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I Kneel Before the Father and Pray for You (Ephesians 3:14): Date and Significance of Ephesians, Part 2

Rüdiger Fuchs

SUMMARY

The first part of this three-part article discussed and defended the place of Ephesians among the letters of Paul. Part 2 grounds the proposal for the dating of Ephesians more fully upon the Pauline chronology and the

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Letter’s character as a legacy. Specific comparisons are made with Acts 20 and 1 Timothy, and Paul’s developing ideas about church order are highlighted. The third and final part of the article will discuss some arguments that for many speak against the authenticity of the Letter to the Ephesians.

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ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Der erste Teil dieses dreiteiligen Artikels untersuchte und vertrat den Stand des Epheserbriefes unter den Paulusbriefen. Der zweite Teil gründet nun den Datierungsvorschlag für Epheser noch umfassender auf die paulinische Chronologie und den Charakter

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des Briefes als ein Vermächtnis. Es werden spezifische Vergleiche angestellt mit Apostelgeschichte 20 und dem 1. Timotheusbrief. Hervorgehoben werden die sich entfaltenden Gedanken von Paulus zur Gemeindeordnung. Der dritte und letzte Teil des Artikels wird dann einige Argumente behandeln, die für viele gegen die Authentizität des Epheserbriefes sprechen.

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RÉSUMÉ

La première des trois parties de cet article traitait de la place de l’épître aux Éphésiens parmi les lettres de Paul et a défendu son authenticité. Cette deuxième partie étaye plus à fond la thèse avancée au sujet de sa date en se fondant sur la chronologie de la vie de l’apôtre et sur

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le caractère de testament de l’épître. L’auteur établit des comparaisons avec le chapitre 20 du livre des Actes et la première épître à Timothée. Il fait ressortir le développement des idées de Paul au sujet de l’organisation d’Église. La dernière partie considérera les arguments avancés par beaucoup contre l’authenticité de l’épître aux Éphésiens.

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2. Was Ephesians written to ‘the saints in Ephesus’?

The first part of this study (in the previous issue of the *European Journal of Theology*) gave an overview of the chronology of the letters of Paul, including Ephesians. In this second part, I will base my proposal for the date of Ephesians more fully upon the Pauline chronology and the Letter’s character as a legacy.

2.1 Ephesians as a late letter

The character of Ephesians is not as impersonal as

is frequently claimed. Rather, it carries a tone of certainty because Paul, writing at the end of the apostolic era, is expressing the things that must generally be important to all Christians after the apostolic time. He is thinking about Christians whom he will never come to know (Eph 1:21). As stated earlier, Ephesians is a circular intended for many congregations in the province of Asia, possibly for all gentile Christians in the entire mission area in the east of the Roman Empire. We too write our round-robin letters or emails in a more impersonal, general manner than letters or emails to a particular person or group. The original ‘Letter to the Ephesians’ will most certainly have been

sent to Ephesus but the name of the destination is missing in Ephesians 1:1 on purpose. Copies of Ephesians were passed on to all gentile Christians, similar, for example, to the decree of the apostles of Acts 15. In this way Paul wanted to establish a ‘bulwark’ against seducers in all congregations and in the name of all apostles.

If this view of Ephesians is correct, then some very personal elements in the Letter become visible. First of all, Ephesians 1-3 is an almost constant *prayer* in a hymnic, moving style (Ephesians 4-6 has a more normal Pauline style) and there is only one place in the Pauline letters where Paul *kneels* in prayer: Ephesians 3:14-21. Then in 2:1-10 in particular, Paul reminds the Christians from a gentile background (with the Messiah title emphasized by the use of the definite article) that the remaining Jewish Christian minorities in their assemblies are to be respected, and that their Jesus, who is Lord of all Christians, remains first of all *the* Messiah of the Jews. A third personal element is the similarity between 3:14-21 and Paul’s meeting with the elders from Ephesus in Acts 20:17-38; every presbyter who, two or three years before the composing of Ephesians, had been in Miletus and prayed on their knees, weeping (Acts 20:36), would immediately be reminded of that moving hour by hearing Ephesians 3:14-21 and what Paul says and prays here.

