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5

Kenotic Imitation of Paul and of Christ in Philippians 2 and 3

WILLIAM S. KURZ, S.J.

In many treatments of the Letter to the Philippians, few have given much attention to a very significant pattern in chapters 2 and 3 which proposes for imitation Christ's and Paul's parallel examples of renunciation of their own prerogatives.¹ Two methodological reasons and one presupposition seem to be especially responsible for this lack of attention in the literature. The approaches to Philippians 2 and 3 have been predominantly source and form criticism focused on the isolated Christ hymn in 2:6–11, as well as source criticism of the whole letter resulting in the currently dominant, multiple-letter hypothesis, with chaps. 2 and 3 belonging to fragments of different letters. With such emphases, it would be surprising if many would notice a parallelism between chaps. 2 and 3.

The presupposition that has contributed to neglect of this pattern of parallel imitation of Christ and of Paul is a fundamental bias against imitation of Christ in such seminal studies as W. Michaelis's *TDNT* article on *mimēsis* and E. Käsemann's analysis of the Christ hymn.²

BEYOND SOURCE AND FORM CRITICISM

The methodological failure of form- and source-critical approaches to account for the present form and context of the canonical Letter to the Philippians raises the question whether Pauline studies need the same kind of methodological developments that have benefited research into the Synoptic Gospels and Acts. Recent approaches to the Synoptics and Acts have uncovered theological riches that had gone unnoticed during the earlier scissors-and-paste approach of exclusively form and source criticism. Redaction and composition criticism now focus on the whole Gospel (or the whole of Luke-Acts), including infancy narratives and postresurrection sequels that were once thought to be less amenable to synoptic comparison

and source analysis. Study of the context of the entire work in its canonical form, its overall literary structure, and the narrative story line in which individual pericopes have been situated has clarified the literary and theological richness and individuality of Matthew, Mark, and Luke-Acts.

This study suggests that it is time for a similar move beyond form and source approaches to Philippians and other letters of the Pauline corpus. Even for letters that are held to be combinations of independent letter fragments (like 2 Corinthians and Philippians), their final "redacted" forms as they appear in the manuscript tradition and Christian canon need to be studied. If New Testament Gospel studies have anything to teach about method, they suggest the inadequacy of purely source explanations and scissors-and-paste approaches and the likelihood that the final redactor of the work had some personal literary and theological sensitivity and purposes. If someone so carefully interwove fragments of three of Paul's letters to the Philippians, as many suggest, then that person saw some overall purpose and unity to the finished product. This deserves explanation.

The letter as it now stands can be expected to have a message that goes beyond whatever purposes any possible fragments might have had. Ironically, the original occasions which scholars today work so hard to reconstruct proved to be a problem for the first-century churches that gathered Paul's letters into a collection.³ Some of the original situations were not applicable to other or later churches. But the gathering of Paul's letters (whether into composite letters or as corpus of letters) provided the churches with a broad sample of Paul's pastoral responses to a variety of situations, which by being read together could give later churches insights on how Paul might answer their problems. If Philippians is a composite letter, it seems a priori likely that its major message would go beyond the purposes of its sources, as the theology of the Gospel of Luke goes beyond the traditions and sources it contains. Thus, the letter as it now stands (and as part of the Pauline letter corpus) gives strong encouragement in *any* situation of persecution, trials, and internal difficulties, and threats to sound teaching.

Further, for the history of exegesis and theology at least until the Enlightenment, and for the use of Paul's letters in the church's life, it has been the final canonical form of Philippians (the only form in the manuscript tradition) that is important and authoritative, not hypothetical, reconstructed sources or letter fragments. The lack of genuine unanimity among scholars on the details of these reconstructions and on most of the form- and source-critical questions pertaining to Philippians seems to add another reason for a renewed focus on the final, redacted canonical form for church life and use.⁴

My purpose here will be to apply some of these more redactional- and compositional-critical approaches to Philippians 2—3 in the context of the

final form of the letter. It will argue that the present form of Philippians 2—3 is centered on the pattern of imitation of both Christ and of Paul in their self-emptying of prerogatives.

The imitation of Christ is indeed a central focus in the exhortation of Phil. 1:27—2:18.⁵ The heart of this exhortation is the Christ hymn in 2:6—11, which in this context functions as an example of surrendering one's own prerogatives and letting God do the exalting. The section begins with a call for unity to a church facing persecution and sharing in Paul's sufferings on Christ's behalf (1:27—30). Philippians 2:1—4 then exhorts the community to have one mind: avoiding competition and vainglory, considering others better than themselves, and looking to the interests of others rather than just of themselves. The meaning of Phil. 2:5 is hotly debated, but the easiest reading in this overall context goes in the direction of the New American Bible: "Your attitude must be that of Christ."⁶ This command to have a certain attitude in 2:5 further specifies those in 2:2 and will be echoed again in 3:15, 3:19, and 4:2 (for Euodia and Syntyche). The pattern of Christ Jesus is one of emptying himself and humbling himself in obedience even unto death on a cross (2:6—8). In response, God has exalted him to Lord of all "to the glory of God the Father" (2:9—11).

Philippians 2:12 follows from the example of Christ in 2:6—11: "for this reason, therefore" (ὥστε),⁷ as they have always obeyed, so now they are to work out their salvation without grumbling and questioning, which destroy community harmony (2:12—15; cf. the rebellious Israelites in the desert). Thus, the overall immediate context for the Christ hymn is an exhortation to community harmony and unity through avoiding competitive self-promotion.

Philippians 3 offers a similar example of Paul's letting go of his own Jewish prerogatives in hope of being exalted in the resurrection, in a context at least initially dominated by the divisiveness of judaizers. Judaizing "mutilators" were tempting the Philippians to "trust in the flesh" (3:2—3). Paul responds with his own example of refusing to trust in the flesh through Jewish credentials, even though his Jewish credentials were the best (3:4—6). Trusting in the flesh at the beginning of chap. 3 clearly refers to desiring Jewish credentials and prerogatives through judaizing practices.

The verb ἡγοῦμαι provides an important verbal link from 3:7—8 back to 2:6.⁸ As Christ in 2:6 did not "count" it something to be seized/clung to (οὐχ ἀρπαγμὸν ἡγήσατο) to be like God but emptied himself, so Paul now "counted" (ἡγήμαι and ἡγοῦμαι) what had been his gain (his Jewish prerogatives) as loss, compared to knowing Christ without any judaizing justification on his own (3:7—11).

Thus, the pattern of imitating both Christ and Paul in their respective self-emptying of personal prerogatives dominates the central chaps. 2—3

in the present form of Philippians. This imitation pattern in Philippians 2—3 recalls Paul's call in 1 Cor. 11:1, "Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ." In chap. 2, Paul calls for community harmony through humility and the kenotic model of Christ. In light of chap. 2, Paul's self-emptying response to the judaizing threat in 3:2—11 has the appearance of imitating Christ's kenosis in the specific situation of judaizing. Since it follows the examples of Christ and of Paul in chaps. 2—3, Paul's call to be "imitators of me" (συμμιμηταί μου) in 3:17 has almost the same force as his call in 1 Cor. 11:1 to imitate him as he imitates Christ. This is true from the context, whether the phrase itself means that the Philippians should all together be imitators of Paul or should join him in being imitators of Christ.⁹

The argument to establish this thesis, that the present form of Philippians 2—3 provides a parallel pattern of imitation of both Christ and of Paul in their self-emptying of prerogatives, will have the following main steps: (1) to show the central importance of imitation in first-century exhortation with the help of previous studies; (2) to study the explicit calls to imitation in Phil. 2:5—8 and 3:17 (with 4:9) in their contexts and within the overall structure of the letter as a whole; (3) to confirm the thesis by briefly showing how two patterns in Phil. 2:1—4:2 also appear in other Pauline texts—(a) self-kenosis and subsequent exaltation, and (b) the ABA structure common to Phil. 2:3—4:2 and 1 Corinthians 8—10 and 12—14—and by recalling the vocabulary clusters that link the calls to imitation in Philippians 2 and 3.

