016:48) argues that the sanctification of the unbeliever is possible only because the unbeliever wishes to remain in the marriage since staying married did not bring any defilement to church community, Horrell (2016:449) writes that this is because the maintenance of these mixed marriages made the unbeliever a participant in the holy community. However, the extent of participation is not as those who have confessed to the faith.

Grosheide (2019:164) explains that sanctification in this passage does not mean "holy in Christ before God" reason being that this type of 'holiness' with spiritual transformation and conversion is only applicable to believers. This comment by Grosheide (2019:164) reveals the various ways in which holiness in the New Testament is used; in some instances, it is linked to spirituality and salvation and in

other instances such as in 1 Cor 7:14 it is used as social identity marker to mark those that externally or indirectly belonging with believers and do not have relationship Christ but live ethical lives as Christians by virtue of their spouses. “The unbeliever is indirectly related to the church of God through the association with the believer who is personally one of the churches and a member of Christ” (Adewuya 2016:48).

The fact that believers, Christians, had ethical and religious obligations (1 Corinthians 4:15-17,13,15 etc.) which the unbelievers did not have to follow reveals the multifaceted nature of church of God. From this it is evident that in the church of God there was a ‘group rooted within a group’ (Roccas and Brewer 2002:88), a group of believers, those who have joined by group by faith, and another of unbelievers, those who joined by group by virtue of the spouse, in the same group. Adewuya (2016:49) notes that the role and character of the unbeliever is that of a “recipient of blessings that may occur from an association — an intimate association — with a believer”. According to social identity complexity theory we can therefore argue that the holiness identity marker is not a primary identity marker for unbelievers.

The sanctification of the unbeliever is not a temporary condition but long lasting, Grosheide (2019:165) writes that this is because the unbelieving spouse has become one flesh with a believer. In Matthew 19:4-6 Jesus’ teaching about marriage states that when the husband and wife get married, they become one united flesh and no man is to separate what God put together. The mere fact that Paul is advocating for these marriages to not be dissolved suggests that these mixed marriages were approved by God as it was with other complex social categories leaving in community. In verse 15, Paul states the unbeliever has the option of initiating the divorce and leaving the ‘brother or sister’ this would translate to the unbeliever losing holiness and subsequently moving to the outgroup, because holiness is only for members of the ingroup and only valid by being in relationship with the believing spouse.

The merger model of social identity complexity could argue that the sanctification and holiness that the unbeliever undergoes by being in relationship with the believer grants the unbeliever a 'ticket' to be in association with the unbeliever as they would share holiness as a *common* social identity marker. According to Berchie (2014:61) Paul in 2 Cor 6:14 is only limiting these mixed marriages and not necessarily eradicating those which have produced holy children as seen in 1 Cor 7:14. The application of holiness as an identity marker accounts for reasons why faith, commitment and entry rites such as baptism seem not to be a necessary requirement for holiness as argued by Murphy-O'Connor's (2009:49). The Theological perspective by Murphy-O'Connor (2009) shows that this *holiness* as different yet the same as it was inclusive of the unbeliever and their children.

### **Children and household**

Already in the 1950's, before the development of social complexity theory, Oscar Cullmann (1950:54) made the following important observation in his study on regarding the relationship between baptism and acceptance into the church:

We have seen that the idea of family solidarity in holiness, on the basis of the marriage tie and membership of the Body of Christ, is the fundamental ground of the declaration of I Cor.7. 14, though Baptism is there regarded as dispensable. The Baptism of children born of Christian parents is based on the same idea of holiness. Hence this passage must also be applied herein order to show that holiness, that is, *the fact of belonging to the 'saints,'* is bound up with those who, in the language of the New Testament, are *members of the Church of Christ* and not with an already present faith.