During his years under house arrest (Acts 22-28) Paul further developed his theology, based on new questions posed and on meetings with new conversation partners. In this period he had more time to think more deeply about some things. An illustration of this development are some earlier thoughts from 1 Corinthians 10-15 which re-appear several years later in Colossians and Ephesians. For example, Christ is the ‘head’ of every man in the congregation and God is the head of Christ. Thus, God, through Christ, is the head of the Body of Christ which, according to 1 Corinthians 10-14, is the *ecclesia*. In addition, Christ is *Son of God*; that is, God’s King of the world (Psalm 2, LXX) who will unite everything in God. At the same time, the congregation is already the ‘body’ of this head, led as it is by apostles, teachers, prophets and other authorities (cf. 1 Cor 4:1-21, 12:28, 16:10-18 with Eph 2:20-21, 4:1-16). These men in turn are inseparably joined to their wives (1 Cor 5-7, 11:3-16, 14:33-40; see Eph 5:21-33). The congregation in Corinth is *ecclesia*, house, temple and body of God’s King (1 Cor 3:11-17, 6:14-20, 11:3-12, 28, 15:58). The

body metaphor is also developed in Romans 12, although from a rather different viewpoint, and somewhat later Christ is described as the coming World Ruler, Lord (*kyrios*) and Saviour (*sotēr*) in Philippians 2:1-11 and 3:20-21.

In Colossians and Ephesians all of this is barely thought through any further. After all, there would not have been a body without a head for the Paul of 1 Corinthians and Romans. More emphatically than in 1 Corinthians, Christ is now declared ‘Lord’ and ‘Head’ of the cosmos and of the Church which consists of women and men (Col 3-4; Eph 5-6). It is not hard to see that several years after writing 1 Corinthians, Paul could formulate his thoughts more fully in Colossians, and subsequently take them from Colossians and in Ephesians convey them in a more fundamental way to a much larger circle of readers.

The apostle grows older and in prison dictates some letters to various secretaries, or commissions them to write them, sending them by means of envoys (Col 4:7-16; 2 Tim 4:9-12). His congregations preserved these final letters, which is why we still possess these late works of a Paul who, facing death, becomes more and more one of the ‘Greeks and Romans, Scythians and barbarians’; in other words, one of the non-Jewish people (1 Cor 9:20-22, Col 3:11). The churches were composed more and more of Christians whom Paul no longer knew personally and he had to address different situations, problems and questions. Hence these last letters of Paul differ in many respects from the pre-prison letters.

2.2 The Roman Empire

At the time of writing of Ephesians, the rule of the Roman Empire is still desirable *or* at least acceptable to Christians. Clearly God and Jesus Christ are described as the best emperor, the best *kyrios*, king, *sotēr*, for Christians and non-Christians; Christ is even the ruler (‘head’) of the cosmos. When compared to the Roman emperor, it is clear that God/Christ Jesus are the true keepers of peace and the reconcilers of all humanity. At this moment in time a description of God (or Jesus) as the true emperor was still acceptable to Christians. But after the emperor Nero had Paul and Peter executed, and many other Christians as well, no Christian of the first century AD would have written 1 Timothy 2:1-7, Romans 13:1-7, Titus 3:1-8 or Ephesians. These letters must therefore be dated before AD 65. The tone of the book of

Revelation is very different: God and Christ are seen as *pantokrator* whereas the Roman emperor is clearly inspired by Satan. This idea is not expressed with the same clarity in Ephesians, but do note the first critical undertones in Ephesians 1:21, 2:2, 3:10.¹ In Revelation, Christians are victims of the emperor, *martyrs* in the new sense of the word. In Ephesians this is not yet the case. In the time of 1 Timothy 2:1-7, 6:11-16, or of Ephesians, images and language of war against earthly rulers such as in Revelation 19 are yet unthinkable.