THE IMPORTANCE OF IMITATION OF EXAMPLES IN FIRST-CENTURY PARENESIS

In his unpublished dissertation of 1982, Benjamin Fiore gathers an extensive bibliography of secondary literature and collection of primary sources which document the critical importance of imitating personal examples in first-century exhortation, in rhetorical, philosophical and religious teaching, and in Paul.¹⁰ Fiore demonstrates the importance of personal examples for imitation in such diverse sources as rhetorical treatises; handbooks and *chria*; hortatory literature; kingship literature by Isocrates, Plutarch, and Dio Chrysostom; official letters; philosophical and ethical hortatory letters by Seneca and others; the Socratic letters; the pastoral epistles; and Paul's letters.¹¹

Greco-Roman pedagogical principles especially emphasize that the role of the teacher is not only to instruct by his words but to be an example of what he teaches. Thus, for example, Isocrates says, "And the teacher . . . must in himself set such an example of oratory that the students who have taken form under his instruction and are able to pattern after him will . . .

show in their speaking a degree of grace and charm which is not found in others."¹² Quintilian and Cicero have similar understandings of the teacher's role in the first century. Quintilian stresses the character of the teacher and the nonacademic cast of that relationship, for the teacher is to act *in loco parentis* and with a parental attitude.¹³ Fiore concludes:

This education by example (*non auribus modo, verum etiam oculis*) looks to various individuals for models; but the *parent's role is crucial* in proposing them when urging that some vice be avoided or that some course be chosen. The parents might propose someone from the family's ancestors as example, or might, like a rhetoric teacher in more institutionalized and technical education, be examples themselves.¹⁴

D. Stanley, W. P. De Boer, P. Gutiérrez, and others argue that the basis of Paul's call to imitate him (as in Gal. 4:12 and Phil. 3:17 and 4:9) is his special relationship as founding father of the community (1 Cor. 4:16).¹⁵ Imitation is often linked with fatherhood, whether of God as father, one's ancestors or natural father, or teachers of noble living. The last category combines father and teacher and lies behind Paul's example (1 Cor. 4:15 and 17).¹⁶

Gutiérrez highlights these important uses of the image of fatherhood in the ancient Orient and during the Hellenistic period. "Father" is always a title of honor, signifying a sharing in God's life-giving activity and an immortalizing of oneself by projecting one's own existence on others. Calling someone "father" generally indicates some kind of dependence, unless it degenerates into formalism. The most common use for the image of fatherhood is the comparison of teaching activities to paternal duties. It envisages not merely formal teaching but the total formation of the disciple.

Another important first-century use of the fatherhood metaphor was by wisdom traditions. Because in the east wisdom and knowledge of life were passed on from father to son, sages were viewed as fulfilling a paternal function. The father was responsible for the total education of his children in the "way" that leads to a long, happy life. Upbringing had a religious dimension in its ideal of the just man walking in God's ways. Given this task, the sage viewed his disciples as his sons, and the more this way of wisdom encompassed the total religious life of the disciple, the more profound was the notion of pedagogical fatherhood. Both the Qumran and the New Testament texts indicate these ideas were current in Judaism in Paul's time. In addition, Philo of Alexandria attests the Hellenistic notion of teaching activity as analogous to giving life when he describes guides to perfection as fathers.¹⁷

Fiore shows the link in 1 Corinthians between exemplifying a way of life to be imitated and making that way explicit with precepts. That letter uses αἱ ὁδοί for Paul's way of life (1 Cor. 4:17; cf. 7:17; 11:16; 14:33, 36).

Precepts that make that way explicit appear at 1:10, 31; 3:21; 4:1, 5, 16; 5:9, 12–13; 6:18, 20; 7; 8:9; 10:10, 12; and many others. The letter also uses more general didactic reminders, such as the οὐκ οἴδατε (“Do you not know?”) formula. Example puts life into the content and conduct of Christian life which precept and instruction delineate.¹⁸

This imitation focused especially on central attitudes of the Christian message, not on peculiarities of Paul’s life.¹⁹ In 1 Cor. 8—11:1, Fiore shows one of these central attitudes to be a self-effacement on behalf of “weaker” members of the community (esp. 11:1 specified by 10:31–33; cf. 9:19–23). This corresponds to Paul’s own kerygmatic method in 1:26–29 and 2:1–5. The opening chapters of the letter help clarify what “as I am of Christ” in 11:1 means. In 2:3, Paul says he limited his knowledge to the crucified Jesus Christ and thus identified with the “weak” (like the Corinthians in 1:26–27). His kerygma was not in Greek wisdom but divine power (2:4–5). His own attitude in this was a pattern for the community (3:18–19), as also his example of voluntary curtailment in 9:19. Paul identified the word of the cross with the gospel (1:17), which was a proclamation of God’s power.²⁰

This illustrates the basic Pauline pattern that God’s power is seen in human weakness, which fits both Christ’s and Paul’s examples in Philippians 2 and 3. In 1 Corinthians, for instance, Paul rejects the use of wisdom in preaching and in Philippians and Galatians the use of righteousness through the law, in order to rely on God’s power alone. Philippians 2 applies this power-in-weakness pattern to Christ letting go his prerogative to be like God and letting God exalt him to be Lord. Philippians 3 shows the same pattern in Paul’s example of letting go his Jewish prerogatives that he may know the power of Christ’s resurrection.

Fiore isolates important elements and the form which Paul’s exhortations to imitate his example share with other exhortations of his day. The use of both positive and antithetical examples was very important in exhortation. Paul contrasted himself and his teaching to people disturbing his churches (Gal. 1:10—2:21; 4:12–16; 5:11–26; 6:14–15; Phil. 3:3—4:1). Unlike the normal practice in exhortation of describing opponents as general types, Paul usually attacked specific known enemies, exposing their tactics and rejecting them directly (Gal. 1:6–9; 4:17; 5:7–10; 6:12–13; Phil. 3:2). Philippians 3:18–19 is the only text that stereotypes the negative examples (which is why mirror-reading to opponents there has led many exegetes astray). But 3:18–19 sets the stereotyped negative examples against an explicit call to imitation (3:16–17); the *context* is specific²¹ and enables identification of these examples as judaizing enemies of Christ’s cross who put stock in the flesh (3:2–4), versus those like Paul who did not trust in the flesh (3:4–11) but only in the cross. Other kinds of negative examples may be found in 1 Cor. 8:9–13 (harmful effects of bad human examples);

10:1–11 (the negative scriptural example of the wilderness generation—cf. 11:29–30); and 16:15–18 (the positive example of Stephanas and others).²²

Philippians 3:12–16 uses another common approach in exhortations to imitate a teacher or leader. It is one of *synaskesis*, a call to imitate and share in the teacher's own striving for the perfection which he has not yet reached. It makes the call to imitate oneself seem a little less arrogant. Paul's claim to perfection in Judaism (3:4–6) had been already relativized in the light of Christ and his death (3:7–11). Christ and his cross lay behind Paul as model: "Allusion to the exemplary attitude of Christ was already made at 2:5 while the suffering first appears at 1:29–30 (here the word ἁγών is used)."²³

Paul does not consistently use the common practice of filling out his example by virtue and vice lists and prescriptions.²⁴ Regarding the common use of both explicit and implicit examples, Paul explicitly calls for imitation of his example at Gal. 4:1–20 and Phil. 3:12–4:1. Philippians is unique in bolstering commands to rejoice (2:18; 3:1; 4:4) with the implicit example of Paul's joy in the most trying circumstances (1:4, 18; 4:10).²⁵

Like the Socratic epistles, Paul uses other members of the community besides himself as examples, but their example is in explicit relationship to his example. Thus, in 1 Corinthians, Apollos's example is subordinate to Paul's and that of Stephanas is derivative from Paul's. Though Paul mentions the example of the suffering Judean churches in 1 Thess. 2:14, he quickly adds his own at 2:16, which echoes 1:7 where he mentions himself and Christ explicitly. Philippians 3:17b points to others insofar as they walk according to Paul's model, which 3:17a calls the readers to imitate.²⁶