(Cullmann 1950:54)

I am in agreement with Cullmann (1950:54) that the holiness language that Paul adopts in 1 Cor 7:14 unifies the Christian household and thus accounts for children in the church. Adewuya (2016:50) details that in matters of religion, the Christian identity was supreme in the household hence these households are referred to as

Christian households. The holiness of the believer meant that he/she is dominant and could not be defiled by social status and identity of the unbeliever, therefore, the status of children as holy meant that children in both the household and related more to the believing parent than unbelieving. Importantly, it is highly likely that in cases where the wife was the believer, the social status of the household changed, the reason being that the ancient Mediterranean world was patriarchal and male dominated. Therefore, the value, status and identity of holiness was different from household to household. In household where the husband was the believer it influenced everything and everyone in the household.

Manyika and Mouton (2019:319) note in the ancient Mediterranean world family (*oikos*) was the most basic level of kinship and association especially in the Roman Empire. Relationships were governed by values surrounding power, honour, protection, submission etc. From all these governing values, honour and shame was the most important because it determined a person's place in the household and the ascribed honour the individual is to receive, Kok and Swart (2021:3) are of the opinion that the person's social identity determined what type of behaviour could be deemed as honourable; following the father was honourable behaviour.

In ancient households the father (*patria potestas*) was the most important person in the household, his word was final. The African proverb of 'you cannot have two bulls in one kraal' describes the power of the father in Graeco-Roman household. Van Eck (2014:10) notes the power of the father in the household extended to even the household of his children who have their own household. The power of the father was lifelong, and children owed their father absolute obedience. Therefore, in the household the father's rule took the women, children, and slaves for granted. It is important to note that in the ancient world households were not nuclear (at least one parent and children per household) and consisting of immediate relatives as we primarily have in modern society. In the ancient world the notion of family was much wider slaves, freedmen and hired workers were also members of the household.

Therefore, as previously expressed, the members of the household came from all walks of life influenced by various and different social, cultural, political, and religious identities were members of the household of believers. The role of the wife in the household was to prepare meals, supervise the household and take care of the children and importantly to teach her daughter in law the rule and traditions of the household (van Eck 2010:15). Life for women in these households was relatively difficult and even worse for female slaves 'Female slaves were thus under a double burden due to the intersection of their gender and social status' (Manyika and Mouton (2019:320). From the already complex contexts in the household the Christ followers brought about more complexity in terms of identity. From Paul's letter it is evident that there was turmoil in the household, believers wanting to divorce their unbelieving spouses because they wanted to maintain the purity. Paul's address calling for unity, could have strengthened mixed marriages and households in Corinthians, because where there is unity there is peace and harmony. Regardless of gender roles and sociocultural context, peace and unity in the household is possible for all. Peace and unity are not the absence of differences and difficulties.

The identity marker for children stems from the believing parent (verse 14), the children are made holy because of their parents because holiness is an identity marker in 1 Corinthians 7:14. The honour and shame model of social-scientific perspective on the New Testament reveals that from birth children are born as members of certain social categories, blood, ethnic, wealth, family reputation etc. with ascribed honour. Likewise, children are born into holiness because of the believing parent. Martens (2019:105) holds that we are to not forget that children were also part of other social group such as family, gender etc. therefore, children also have to multiple identities simultaneously.

David Horrell (2016:450) emphasises that the call of children as 'holy' regardless of manner in which the term is used in theological or religious perspective is no minor claim. The fact that the only times that Paul makes reference to children he makes such claim speaks of the importance of children and the fundamental role that they play in the household and marriage of their parents. Holiness as an identity boundary

marker that determines who is 'in' and 'out' of the group is given to children by Paul to demonstrate that children are part of the community.

## **6.5. Conclusion**

In this chapter I have illustrated how the merger model be useful in analysing Paul's holiness language in 1 Corinthians 7:12-16 to reconcile and promote peace and unity in the household of the unbeliever and believer. Through the merger paradigm of social identity complexity theory, I have portrayed that the members of the Jesus movement (believers, unbelievers, and children) embraced all their identities. Paul transcending boundaries shows that unity and peace in the household was possible by being more tolerant to person that share different views and identities, from this analysis it is evident that individuals, in the New Testament and to date, are not 'this or that' but are rather 'this and that' is evident. Unity and peace prompted by holiness does not necessarily mean equality in the household, certain household codes and rules were still maintained in the community.