2.3 Ephesians, Acts 20 and Miletus

Paul saw himself as the father and teacher of his congregations (e.g. 1 Cor 3-4) and the people he taught he called his children or pupils (1 Cor 4:14-17). In Acts 20:17-38 Luke tells us – without these metaphors, as an eyewitness, see the ‘we’ in Acts 20:15 – about the departure of the teacher Paul from the elders of the congregation in Ephesus in such a way that certain elements of Ephesians sound like echoes:

I know that after I have gone, savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. Some even from your own group will come distorting the truth in order to entice the disciples to follow them. Therefore be alert [cf. Eph 2:1-10, 4:26, 6:10-20 on the theme of enemies], remembering that for three years I did not cease night or day to warn everyone with tears. And now I commend you to God and to the message of his grace [cf. *charis* in Eph 1:2, 6, 15, 2:5-8, 3:2, 7-8, 4:7, 29, 6:24], a message that is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all who are sanctified [cf. Eph 1:1 ‘the saints’; the house metaphor in 2:19-22]. When [Paul] had finished speaking, he knelt down with them all and prayed.²

As I said before, the first chapters of Ephesians are written from prayers to a prayer, from 1:3-11 and 1:15-23 to 3:14-21. Especially 2:1-10 and 3:1-6 sound like echoes of the words of the Lucan Paul. We also noted that Paul never writes about kneeling down to pray, except in Ephesians 3:14 which is a clear allusion to Acts 20:36. Paul continues the prayer he started in Miletus and finishes it with Ephesians 3:14-21 or even 1:3 – 3:21.

In the exhortations to avoid association with pagan persons who lead questionable lives (Eph 5:1-20), Paul becomes quite personal with his pupils. The departing Paul now no longer uses the designation ‘father’ to refer to *his own* example –

with which they would have been familiar – but rather to God the ‘Father’ and *his* example. The earthly, departing ‘father’ Paul binds his congregations – ‘children of light’ – to the one eternally abiding, heavenly ‘Father’.

In no letter of Paul do we find God as ‘Father’ as often as in Ephesians: eight times in 1:2, 3, 17, 2:18, 3:14-15, 4:6, 5:20 and 6:23. In chapter 3 Paul hands his ‘fatherhood’ back to God (see 1 Cor 4:14-21); we also hear clearly how he hands over *his* ‘children’ to the ‘teacher’ God as their ‘Father’, as their teacher, their model, as he had done in Acts 20. (Is there also an allusion to the Jesus tradition as we find it in Mt 5:14-16, 45, 48?) Paul does this explicitly for his pupils who had often heard him. There are also implied references to God as Father in Ephesians 5:1 and 8 instead of *Paul* as Father, theological teacher and ethical model (as in 1 Thess 1:6, 2:7-9, 1 Cor 4:16, 11:1, Phil 3:17; 4:9). In short, in Ephesians Paul uses moving, emotion-filled words to recall the scene from Acts 20 that had remained in the minds of the church leaders at Ephesus; also compare the use of ‘tears’ and ‘weeping’ in Acts 20:31, 37-38.

However, in old manuscripts of the so-called ‘Letter to the Ephesians’, the location is missing in the *superscriptio* of Ephesians 1:1. Is it possible that, because of events described in Acts 19:23-41 and 2 Corinthians 1:8-11, the letter could not be delivered to Ephesus and read there as a letter of Paul? Compare the fact that according to Acts 20:17, Paul had to meet the elders of the Ephesian community in Miletus. Also note that later, during the journey to Italy (Acts 27:1-6), travelling on a ship ‘to the ports along the coast of Asia’ (verse 2), Paul had to leave the *Ephesian* Trophimus (Acts 21:29) behind in Myra (verse 5). In this way the (sea?)sick Trophimus could get quickly to Miletus (see 2 Tim 4:20b) before Paul and his travel companions were taken to another ship that was sailing for Italy. Can we suggest that Miletus was the new ‘secret’ headquarters for the Christian mission after the events mentioned in 2 Corinthians 1:8-11 and Acts 19:23 – 21:29? If so, Ephesians was probably written for the purpose of being circulated among the Christians in the province of Asia and sent to Miletus, and thus intended only indirectly for the Christians in Ephesus.