Let us end this consideration of the importance of imitation in first-century exhortation with Fiore's listing of the range of hortatory devices in Philippians 3. This passage resembles the Socratic and pastoral letters and other hortatory works "as it elaborates its exhortation with the cluster of devices specified for the development of the *chria*."²⁷ These devices are negative example (vv. 2–4a), Paul's example (vv. 4b–11), a racing metaphor (vv. 12–14), the correct attitude (v. 15a), promise of its proof (v. 15b), restatement (v. 16), command (v. 17), contrast (vv. 18–19), gnomic saying and its elaboration (vv. 20–21), and concluding command (4:1).²⁸ But the aim of Philippians 3 is not purely hortatory. It includes polemic against false teachers and reasserts Paul's own authority.²⁹

CALLS TO IMITATION IN THE OVERALL LETTER CONTEXT

A major difference in a redaction and composition approach, from the usual form- and source-critical studies of passages from Philippians, is the importance of the structure and context of the *whole* letter for interpreting

each passage. For the structure of ancient letters, this study will utilize the consensus in American scholarship.³⁰ Particularly significant is the function of the epistolary thanksgiving in foreshadowing the major themes and topics of the letter as a whole through vocabulary and other hints.³¹

Even if Philippians is a redacted letter, the thanksgiving section (1:3–11), as read in the light of the complete present form of the letter, does contain hints and verbal links with most of the complete letter, and thus provides a context for understanding chaps. 2 and 3. The note of joy in 1:4 is a striking characteristic running throughout the letter (1:4, 18, 25; 2:2, 17–18, 28–29; 3:1; 4:1, 4, 10). This joy is often an eschatological kind of joy in the midst of suffering or conflict (cf. esp. 1:17–18 with 3:1–2 and 4:1: joy in the same context as preachers Paul opposes).³² The Philippians' "fellowship" with Paul for the gospel in 1:5 is re-echoed in his thanksgiving for their gift in 4:15 (cf. 2:1). The expressions "from the first day" (1:5) and "the one who began" (1:6) are recalled by "in the beginning of the gospel" (4:15). The notion of God "completing" at the day of Christ the good work begun in the Philippians (1:6) has echoes in "the day of Christ" of 2:16 and in 3:12–14, which emphasizes that Paul is not yet perfect (cf. 3:14 and 20).

The expression "to feel thus" (τοῦτο φρονεῖν) in 1:7 is echoed in 2:2, 5 and 3:15 (cf. 3:19), and "to feel thus about you all" (ὑπὲρ πάντων ὑμῶν) in 1:7 is reciprocated in 4:10, Paul's acknowledgment for their gift. That the Philippians were "partakers with [him]" (συγκοινωνούς μου) in 1:7 is echoed in his appreciation for their gift in 4:14.³³ Paul's longing for the Philippians in 1:8 has resonances in 4:1, at the end of his warning about the "dogs" (3:2). The word "affection" (σπλάγχνους) in 1:8 reoccurs as σπλάγχνα in 2:1.

Paul's prayer in 1:9–11, to the effect that their love may increase with knowledge and discernment so that they approve what is better, is quite general (cf. Rom. 12:2) but certainly applies to and prepares for the example of Paul's change of values in 3:7–11.³⁴ There Paul states that he counted as loss his Jewish credentials because knowledge of Christ was a greater good (3:8). Philippians 1:10b, "that they be pure and blameless for the day of Christ," reinforces 1:6 in foreshadowing 2:16, "the day of Christ." Paul's prayer in 1:11, that they would have completed the "fruit" (καρπὸν) of the righteousness they received through Jesus Christ, has resonances both in 4:17 (Paul wants the "fruit" that increases to their credit) and 3:6–9, esp. 3:9 (Paul has righteousness not of his own from the law but through Christ). Philippians 1:11b, "to the glory and praise of God," is contrasted in 2:3, "do nothing from . . . conceit" (cf. not "trusting in the flesh" through Paul's Jewish credentials in 3:3–6). It is echoed in the doxologies to God in 2:11 (at the end of the Christ hymn) and in 4:20 (at the close of Paul's thanksgiving for their gift).

Thus, the thanksgiving and prayer in Phil. 1:3–11 call to mind the following themes as a context for the kenotic imitation of Christ and of Paul in Philippians 2–3: Paul's prayer with joy, thankful for the Philippians' fellowship for the gospel from the beginning, with forward-looking trust that God would finish at the day of Christ the good work he had begun in them. Paul has this mind about the Philippians because they were "partakers" with him in his chains and defense of the gospel (through their suffering and especially through their gift). Paul longs for them with the heart of Christ and prays that their love increases with knowledge and discernment to see through false teachings and approve what is better, and that they remain without offense until the day of Christ, producing the fruit of their justification through Christ (not through the law) for God's glory.

The structure of the *present* form of Philippians is relatively easy to delineate after the opening (1:1–2) and introductory thanksgiving and prayer (1:3–11): two major sections of exhortations and/or warnings (1:27–2:18 and 3:1–4:9) are interspersed with descriptions of Paul's situation (1:12–26), his plans for Timothy (2:19–24) and commendation of Epaphroditus (2:25–30), and his thanksgiving for their gift (4:10–20), followed by the closing (4:21–23). Thus, the order is: opening (1:1–2), thanksgiving (1:3–11), Paul's situation (1:12–26), exhortations (1:27–2:18), Timothy and Epaphroditus (2:19–30), exhortations and warnings (3:1–4:9), thanksgiving for their gift (4:10–20), closing (4:21–23).

Paul prepares for his exhortation to imitate the self-emptying of Christ by describing his own imprisonment, which seems to have led to the conversion of some of his jailers (cf. the Praetorium, 1:13; the saints of Caesar's household, 4:22). He refers to preachers emboldened by his captivity to preach from envy and rivalry and partisanship (1:17, cf. 2:3), thinking to afflict him. Paul responds with several expressions of his indomitable eschatological joy in the face of their spiteful efforts, refusing to give them the satisfaction of grieving him by rejoicing that, even if in pretense, Christ is proclaimed (1:18).

Paul continues to rejoice in his not being shamed, for Christ will be honored in either his life or his death (1:19–20). As Paul faces the two possibilities of either dying to be with Christ (his preference) or remaining to serve them, he trusts that he will return to them for their progress and joy (1:21–26).

This report of Paul's imprisonment and possible death introduces the first major section of exhortation (1:27–2:18), whose center is the kenotic example and exaltation of Christ (2:6–11).³⁵ Paul calls the Philippians to unity without fear of their persecutors, for they have the privilege of suffering for Christ as Paul does (1:27–30). He urges them to fill up his joy by being united in mind and love, doing nothing from self-seeking but looking to the needs of others in humility (2:1–4). Verbal preparations for

the Christ hymn include "conceit" (κενοδοξίαν), "humility" (ταπεινοφροσύνη), and "count others better than yourselves" (ἀλλήλους ἡγούμενοι ὑπερέχοντας ἑαυτῶν) in 2:3. The verb "to look at" or "to mark" (σκοποῦντες) in 2:4 will recur in 3:17; 2:4 names the self-interest they are *not* to look to; 3:17, their true models.

The attitude Paul asks for in 2:1–4 is illustrated by the example of Christ in 2:5–8. Being "in the form of God" (ἐν μορφῇ θεοῦ), he "did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped" (οὐχ ἄρπαγμόν ἡγήσατο) but "emptied himself" (ἐαυτὸν ἐκένωσεν), taking on "the form of a servant" (μορφὴν δούλου). Being found as a human, he "humbled himself" (ἐταπείνωσεν ἑαυτόν) and became obedient even unto death on a cross (a curse: Gal. 3:13).

In the Old Testament, self-abasement by a servant of God often leads to God's exalting that servant (cf. Isa. 53:10b–12 and the citation of Isa. 45:23 in Phil. 2:10–11). The Philippians hymn also culminates in God's exalting the self-abased Christ (2:9–11). The word "therefore" (διὸ) in 2:9 interprets this exaltation as God's vindication or reward for Christ's abasement.