## Conclusion and Summary

In this research, using social identity complexity theory as the theoretical framework, I set out to show how Paul uses holiness language in 1 Corinthians 7:12-16 as a rhetorical device to advocate for unity and peace in the complex households with various social groups and identities including believers married to unbelievers. Holiness in this passage is used as a social identity marker including the unbelievers, with no moral implications, therefore, making children 'holy' by virtue of their parents' holiness status.

In chapter two of this study, I started by reviewing the various theoretical perspectives which have been used to interpret 1 Corinthians 7:12-16, I looked at representative voices from a theological, halakic and social-scientific perspective. The question of whether or not Paul's use of the term holy as unprecedented in this passage is prominent amongst scholars, the identity of children in the household is thus brought to question. From the literature review I found out that the role of *children as holy* in these emerging Christian households has not been given much attention. These marriages of believers to unbelievers incorporated the coming together of various social identities with clashing ingroup-outgroup boundaries, these mixed caused friction and tension in the Christian community especially regarding the status and identity of children.

Moving on to chapter three, I discussed social identity complexity theory and its four models as a plausible theoretical perspective for this study. This theory explains the multiple cross-cutting identities and group memberships that individuals are members of. Moreover, it seeks to account for the fluidity of having multiple ingroup identities such as those of the Corinthians. I started by briefly discussing social-scientific criticism, social identity theory and social categorisation theory as the foundational theories in which the social identity complexity theory is built on. This theory revealed that identity is not static is changes over time due to social factors. In proving the hypothesis, social-scientific criticism was used to assist in understanding the group boundaries and associations in the ancient Mediterranean world. The

inclusivity of the merger model of social identity complexity theory reveals that believers and unbelievers can coexist and be members of the same ingroup if they share one of their various identities. Interpreting holiness as an identity marker using this model reveals that holiness united as an inclusive identity marker and so was not exclusive.

In Chapter four I discussed the date, authorship, historical setting, and social, political, and religious identities in Corinthians. The purpose of this chapter was to bring to surface the various identity complexities in Corinthians from which the believers and unbelievers were a result of. I expressed that migration and moving to Corinth as a Roman city in 44 B.C.E. due to its metropolis landscape and ripe trade routes is one of the reasons that Corinth consisted of individuals with various identity complexities from all walks of life. Therefore, mixed marriages were almost unavoidable, and this changed group boundaries and dynamics constantly. In this chapter I outlined the importance of temples as identity expressions and formation in Corinth, temples shed light on the cross identities of person that adopted the merger model of identity formation, the same individuals attending the temples for cultic purposes were also members of the church and household.

In the fifth chapter, I discussed the term *holy* and its cognates from the Old Testament and New Testament, I explore Leviticus 19 in arguing that Paul's use of holiness language in 1 Corinthians 7:24 is consistent and coherent with how it is used in the Old Testament and New Testament respectively as a social identity marker. I have observed that in the Old Testament holiness is related to ritualistic purity and in the New Testament it moves to moral purity. Holiness being inclusive to both the believers and unbelievers calls for unity and peace in Christian households. In this chapter I illustrated that Paul's holiness theology is consistent with that of Jesus and subsequently with the Holiness Code in terms of inclusivity of "loving thy neighbour and resident alien and yourself" (Leviticus 19:18,33-34).

In chapter 6 I interpreted 1 Corinthians 7:12-16 using the merger model of social identity complexity theory. In this chapter I have argued that Paul gave both the believer and unbeliever in marriage the status of sanctified and holy. This includes those who have not accepted Jesus Christ and have not performed formal entry rites. This is a way in which Paul transcends boundaries and reshapes the identity of Christian households being inclusive of those individuals that embody various social complex identities. Therefore, children being holy by virtue of parents' identities play a fundamental role in the household and community at large. Paul's holiness language in 1 Corinthians 7:12-16 to reconcile and promote peace and unity in the household of the unbeliever and believer.

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