2.4 Ephesians and 1 Timothy

Heinz-Werner Neudorfer has drawn up an interesting synoptic comparison of themes in Ephesians

and 1 Timothy, a letter which is clearly addressed to Ephesus. Neudorfer brings detailed similarities to light between the two letters.³ Here are the parallel passages, which Neudorfer discusses in greater detail, with additions by me:

• **Love**

In no letter of the Pauline corpus is love discussed so intensively as in Ephesians (and Philemon), see 1 Timothy 1:5, 5:11; Ephesians 1:6, 4:15, 6:23-24 and elsewhere; Revelation 2:4.

• **Prayer**

Paul especially prays against the destruction of peace in the community and the home by Satan (1 Tim 2:1-14, Eph 5:21 – 6:20). Note the general tone of prayer in Ephesians after 1:3 and in 1 Timothy from 1:11-12 on, and also the variety and order of prayer: from praise and thanksgiving to prayers of petition, practised in Ephesians 1-3 and urged in 1 Timothy 2:1-2. In Ephesians, Paul does for the Ephesian Christians what he asks for in 1 Timothy: intensive prayer. He also casts an eye to the political authorities in Ephesians 1:21 and 3:10 (see Tit 3:1)!

• **Good works**

According to Ephesians 2:10, Christians are to be the ones who do ‘good works’ (cf. Tit 3:1-8). But their world is no longer being ruled with positive results by political authorities (Eph 2:1-10). Hence Paul no longer thanks or offers prayers for kings and other rulers. By the time of writing of Ephesians, the optimistic period of 1 Timothy 2:1-7, Titus 3:1-2 and Romans 13:1-7 lies in the past. Even so, the time of the Revelation to John, when Christians will become martyrs of the Roman emperor, is yet unimaginable to Paul. Felix and Festus, like several other political authorities before them (who also have no further role to play in Phil 3:20 – 4:7), had not proven to be ‘gifts’ for whom Christians can give thanks. They were no servants of God on the side of justice (Acts 16, 18, 22-26 and 2 Cor 6:5; 11:25-28). Prayers for political authorities (like 1 Tim 2:1-7) that were answered (Acts 19:31-40) had remained the exception. A loving God ‘of peace’ (1 Cor 14:33, Phil 4:9) cannot change a heart that does not *want* to make the right decisions (cf. Lk 15:11-32).

• **Women and men**

In 1 Timothy 2:1-15 as well as Ephesians 5:21-33 this theme is discussed in the context of the use of the title ‘Saviour’. I also notice that both times it comes up in close proximity to references to attacks of Satan (1 Tim 2:14, Eph 5:21 – 6:20).

Women are to move into the ‘second row’ and men into the front to protect the women. In both, letters it is a matter of the women placing themselves under the protection of the men. In both the self-offering of Christ and the salvation given by God/Christ are emphasised. In both cases prayer as a means of battle against the tempter is mandated. In Ephesians only Christ is still regent and saviour (*sotèr*; 5:23) under the Father (5:1-7).⁴ In 1 Timothy, Paul still has hopes for earthly political authorities who want to become servants of the heavenly Saviour; that is, for regents and their representatives in Ephesus (Acts 19:31-40).