This pattern of exaltation after self-abasement in Phil. 2:9–11 also corresponds to the promise of reward (or, in athletic terms, a prize) for exercising virtue in first-century parenesis, which was described above. The reward motif reoccurs in Phil. 3:10–11, being conformed to Christ's death so as to attain to resurrection, and in 3:12–16, pressing on for the prize. Philippians 3:21 repeats the humiliation-exaltation pattern of this hymn, even using the same verbal roots: "who [the Lord Jesus Christ] will change [μετασχηματίσει] our lowly body [τῆς ταπεινώσεως] to be like his glorious body [σύμμορφον τῷ σώματι τῆς δόξης αὐτοῦ]."³⁶ The cause of exaltation is God in 3:9–11 and God's power in 3:21.³⁷

The conclusion and application of the hymn leads to further exhortation (2:12, 14, 15; cf. 3:6). Because of Christ's example, they should work out their salvation "with fear and trembling" (not complacently considering themselves "perfect," cf. 3:12–16). Avoiding the negative example of the wilderness generation who grumbled and questioned God, they should let their innocence shine as lights in a corrupt world, as they hold fast to the word of life (e.g., by refusing to judaize, chap. 3). The result will be Paul's pride on the day of Christ that he did not labor in vain for them (2:12–16). This recalls the constant eschatological perspective throughout the letter (e.g., 3:20–21 and esp. 1:6 and 10). The sacrificial language Paul applies to his possible death in 2:17 is very similar to the sacrificial imagery applied to their gift in 4:18 and recalls the context of possible martyrdom behind the letter as it now stands (1:7, 20–22). The exhortation section ends on the note of rejoicing in trials that is thematic for the whole letter (e.g., 1:17–18; 1:27–2:2; 3:1–2; 4:1–4).

Two short sections on Timothy and Epaphroditus have their setting in the canonical letter between the exhortation based on Christ's example and that based on Paul's in 3:1—4:9. This setting seems to imply some carry-over of Christ's example to Timothy and Epaphroditus and to prepare for Paul's presentation of his own example. Other preachers are antithetical examples, but Timothy exemplifies what Paul asked of the Philippians (not to seek their own interests but those of others, 2:4)—that is, other teachers look after their own interests (2:21), but Timothy looks after the interests of the Philippians (2:20). Timothy in turn is Paul's disciple and imitates Paul "as a son (τέκνον) with a father" (2:22). He worked as a slave with Paul (σὺν ἐμοὶ ἐδούλευσεν) for the gospel (2:22), as Christ had taken on the form of a slave (μορφὴν δούλου) and become obedient, even unto the slave's death on the cross (2:7–8).³⁸

Plans to send someone and hopes to come oneself (as in 2:23–24 for Timothy and Paul) are commonplace in letters of that time.³⁹ Paul's praise of Timothy is also normal for letters of commendation, where the writer recommends someone by explaining their relationship and giving his or her credentials.⁴⁰

Like that of Timothy, the commendation of Epaphroditus in 2:25–30 contains elements of a letter of commendation, and it also echoes significant phrases from the section on Christ's example. Many have wondered why Paul felt it necessary to tell the Philippians to receive and honor their own messenger, Epaphroditus (2:29). Perhaps part of the answer is the standard practice to have a letter of commendation for the letter carrier, who was probably Epaphroditus (2:25, 29). But because Epaphroditus had been sent to Paul by the Philippians, Paul deliberately modifies the usual commendation. He begins by calling Epaphroditus his brother, fellow worker, and soldier, as well as their messenger. The important role for this study on the example of Christ and Paul is the echo from the Christ hymn: that Epaphroditus had come "close to death" (μέχρι θανάτου, 2:30 as in 2:8) in Christ's work. By risking his life, Epaphroditus was another embodiment of Christ's self-sacrificing example in 2:7–8.

The letter returns to exhortation in 3:1—4:9 with "finally" (τὸ λοιπόν), as 1 Thess. 4:1 turns to two chapters of exhortation with λοιπόν after treating Timothy's news (3:1–8) and Paul's reaction to it (3:9–13).⁴¹ Philippians 3:1 reiterates Paul's emphasis on rejoicing made in several earlier difficult situations of imprisonment, risk to life, and false teachers. Then the letter turns abruptly to a sharp warning against judaizers (3:2). Even if this is a seam between letter fragments, its redactor apparently did not think the transition impossible, for he left it as it was.⁴²

Paul uses invective as he sharply warns against the antithetical examples of the "dogs," "evildoers" (often used by Jews against Gentiles), and "those

who mutilate the flesh" (3:2, versus "circumcision," 3:3). He counters their bad example with "We are the true circumcision who . . . glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh" (3:3), and then with his own personal example in 3:4–21. Beginning with his Jewish credentials (3:4–6), Paul reverses his value judgments so that his Jewish "gains" he now considers "loss," compared to gaining Christ without justification from the law (3:7–9). His relationship to Christ echoes earlier language of the letter (3:10, cf. 1:7) and especially the Christ hymn (3:10; cf. 2:6–8). Paul chooses participation in Christ's death that he may attain to the resurrection (3:11; cf. Christ's exaltation, 2:9–11). Paul's example is not one of completed perfection but one of striving toward the goal (3:12–14), and he utilizes standard rhetorical admission of imperfection and athletic imagery, as mentioned earlier. As many as are "perfect" agree with Paul (3:15, recalling 2:5 and 2:2). Philippians 3:16 calls them to hold true to and follow what they have already attained.

The call to imitate Paul in 3:17, which is one of the main foci of this essay, forms an inclusion in the present form of the letter with the call to imitate his ways at the end of this exhortation section in 4:9. This inclusion is reinforced by another inclusion signaled by τὸ λοιπὸν at the beginning and toward the end of this whole exhortation section (3:1 and 4:8).

Philippians 3:17 calls for imitation both of Paul and of "those who so live (περιπατοῦντας) as you have an example (τύπον) in us." Both περιπατέω and τύπος are technical terms in first-century exhortation, often applied to imitation of people as examples (e.g., 2 Thess. 3:19, 1 Tim. 4:12, Titus 2:7). The sentence extends imitation of Paul to imitation also of those at Philippi who follow Paul's way. In this context, these would presumably be those who refused to judaize, possibly including Epaphroditus and Timothy (when he arrives). The imperative "look at" or "mark" (σκοπεῖτε) of 3:17 points to positive examples for imitation (those in Philippi who follow Paul's way) in contrast to the antithetical examples they are to avoid (cf. βλέπετε three times in 3:2 and the many who "walk" as enemies of Christ's cross in 3:18).

Through the repetition of περιπατέω, 3:17 and 3:18 draw a sharp contrast between those walking according to Paul's "example" and the enemies of the cross of Christ (3:18) whose "minds [are] set on earthly things" (3:19). Philippians 3:18–19, 20–21 repeat this contrast between these enemies of Christ's cross and the "we" whose "commonwealth" (πολίτευμα; cf. πολιτεύεσθε in 1:27) is "in heaven," whence they await as their savior (versus saving themselves through judaizing) "the Lord Jesus Christ" (3:20, paralleling 2:11 at the end of the Christ hymn). The contrast between those whose heavenly hope is in Christ as savior, versus enemies of the cross of Christ whose minds are set on earthly things, is strong evidence that the

latter refer to judaizers, not libertines as a mirror-reading of Phil. 3:19 might suggest.⁴³

Against most commentators, Helmut Koester makes a convincing argument that there is only one situation throughout Phil. 3:2—4:1 and that 3:17 continues from 3:16 and what preceded. At least v. 17 as it now stands finds its most natural context in what precedes, with περιπατούντας in 3:17 recalling στοιχεῖν from 3:16. Moreover, Phil. 3:18 ("enemies of the cross of Christ") continues the themes of 3:3—4 (boasting in Christ versus trusting in the flesh) and 3:10 (sharing in Christ's sufferings and conformed to his death).⁴⁴

If 3:17 continues what went before, then 3:2—16 specifies that in which Paul wants to be imitated: not trusting in the flesh (3:3—4) through judaizing efforts at perfection⁴⁵ but following his example of surrendering his Jewish credentials so as to gain righteousness in Christ, not of his own from the law (3:4—9), and being conformed to Christ's death that he may attain to the resurrection from the dead (3:10—11).

Those who walk as enemies of Christ's cross (3:18) are antithetical examples to Paul, who is conformed to Christ's death (3:10b) and who got that way by the change of attitude recorded in 3:7: "But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ." The same choice faces Paul in 3:7 and the enemies of Christ's cross in 3:18 to seek salvation in judaizing practices or in Christ alone. When Paul chooses the way of Christ's death, he willingly forfeits his accomplishments and standing as a Jew.

In turn, Paul's choice in 3:7 parallels Christ's in 2:6. We have seen that the use of ἡγημαί in 3:7 parallels that in 2:6, οὐχ ἀρπαγμὸν ἡγήσατο. Both Paul and Christ had a certain standing they were willing to consider expendable—Paul as the perfect Jew and Christ as "in the form of God" (2:6). Each of them made a kenotic choice, and both choices are held up for imitation.

Both Paul's choice and Christ's led to the cross, in contrast to the "enemies of the cross of Christ." If the context in the present form of the letter implies judaizing, then the negative examples are Christian enemies of Christ's cross for one of two reasons. Either their judaizing approaches to justification in effect nullify the cross of Christ, as Paul argues in Gal. 2:21: "I do not nullify the grace of God; for if justification were through the law, then Christ died to no purpose" (cf. Gal. 5:2—4). Or Christians are trying to mollify non-Christian Jews and avoid their persecution by making converted Gentiles into Jews. For example, in Gal. 6:12, Paul adds in his own hand, "It is those who want to make a good showing in the flesh that would compel you to be circumcised, and only in order that they may not be persecuted for the cross of Christ."

Perhaps the opponents mentioned in Phil. 1:28 are non-Christian Jews

persecuting the church because of Gentile Christians. Philippians 1:27–30 would then be urging the Philippians to stand firm and united against Jewish pressure to circumcise Gentile Christians and not to be frightened by their opponents from suffering for Christ's sake, thus having the same conflict as Paul, who suffered from Jews because of his mission to Gentiles (cf. 2 Cor. 11:24: five times given thirty-nine lashes by Jews; 2 Cor. 11:26: "danger from my own people").

In the language of invective, "belly" could allude to food laws and "shame" to circumcision. As in Galatians (5:12, cf. 5:10–11), in Phil. 3:2, Paul twisted the term of Jewish pride, "circumcision" (περιτομή), to one implying the shame and ritual uncleanness of castration, κατατομή (cf. Deut. 23:2). Similar invective not related to libertinism appears in the warnings in Rom. 16:17–18 against those who cause division against received teaching: "Such men serve, not Christ our Lord, but their own bellies, and they deceive the simple-minded with smooth and flattering speech" (NAB).⁴⁶

The adjective "earthly" (ἐπίγειος) occurs in Paul only here in 3:19 and in 2:10, 1 Cor. 15:40, and 2 Cor. 5:1, always in juxtaposition with "heavenly." A similar contrast occurs in John 3:12, James 3:15, and in early Christian and other contemporary writings.⁴⁷ In an anti-Judaizing context, the adjective would correspond to trusting in the flesh (3:3–4) as a negative Christian evaluation of Jewish regulations like circumcision. Thus, Paul contrasts the "earthly things" of 3:19 to Christian citizenship (πολίτευμα, echoing the *hapax legomenon* in 1:27) in heaven, from where Christians await Jesus' return as savior. The basic contrast is between salvation through Christ or through "earthly" strivings of the "flesh."

Philippians 3:20b, "the Lord Jesus Christ," echoes 2:11, and 3:21 recalls several unusual key terms from 2:6–8 and 2:11. Paul's eschatological hope in 3:20–21 corresponds closely in vocabulary and structural pattern to the humiliation-exaltation of the Christ hymn in Philippians 2. In 4:1, the "therefore" (ὥστε) which follows 3:20–21 is the same as the ὥστε in 2:12 following the Christ hymn. Because of their eschatological humiliation-exaltation hope in 3:20–21, the Philippians should "stand fast" against enemies of the cross who would seek earthly solutions and await from heaven exaltation from their lowliness (4:1). Philippians 4:1 has several verbal echoes back to earlier parts of the canonical letter: the New Testament *hapax legomenon* ἐπιπόθητοι ("longed for") to ἐπιποθῶ πάντας ὑμᾶς ("I yearn for you all") in the thanksgiving at 1:8; χαρά ("joy") and στήκετε ἐν κυρίῳ ("stand firm thus in the Lord") to στήκετε ἐν ἐνὶ πνεύματι ("stand firm in one spirit") in 1:27 at the beginning of the first exhortation section.

In Phil. 4:2–3, Paul applies his more general calls to unanimity, especially those in 2:1–4, to asking that his co-workers Euodia and Syntyche "agree

in the Lord" (4:2–3). He begins a last set of general exhortations in 4:4–9 with a twofold "Rejoice!" He sums up these exhortations and those of the whole letter with another call to imitate him in 4:9: "What you have learned and received [παρελάβετε, a technical term for receiving tradition] and heard and seen in me, do." The call to imitate Paul in 4:9 reinforces that in 3:17.

Paul's thanksgiving for their gift in 4:10–20 begins with "I rejoiced," which continues the theme of rejoicing that has pervaded the earlier parts of the canonical letter. Their concern for Paul in 4:10 reciprocates his concern for them in 1:7. Paul begins with the standard philosophical claim to be ἀνάρχης, content with what one has. For example, the Socratic letter "Antisthenes to Aristippus" begins: "It is not right for a philosopher to associate with tyrants and to devote himself to Sicilian tables. Rather, he should live in his own country and strive for self-sufficiency."⁴⁸ The verb "to be abased" (ταπεινούσθαι) in 4:12 illustrates this virtue of contentment and recalls the abasement that Christ underwent in 2:8 (ἐταπείνωσεν ἑαυτόν, cf. 2:3) and from which Paul hoped Christ would rescue him in 3:21 (ταπείνωσις), thus helping tie the major parts of the canonical letter together. In 4:14–20 the following expressions refer back to the epistolary thanksgiving: "to share my trouble" (συγκοινωνήσαντές μου τῇ θλίψει) in 4:14 to 1:7; "in the beginning of the gospel" (ἐν ἀρχῇ τοῦ εὐαγγελίου) and "entered into partnership" (εκοινωνήσεν) in 4:15 to 1:5; "fruit" (καρπὸν) in 4:17 to 1:11; "to God . . . glory" (τῷ δὲ θεῷ . . . δόξα) in 4:20 to 1:11. The sacrificial imagery for their gift, especially "sacrifice" (θυσία), recalls Paul's self-sacrifice in 2:17.

In the closing, the greetings from those of Caesar's household recalls the effect of Paul's chains on the praetorean guard in 3:13 and maintains to the very end of the canonical letter the self-sacrificial theme which has run throughout it.

Thus, in the context of the entire letter to the Philippians, the call to imitate the kenotic example of Christ in Phil. 2:5–11 and Paul in 3:4–4:1 and 4:9 dominates the two main sections of exhortation. In turn, the epistolary thanksgiving in 1:3–11 and Paul's acknowledgment of the Philippians' gift in 4:10–20 form an inclusion into which the parenetic sections in 1:27–2:18 and 3:1–4:9 are set. The inclusion emphasizes rejoicing in sufferings, mutual love and concern, communion through common suffering and their gift to Paul, appreciation of self-sacrifice, and abasement in the hope of eschatological exaltation, all to the glory of God.

The description of Paul's situation in Phil. 1:12–26 and remarks about Timothy and Epaphroditus in 2:19–30 add concrete details to the significance of the self-sacrificing examples of Christ and Paul, which the letter asks the Philippians to imitate. Paul can rejoice even facing death in prison.