• **Gnosis (knowledge) or faith**

Ephesians contains a discussion of whether gnosis or faith expressing itself in love is the right way to knowledge of God (3:14-21). This is a developed version of Paul’s answer to the Corinthians’ emphasis on *gnosis* which we find in 1 Corinthians 12:31 – 13:13 (see also Rom 2:17-24; 5:1-11; 8:1-13, 39; cf. 1 Cor 12:31 with Eph 3:20-21 ‘above and beyond’). In contrast, Paul emphasizes that one cannot recognise God in ‘complete’ fullness by means of increasing one’s knowledge, but only through knowledge given through Christ and only through *love* to God. This is also a theme in 1 Timothy 1:3-10 and 6:20-21. True faith expresses itself in love (*agape*) and behaviour (1 Tim 1:5; 2:15). Note all the ‘faith and love’ variations in 1 and 2 Timothy as well as in Ephesians 3:14-21.⁵

• **Ideal ruler**

Julien Smith has recently argued that Ephesians presents Christ as an ideal ruler (cf. 1 Tim 3:16, 6:14-16).⁶ Through Christ will be realised the reconciliation of humankind with God, the uniting of Jews and non-Jews, the establishment of harmony in the Church and the destruction of the occult forces.⁷ In Ephesians 5:23 Jesus, as mentioned above, is the ‘Saviour’; 1:19 mentions ‘the immeasurable *greatness* of his power’ and 5:32 refers to ‘a *great* mystery’; similar language occurs in 1 Timothy 3:16; 6:6 and Titus 2:13. (See above; also 2 Tim 2:20, 1 Cor 16:8-9 and the use of ‘great’ in Acts 19:27, 34.) It seems to me that all of this is polemical against the cult of Artemis which dominated Ephesus.⁸ Ephesians also presents Christ as God’s true saviour and ruler, opposing the belief in spirits that abounded in Ephesus (Acts 19:11-20), and opposing the ruler cult that, together with the Artemis cult, was practised and celebrated in Ephesus. Ephesians does not use the epiphany language of the Pastoral Epistles, although the

imagery of light from Hellenistic soteriology is not completely missing in chapter 5.⁹ (Cf. Eph 3:9 and especially 5:8-9, 13-14; see also ‘darkness’ in 5:8, 11 and 6:12.)

Other themes can be mentioned more briefly: **Repentance** (1 Tim 1:12-17; Eph 2:1-7, 3:5-10; cf. Rev. 2:5); **Hidden and obvious sin** (Eph 5:11-14a, 1 Tim 5:22-25); **Alcohol consumption** (1 Tim 3:3, 5:23, Eph 5:18); **Generational questions** (1 Tim 5:1-8; Eph 6:1-4); **Slaves and masters** (1 Tim 6:1-2; Eph 6:5-9); **Oikonomia** (1 Tim 1:4; Eph 1:10, cf. 3:2, 9); the key word **Mystery** (Eph 2:10; 3:2-6) which, as in 1 Corinthians 3 and 1 Timothy 3:15-16, appears at the central point of the letter.

2.5 Differences between Ephesians and 1 Timothy

There are two main differences between Ephesians and 1 Timothy: First, as stated in 2.2 above, in the prison letters and in Ephesians Paul’s optimism regarding the state has disappeared. This in contrast with the optimism in 1 Timothy 2:1-2, which arose probably out of positive experiences such as we find, for example, in Acts 19:23-40, when city officials in Ephesus intervened on behalf of calm and of the Christians. Experiences of ‘partial successes’ by the enemy (2 Tim 1:15; Phil 1:15-17, 3:2-4) and of injustice suffered (Acts 21, 24, 25) may have contributed to this change in Paul’s thinking.