He is willing to postpone his release in death for complete union with Christ in order to serve their needs. Timothy, too, unlike other teachers who seek their own interests by judaizing compromises to avoid Jewish persecution, shares Paul's concern for their needs and not his own. Epaphroditus risks his life and almost dies fulfilling the mandate the Philippians give him. The cumulative effect of all these personal examples is a powerful incentive to imitate their self-sacrifice for the interests of others.

PATTERNS AND WORD CLUSTERS

A final, brief look at similar patterns in other letters of Paul can confirm the plausibility that this was the interpretation given to the final form of Philippians in the context of the Pauline letter corpus. A seminal suggestion for our thesis has been that the calls to imitate Christ and Paul, respectively, in Philippians 2 and 3 implicitly parallel 1 Cor. 11:1: "Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ." But the parallelism between Phil. 2:1—4:3 and 1 Cor. 8:1—11:1 goes further. Both contexts stress kenotic imitation of Paul and Christ, and both use an inclusion or A-B-A pattern.

The inclusion in Phil. 2:1—4:3 is caused by the parallel commands to community members in 2:2 and 4:2, "Be of the same mind" (*τὸ αὐτὸ φρονεῖν*). Though some have argued that the text would make more sense flowing directly from 2:2 to 4:2, that ignores the common practice of inclusions and A-B-A structures in New Testament writings and substitutes contemporary for first-century logic. Studies of the Gospel of Mark have benefited greatly from attention to its many A-B-A intercalations. Scholars now commonly recognize the A-B-A structure in 1 Corinthians 12—14 and 8—10, and how chaps. 13 and 9:1—10:13 add deeper perspectives (though seeming to digress) before returning to the original question in chaps. 14 and 10:14.

Whether the inclusion in Phil. 2:2 and 4:2 came from Paul or from a redactor, readers of the Pauline corpus would perceive it as an inclusion like other inclusions in Paul. And the structural similarity to the inclusion in 1 Cor. 8:1—11:1 is especially strong. Philippians 2:1—4 calls the community to unanimity through self-abasement and concern for others' interests. Before Phil. 4:2 applies this general admonition to Euodia and Syntyche, Phil. 2:5—11 grounds the call in Christ's example. Philippians 2:12—18 applies Christ's example to the community; 2:19—30 gives the examples of Timothy and Epaphroditus; 3:1—4:1 warns against judaizers and gives Paul's self-sacrificing example with an athletic metaphor to counter their judaizing attempts to avoid Jewish persecution.

A similar inclusion in 1 Cor. 8:1—11:1 occurs in the question of meat sacrificed to idols in 8:1—13 and 10:14—11:1. In 9:1—27, Paul deepens

his preliminary answer about idol meat by his self-sacrificing example in letting go his apostolic prerogatives of support, also with an athletic metaphor (9:24–27). 1 Corinthians 10:1–13 adds a negative Old Testament example of idolatry to warn that baptism, eucharist, and community membership do not guarantee salvation. Only then does 1 Cor. 10:14–22 return to idol meat with a deeper reminder that idol worship has demonic aspects, even for a monotheist. Then 1 Cor. 10:23–11:1 returns fully to the original question from 8:1–13, ending with the call to imitate Paul as he imitates Christ (11:1).

Thus, in both Phil. 2:1–4:3 and 1 Cor. 8:1–11:1 there are inclusions of an original topic (unanimity and idol meat), deepened by further considerations of self-emptying examples of Paul and Christ contrasted to negative examples, before returning to the original question for a final statement or application. 1 Corinthians 12–14 have a similar inclusion, turning from spiritual gifts to how they function in Christ's body and to the generalized implied example of Paul in the love hymn before applying these insights to the gifts of tongues and prophecy in chap. 14.

Another pattern which Paul's other letters confirm as a plausible interpretation of Philippians 2–3 is Paul's self-sacrificing example for the sake of others. Some of these are mentioned in the first section on imitation in first-century exhortation and in Paul. They include the examples in 1 Cor. 8:1–11:1, esp. 1 Cor. 9:19, "For though I am free from all men, I have made myself a slave to all, that I might win the more." In 1 Corinthians 8, 9, and 14, Paul declines to use his knowledge, his apostolic right to support, and his strong gift of tongues, lest they hinder other Christians. (Cf. the same pattern in 2 Thess. 3:9, "It was not because we have not that right, but to give you in our conduct an example to imitate.") 1 Corinthians 1–4 focused on a call to unity and the example of Paul's refusal to rely on human wisdom or knowledge or rhetoric, but to preach only Christ crucified. 1 Corinthians 4:9–17 mentions Paul's sufferings, his call to imitate him as their only father, as Timothy his "son" reminds them of his ways in Christ which he teaches everywhere in every church.

Second Corinthians has a heavy emphasis on self-sacrifice and suffering as exemplary of true following of the crucified Christ. 2 Corinthians 8:9 refers to Christ making himself poor though rich so as to enrich others in his poverty, which is an example for their generosity to Paul's collection. 2 Corinthians 13:4 says that Christ was crucified from weakness but lives from the power of God. This has elements of both kenosis and exaltation. 2 Corinthians 1:7–9 hopes that "as you share in our sufferings, you will also share in our comfort" and tells how Paul felt as if under a sentence of death, "but that was to make us rely not on ourselves but on God who raises the dead" (cf. 4:10–14). 2 Corinthians 4:16–17 and 5:1 speak of the

outer man corrupting but the inner man being renewed, slight affliction preparing for eternal glory, and the destruction of an earthly tent to receive an eternal building from God in heaven. The theme of divine strength in human weakness is important in 2 Cor. 11:30 and 12:9–10, with special reference to suffering persecution for Christ.

Though Paul has a lot of references both to self-sacrifice and suffering and to hope of resurrection, he does not have too much explicit combining of kenosis and exaltation as in Phil. 2:5–11 and 3:20–21. Nevertheless, this combination is common in Old Testament texts which Paul used, such as the servant of Isaiah, the suffering righteous person, and the rejected and vindicated prophet. Dying and rising with Christ is at the heart of baptism symbolism. The pattern is also current in the traditions of the sayings of Jesus about losing and finding one's life and humbling oneself to be exalted. Finally, it is related to Paul's strength-in-weakness motif and his common call to rely on God's power, not on human ways and resources.

The last confirmations for our thesis about the imitation of Paul and Christ in Philippians 2 and 3 are the vocabulary links between these chapters. They have been mentioned in the course of the argument, so here it is only necessary to list them all together for their cumulative effect. On the literary level of the manuscript tradition, the vocabulary evidence does support the theological parallelism now present in Philippians 2–3.

The parallel between ἡγεῖσθαι ζημίαν in 3:7 and ἡγεῖσθαι ἀρπαγμόν in 2:6 has struck many on both sides of the question concerning literary integrity. The verb occurs five times in Philippians, only three times in Paul's other letters. All five occurrences are in chaps. 2 and 3 (2:3, 6; 3:7 and 8).

The ταπειν-root appears only in Philippians and mostly in chaps. 2–3. ταπεινοφροσύνη appears only in Phil. 2:3 in the undisputed letters. It goes with ἡγεῖσθαι in the request, "in humility count others better than yourselves." The verb ταπεινῶν occurs in Philippians only at 2:8 (Christ humbled himself) and 4:12 (in the acknowledgment of the gift). ταπεινώσις occurs in the Pauline letters only at 3:21 (transform our lowly body).

The links between Philippians 3 and 2 from using σχῆμα and μορφή and their compounds are quite strong. The words are almost peculiar to Paul in the New Testament and are concentrated mostly in these two chapters of Philippians. σχῆμα occurs only in 2:7 and 1 Cor. 7:31. μετασχηματίζω is only in 3:21 and four times in 1 and 2 Corinthians. μορφή appears in the New Testament only twice (Phil. 2:6–7; Mark 16:12). συμμορφίζω is a New Testament *hapax legomenon* at 3:10, and σύμμορφος occurs in the New Testament only in 3:21 and Rom. 8:29.

πολιτεύμα in 3:20 is a New Testament *hapax legomenon*. It makes a strong verbal link with πολιτεύεσθε in 1:27 (in the New Testament, only there

and Acts 28:1), the beginning of the section of exhortation to which chap. 2 belongs.

Philippians has a heavy concentration of *φρονεῖν* (ten times in Philippians, eleven in the rest of Paul). They occur in 1:7 (Paul toward the Philippians); 2:2 twice and 2:5 (have one/Christ's mind); 3:15 and 19 (mature/worldly attitudes); 4:2 (between Euodia and Syntyche), and 4:10 (their thought toward Paul). The concentration of six of ten uses in chaps. 2—3 creates strong verbal links between those chapters.

In Phil. 2:7 and 3:9 one finds the only two uses of *εὐρίσκω* in Philippians. Less significantly, the only two instances of *ὑπάρχειν* in Philippians come at 2:6 and 3:20.

Finally, the thematic *κοινων*-root is found in the major sections of the letter (1:5, 7; 2:1; 3:10; 4:14–15) and strengthens the link between these two chapters. Philippians 2:1 mentions fellowship in the Spirit and 3:10, fellowship in Christ's sufferings.

RECAPITULATION AND CONCLUSIONS

This study has shown the need to go beyond the scissors-and-paste approaches of source- and form-critical studies of Philippians and to explain the final redacted form of any composite letter, as the fruitfulness of recent studies in the Synoptics and Acts has demonstrated. It has studied the examples of Christ and Paul in Philippians 2 and 3 in the context of the whole canonical letter and in light of the importance of imitating personal examples in first-century exhortation. The kenotic examples of Christ and Paul ground the two main exhortation sections of the canonical letter and are in turn given the letter's setting of Paul's imprisonment and possible death.

The letter in its present form has a message that goes beyond the purpose of any sources it might contain. When the original problems were no longer of concern to the churches, the basic self-emptying models of Christ and of Paul maintained their relevance for imitation by Christians in any age. The letter as a whole provides a relatively unified situation of Paul writing from prison to urge a unified stand against persecutors and those who would compromise with persecutors by judaizing human means, instead of relying solely on God. It encourages Christians in any situation of external and internal trials and fortifies them against temptations to compromise to escape suffering.

This encouragement is based on an indomitable, eschatological joy amidst trials of all sorts, which pervades the whole document. The call to unanimity also runs throughout the letter. These themes and the call to reconciliation among respected members (4:2) have perennial validity for Christian com-

munities, long after the readers might know who Euodia, Syntyche, and the "yoke-fellow" (4:3) were.

The letter's encouragement and exhortation revolve especially around the examples of Christ and Paul, who let go personal prerogatives that might have spared them suffering and trusted instead in God and not in the flesh to vindicate and exalt them. The main motivation to avoid human compromises like judaizing comes from Paul's example and that of those who follow Paul's nonjudaizing ways. Paul's example in Philippians 3 is in turn seen in light of Christ's example and cross in Philippians 2, an example which Paul himself embraced and taught to his followers.

The opening and closing chapters of the letter to the Philippians put these exhortations in the context of a community which has special fellowship with Paul, aiding him in his trials and imprisonment through Epaphroditus, who almost died in bringing this aid to Paul. The community is promised another link with Paul through Timothy, who is portrayed as a faithful son, like Paul, who puts others' interests before his own, as Christ and Paul did. For later churches reading this letter, all four personal examples embody the main message of letting go one's own interests for the sake of others. Those who imitate the kenotic example of Christ and Paul and their own leaders can expect the kind of eschatological joy the letter promises in even the worst of situations.

NOTES

1. D. M. Williams, "The Imitation of Christ in Paul with Special Reference to Paul as Teacher" (Ph.D. diss., Columbia Univ., 1967) 2, 425-27; D. M. Stanley, "'Become Imitators of Me': Apostolic Tradition in Paul," in *The Apostolic Church in the New Testament* (Westminster, Md.: Newman Press, 1965) 371-89, esp. 382.

2. W. Michaelis, "μιμέομαι, κτλ.," *TDNT* 4 (1967) 659-74; e.g., "The call for an *imitatio Christi* finds no support in the statements of Paul," 672; E. Käsemann, "Kritische Analyse von Phil. 2, 5-11," *ZTK* 47 (1950) 313-60. Käsemann denies example in Christ's kenosis (342), yet his closest analogy to it (2 Cor. 8:9) is clearly used as example for Corinthian generosity (335). B. Fiore ("The Function of Personal Example in the Socratic and Pastoral Epistles" [Ph.D. diss., Yale Univ., 1982] 309) sums up a thorough critique of Michaelis thus: "Consequently, on the basis of his own evidence . . . Michaelis' interpretation of 'imitating the example' in terms of obedience of authority is tendentious. Indeed, it is a usage which does not appear in the rhetorical treatises which treat example." Many agree with Stanley ("'Become Imitators of Me'") in his criticisms of Michaelis. See esp. E. Cothenet, "Imitation du Christ," in *Dictionnaire de Spiritualité* 7,2 (1971) 1536-1601, Part I, esp. 1536-37 on the Lutheran distrust of *Nachahmung* ("imitation") for *Nachfolge* ("following"); and R. Thysman, "L'Éthique de l'imitation du Christ dans le Nouveau Testament: Situation, notations et variations du thème," *ETL* 42 (1966) 138-75, esp. 155-56: though the New Testament generally keeps "following Christ" separate from "im-

itating Christ" on the literary level, yet the historical reality of following Christ must have implied the disciple would have a similar attitude.

Therefore, this study on imitation is included in a volume on discipleship, for though the vocabulary and corresponding backgrounds of *Nachahmung* and *Nachfolge* differ, they both refer from different perspectives to a common *res* ("reality, phenomena") in practice; for the application of imitation on which this study focuses is *pedagogical* practice, which lies behind both expressions.

3. See N. Dahl, "The Particularity of the Pauline Epistles as a Problem in the Ancient Church," in *Neotestamentica et Patristica. Eine Freundesgabe, Herrn Professor Dr. Oscar Cullmann zu seinem 60. Geburtstag überreicht* (NovTSup 6; Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1962) 261–71; and W. Kurz, S.J., "Inspiration and the Origins of the New Testament," in *Scripture and the Charismatic Renewal* (ed. G. Martin; Ann Arbor, Mich.: Servant Pubs., 1979) 29–58, esp. 51. For a similar comparison of redacted letters to the Synoptic Gospels, see W. Dalton, "The Integrity of Philipppians," *Bib* 60 (1979) 97–102, esp. 102.

4. Though the currently most influential opinions in the debate over the unity of Philipppians argue for up to three letters, scholarly challenges to the multiplicity theory continue to be published from a variety of perspectives, mainstream as well as conservative. This study will not enter the debate, except to point to the genuine evidence for unity in the letter at least on the redactional level. Whether Paul wrote one letter or a redactor combined three of Paul's letter fragments into one letter, the resulting document in either case has some unity and consistency of vocabulary and themes throughout. The arguments of this study for a redactional unity, even if there were originally three letters, would apply a fortiori under a unity hypothesis.

The more influential view for multiplicity is too well known to require documentation. A good bibliographical guide up to 1961 is H. Koester, "The Purpose of the Polemic of a Pauline Fragment (Philipppians III)," *NTS* 8 (1961–62) 317–32. A convenient summary of the whole debate is in R. P. Martin, *Philipppians* (NCB; Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1976) 10–22.

For recent arguments in favor of unity, see the following with their bibliographical references: Dalton, "Integrity of Philipppians"; H. Gamble, Jr., *The Textual History of the Letter to the Romans* (SD 42; Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1977) Appendix 2, "Some Notes on the Literary Problems in Philipppians," 145–46; P. T. O'Brien, *Introductory Thanksgivings in the Letters of Paul* (NovTSup 49; Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1977); G. Wiles, *Paul's Intercessory Prayers* (SNTSMS 24; Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1974); H. R. Moehring, "Some Remarks on *Sarx* in Philipppians 3,3ff," *SE* 4 (TU 102 [1968] 432–36); Williams, "Imitation of Christ in Paul,"; T. E. Pollard, "The Integrity of Philipppians," *NTS* 13 (1966–67) 57–66; R. Jewett, "The Epistolary Thanksgiving and the Integrity of Philipppians," *NovT* 12 (1970) 40–53; V. P. Furnish, "The Place and Purpose of Philipppians III," *NTS* 10 (1963–64) 80–88; B. S. Mackay, "Further Thoughts on Philipppians," *NTS* 7 (1960–61) 161–70.