Perhaps for this reason we find in 2 Timothy a description of *eusebeia* (godliness) which is formed by the sobering experience of suffering, as opposed to the form of *eusebeia* described in 1 Timothy. In other words, Christian *eusebeia* – that is, an *eusebeia* that as far as possible promotes a blameless civic and religious life and especially promotes the common good through prayer – does not prevent persecution. Instead we read in 2 Timothy 3:12 that ‘all who want to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted’. And in Ephesians we find critical undertones, especially in 1:21, 2:2, 3:10 (cf. Tit 3:1!), 4:5, 9-13, where Paul clearly places Jesus above all earthly and heavenly rulers, whom he no longer sees as directed by God, such in contrast with Romans 13:1-7. In Ephesians, the true ruler and sole bringer of peace for the whole world is Christ, who is Lord above all (Eph 1-2), while the Father of Christ is the ‘Father of all’ (4:6) and above all rulers who see themselves as fathers (Eph 3-5).

The second difference is that Paul has abandoned the use of *seb*-words such as *eusebeia* in the prison letters, in contrast to 1 Timothy, Titus and Romans (also 2 Thess 2:4). He previously used this language from the pagan religion; when he uses it one last time in a letter to his best friend Timothy, it is with an undertone of bitterness, it seems. Second Timothy also has the situation in and around Ephesus in view. Therefore, Paul *could* have used *eusebeia* and related words in 2 Timothy, reminding Timothy especially that a few years earlier, he had used them extensively only in one letter: in his first letter to him arguing against the accusation that Christians are ‘godless’ (*asebes*). Timothy surely would have been able to hear the echoes of the first letter to him and also the undertone of bitterness in this repeated terminology (as, e.g., in Eph 3:14 the Ephesian elders could detect an allusion to the situation described in Acts 20:36).

2.6 Artemis and the women

According to Greek mythology, Artemis, the goddess of the city of Ephesus, defended her virginity aggressively, to the point of bloodshed. She also disallowed sexual intercourse to her female adherents, and her servants (girls older than nine years) had to be virgins. She allegedly came into the world without birth pangs and she accused men of being responsible for the birth pangs of women. When reading 1 Timothy 1:17, 2:8-15, 3:15b, 4:1-5, 10, 5:1-16, 6:13, 15, 17, it can be asked whether this letter reflects disagreements or debates with women in the church in Ephesus who were former adherents of the virginal, man-hating Artemis. Had they retained some of their views in modified form and does 1 Timothy 5:14 point toward this behaviour as ‘giving the adversary ... occasion to revile us’? What is at any rate certain is that 1 Timothy 2:15, 4:1-5 and 5:14-16 take a stand against some opponents of Paul who are ascetic, who reject marriage and who, consequently, are also anti-family. Some former adherents of the Artemis cult may have been opposed to marriage and to being a woman in the traditional roles of Antiquity or to living in the gender role patterns of the Old Testament. Therefore 1 Timothy 2:1-15 and 4:1-5, and also Ephesians 5:21 – 6:20, could be responses to this ‘trend’ among women, especially among those from the upper class.¹⁰ According to 1 Timothy 2, women are unprotected against the attacks of Satan if

they get into a ‘teaching conversation’ with him without their husband at their side, as Eve once did. Using typological interpretation of the Old Testament, Paul commands man and woman, and especially husband and wife, to resist the tempter’s attack with behaviour that is exactly the opposite of that of Adam and Eve. Among other things, as those who offer prayers (though without anger, 2:8) men are – so to say – commanded to go to the front line in this spiritual battle for peace, because Adam shirked his responsibility. In the case of satanic attacks, women should go into shelter, stepping back into the ‘second row’.

At this point we should note Paul’s thinking in Romans and 2 Corinthians. According to Romans 5, Adam bears the responsibility for the intrusion of sin into the world but according to 2 Corinthians 11:3 Eve is the site of Satan’s first attack; hence, according to Paul, as it once was, so it is now. In my opinion, Paul’s command that women move into the ‘second row’ only applies to satanic attacks, which he clearly differentiates from non-satanic ‘temptations’ (1 Cor 10:13). In those days women were still allowed to speak God’s word from the ‘front row’ (1 Cor 11:3-16) but when outsiders were present, they had to remain silent in the discussions on how to understand and appreciate God’s word, *after* hearing or speaking a word of prophecy (1 Cor 14:25-40). (For the order was: first prophecy, then its testing, cf. 1 Thess 5:19-22.) Female prophets are well known to non-Christians so there is no reason to be shocked at their presence in the churches; compare the main theme at the beginning and the end of the instructions regarding public worship in 1 Corinthians (10:31 – 11:16 and 14:23-40).

In Luke-Acts, Luke repeatedly and plainly presents exemplary men, women and families who are living in marriages which are conducted according to the biblical norm. He also shows that Mary, Joseph and Jesus were not exempt from this norm, thus correcting opposing propaganda that ‘all things are allowed’ which used a word of Jesus such as we find in Matthew 22:30 or even the example of the pregnant but unmarried Mary.¹¹ In addition, Luke frequently mentions exemplary women as adherents of the new faith, even (in a parable) using a woman as a model of God (Lk 15:8-10). This could indicate that Luke-Acts is taking position in the same debate as 1 Timothy.¹² Possibly Luke-Acts must also confront the slander of ‘abusers’ (compare Acts 19:9-10 with 1 Tim 1:18-20, 6:4) who accused the Christians, among

other things, of breaking down the traditional orders of marriage. Paul’s words in Romans 3:8, 6:1, 15 contain more general comments against such slander; and in Romans 7:1-6 Paul states that he is loyal to the Law of Moses, that is including the regulations for marriage, perhaps a polemic against opponents.

The instructions in Ephesians 4-6 are another Pauline attempt to minimise the potential of conflict between the non-Christians and the Christians in and around Ephesus. Christians – under whatever political authority (Eph 1:21; 3:10) – and particularly a community of men and women who live in agreement with the instructions in Ephesians 4-6, present no risk to the *pax romana*. Christ is the true Saviour (Eph 5:23) and bringer of peace for all, Jews and non-Jews (Eph 2). Note that the word *eirene* (peace) is nearly absent from Colossians (only 1:2, 3:15) but frequently found in Ephesians (1:2, 2:14-15, 17, 4:3, 6:15, 23) as well as in Romans, Paul’s ‘Friedensmemorandum’ (memorandum of peace).¹³

2.7 Church order

Paul wrote Galatians first; then followed 1 and 2 Thessalonians, 1 and 2 Corinthians and Romans; in this last letter he reaches a first interim position in his theology and ethics. During his six years of imprisonment he deepened his teaching, as it is reflected in further letters for his congregations. Philippians and Philemon were written before the appeal to the emperor (Acts 25:9-12); after this appeal he wrote Colossians and Ephesians shortly before his departure for Rome. Second Timothy originated soon after the arrival in Rome but this letter was intended for Timothy alone; it was Ephesians that would be Paul’s true theological legacy for all Christians in his congregations in the East, including those who would come after him (Eph 1:21). In this circular letter, he summarises his teaching and sends it to all the congregations, in order to strengthen them against any attacks by enemies. He writes as one of the last apostles, looking back to the apostolic era. He entrusts the ‘fatherhood’ over the ‘children’ in the congregations which he founded to the heavenly Father, who plays a primary role in Ephesians.

If I see it correctly, in Galatians 3-6 we can meet an early, Spirit-oriented apostle. After his disputes with the ‘Spirit-oriented’ Corinthians (and possibly the Thessalonians, see 1 Thess 5:19-22 and 2 Thess 2-3), he changed into the Paul of Romans

nearly ten years later, and later still into the apostle of the Prison Letters. He wrestled with the question how the free working of the Holy Spirit could be combined with a hierarchical congregational leadership and with proper order in congregations and during worship (Eph 4), which would allow for the kind of order that encourages congregational growth and mission. In Ephesians, Paul describes this church order or 'house rules', to which he refers with the word *oikonomia* (1 Cor 9:17, Eph 1:10, 3:2, 9, Col 1:25, 1 Tim 1:4). These rules are to help shield Christians as the 'household of God' (Gal 6:9, 1 Tim 3:5-15, Eph 2:20 and ch. 5) from the temptation to fall away from the gospel or from the Father of that 'house'.¹⁴ The work of the Holy Spirit, which – among other things – is protecting, is thus invoked and hoped for through prayer to God and Christ, which becomes more and more important to Paul.

Paul for the first time formulates his guidelines for the ordering of congregations and their worship in 1 Thessalonians 5:11-27. This is a fundamental order that is valid to this day:

Therefore encourage one another and build up each other, as indeed you are doing. But we appeal to you, brothers and sisters, to respect those who labour among you, and have charge of you in the Lord and admonish you; esteem them very highly in love because of their work. Be at peace among yourselves. And we urge you, beloved, to admonish the idlers, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with all of them. See that none of you repays evil for evil, but always seek to do good to one another and to all. Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. Do not quench the Spirit. Do not despise the words of prophets, but test everything; hold fast to what is good; abstain from every form of evil.

In Romans 8 and 12-15 and Ephesians 4-6, he takes things still further in this direction.

2.8 Concluding remark

The inner and outer 'journeys' of Paul from Galatians via the interim position in Romans to Ephesians and 2 Timothy, from Jerusalem to Rome, together brought into being the specific Pauline theology, ethic and ecclesiology which he and his pupils formulated one last time in Ephesians. It has for 2000 years brought Christians more bless-

ing than the apostle to the gentiles could have imagined. He prayed for his readers at that time and he prayed also for us, his sisters and brothers who would be living after him (Eph 3:16-21). Personally I find my joy in living in faith, hope and love, and in being allowed to grow through the teachings of the apostle of Christ, as a fulfilment of the prayers of Paul.

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Endnotes

- 1 To the whole compare Berger, *Kommentar*, 689.
- 2 Regarding this very Pauline and Jewish language see Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 473-474.
- 3 Neudorfer, *Timotheus*, 23-25.
- 4 In the Prison Letters Christology often takes the place that in earlier letters belongs to Theology; see the first part of this study in the previous issue of *EJT*.
- 5 See R. Fuchs, 'Ist die Agape das Ziel der Unterweisung (1 Tim 1,5)?: zum unterschiedlichen Gebrauch des agapè- und des fil-Wortstamms in den Schreiben an Timotheus und Titus' in *Jahrbuch für Evangelikale Theologie* 18 (2004) 93-125.
- 6 On the language of the ruler cult which is used particularly in 1 Timothy, see R. Fuchs, 'Artemis of Ephesus, the Ruler Cult, and the Language of the Pastoral Epistles. Considerations regarding differences and similarities of terminology in the Letters to Timothy and Titus' (forthcoming).
- 7 Julien Smith, *Christ the Ideal King: Cultural Context, Rhetorical Strategy, and the Power of Divine Monarchy in Ephesians* (WUNT 2. Reihe; Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr 2011) and Berger, *Kommentar*, 688-717. Compare the titles Son (in OT language: the King) and Christ in 1 Cor 15:22-28, as God's King in action.
- 8 See Fuchs, 'Artemis'.
- 9 Jung, *Soter*, 140-142.
- 10 See Bruce W. Winter, *Roman Wives, Roman Widows: The Appearance of the New Women and the Pauline Communities* (Grand Rapids / Cambridge UK: Eerdmans, 2003).
- 11 See Philip H. Towner, 'Gnosis and Realized Eschatology in Ephesus and the Corinthian Enthusiasm', *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 31 (1987) 95-125.
- 12 Cf. for example the sixty occurrences of 'woman' in Luke-Acts.
- 13 Haacker, 'Friedensmemorandum'.
- 14 In Galatians God is also emphatically the 'Father' (1:1-4; 4:6-7) of his family, of his 'house' (3:28, 6:9-10). This metaphor is developed in Ephesians, 1 Timothy and Titus.