5. E.g., I. Havener (*First Thessalonians, Philipppians, Philemon, Second Thessalonians, Colossians, Ephesians* [CBC 8; Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 1983] 35) entitles these verses "Christian Life as Imitation of Christ."

6. Against Käsemann, "Kritische Analyse."

7. BAGD, s.v., ὡστε.

8. Käsemann ("Kritische Analyse," 334) thanks R. Bultmann for this reference. See also Phil. 2:3.

9. On the meaning of *συμμιμηταί*, see Jewett, "Epistolary Thanksgiving," 52; Williams, "Imitation of Christ in Paul," 415–16, 427; J. B. Lightfoot, *Saint Paul's Epistle to the Philippians* (London: Macmillan & Co., 1913) 154.

10. For the importance and uses of imitation in Paul, see Fiore, "Function of Personal Example," chap. 7: "Example in the Letters of Paul," 304–55, esp. 305 n. 2. Especially important are W. P. De Boer, *The Imitation of Paul* (Kampen, Neth.: J. H. Kok, 1962); P. Gutiérrez, *La Paternité spirituelle selon Saint Paul* (Paris: J. Gabalda, 1968); D. M. Stanley, "'Become Imitators of Me': The Pauline Conception of Apostolic Tradition," *Bib* 40 (1959) 859–77; H. D. Betz, *Nachfolge und Nachahmung Jesu Christi im Neuen Testament* (BHT 37; Tübingen: Mohr/Siebeck, 1967); and earlier works to which they refer. Also quite helpful is Williams ("Imitation of Christ in Paul") for gathering of sources and discussion of texts and literature.

11. Fiore, "Function of Personal Example."

12. Isocrates, *Against the Sophists*, 16–18; cited in Fiore, "Function of Personal Example," 58. See the other literature in Fiore, 58 n. 24, and A. Lumpe, "Exemplum," *RAC* 6:1229–57.

13. Fiore, "Function of Personal Example," 59–60. See also Pliny's *Letter* (to Titius Aristo) 8.14: "But in the olden time it was an established rule that Romans should learn from their elders, not only by precept, but by example. . . . The father of each youth served as his instructor, or, if he had none, some person of years and dignity supplied the place of the father. . . . Thus they were taught by that surest method of instruction, example, the whole conduct of a senator" (LCL; cited Fiore, 60–61).

14. Fiore, "Function of Personal Example," 61. (Italics Fiore's.) See sources and literature, 61–62 nn. 29–31; 329–30 nn. 34–35.

15. Stanley, "'Become Imitators of Me'"; Gutiérrez, *La Paternité spirituelle*, 125, 172, 175, 178–81; De Boer, *Imitation of Paul*, 145–46, 153, 165, esp. 206–7; Fiore, "Function of Personal Example," 326, esp. nn. 27–29; 332–33, 337–43; B. Holmberg, *Paul and Power: The Structure of Authority in the Primitive Church as Reflected in the Pauline Epistles* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1980) 77–79, esp. n. 97 about 1 Cor. 4:17 and Phil. 2:22 on children learning correct conduct by imitating their "fathers." For imitating a "father" as an example, see 1 Cor. 4:16; 10:33–11:1; 1 Thess. 1:6; Phil. 3:17; 4:9; Gal. 4:12. See O. Betz, "Die Geburt der Gemeinde durch den Lehrer," *NTS* 3 (1956–57) 314–26.

16. Fiore, "Function of Personal Example," 329–30, including nn. 36–38. For a treatment of "fatherhood" in antiquity, see Gutiérrez, *La Paternité spirituelle*, 15–83, on the title for priests and counselors of the king; on fatherhood of prophets, in wisdom schools, at Qumran, in the rabbis; and in Greco-Roman mystery religions. See also 116, 168.

17. Gutiérrez, *La Paternité spirituelle*, 81–83.

18. Fiore, "Function of Personal Example," 334.

19. *Ibid.*, 335. Note 54 cites Gutiérrez, *La Paternité spirituelle*, 183, and Isocrates *Nicocles* 6 and *Philip* 114.

20. Fiore, "Function of Personal Example," 337–39, 342.

21. *Ibid.*, 349–50.

22. Ibid., 343–44.
23. Ibid., 346; quotation is from n. 65.
24. Ibid., 351.
25. Ibid., 352.
26. Ibid., 352–53.
27. Ibid., 353.
28. Ibid., 353 n. 77.
29. Ibid., 353–54.
30. E.g., P. Schubert, *Form and Function of the Pauline Thanksgivings* (BZNW 20; Berlin: Alfred Töpelmann, 1939); W. Doty, *Letters in Primitive Christianity* (GBS; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1973); N. Dahl, "Letter," *IDBSup*, 538–41; H. Koester, *Introduction to the New Testament* (2 vols.; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1982) 2:52–56, esp. 55–56; J. White, ed., *Studies in Ancient Letter Writing* (Semeia 22; Chico, Calif.: Scholars Press, 1982), esp. J. White, "The Ancient Epistolography Group in Retrospect," 1–14, and idem, "The Greek Documentary Letter Tradition Third Century B.C.E. to Third Century C.E.," 89–106.
31. E.g., Doty, *Letters in Primitive Christianity*, 31–34; Jewett, "Epistolary Thanksgiving," 53: "Despite the abrupt transitions, the entire letter as it now stands is the product of the author's intention set forth in the epistolary thanksgiving." At least the thanksgiving can be read as preparing for the entire canonical letter, regardless of how the letter reached its present form. See Wiles, *Paul's Intercessory Prayers*, 195–97, and O'Brien, *Introductory Thanksgivings*, 19–46, esp. 37–41, on the epistolary purpose of the thanksgiving in Phil. 1:3–11.
32. See also Phil. 1:27–2:3, and see Koester's *Introduction to the New Testament*, 133, for eschatological joy amidst suffering in the "imprisonment letter."
33. Dalton ("Integrity of Philippians," 101) argues that the thanksgivings in chaps. 1 and 4 form an inclusion signaled by repetition of several key expressions.
34. See Wiles, *Paul's Intercessory Prayers*, 208–10, esp. 210 n. 2.
35. See Williams, "Imitation of Christ in Paul," 407; Quintilian *Institutio oratoria* 9.2.103; and R. P. Martin, *Carmen Christi: Philippians 2:5–11 in Recent Interpretation and in the Setting of Early Christian Worship* (SNTSMS 4; Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1967) 42 n. 2.
36. N. Flanagan, "A Note on Philippians iii.20–21," *CBQ* 18 (1956) 8–9. R. P. Martin (*Philippians*, 150) and W. A. Meeks, ed. (*The Writings of St. Paul* [New York: W. W. Norton, 1972] 101 n. 7) both note the resemblance between 3:21 and 2:6–11 but exemplify the common failure to exploit it by relating the two passages, resorting instead to the source-critical explanation that they have common traditional material.
37. The word for "exalted" in the hymn (Phil. 2:9) is a typically Pauline compound beginning in ὑπέρ. Since the vast majority of compounds with ὑπέρ in the New Testament appear in the Pauline literature, the word here seems at least a Pauline retouching, if the verse was not originally by Paul. Against Käsemann's unsupported assertion that the Hellenistic age was especially partial to *composita* ("Kritische Analyse von Phil. 2, 5–11," 346). See Moulton-Geden, 974–75, and *Computer-Konkordanz*, 1836–38.
38. R. A. Culpepper ("Co-Workers in Suffering: Philippians 2:19–30," *RevExp* 77 [1980] 349–58) notes that Timothy and Epaphroditus were presented with Paul as examples of how the Philippians should imitate Christ in servanthood.

39. See White, "Greek Documentary Letter Tradition," 99, on stereotyped announcements of visits.

40. See *ibid.*, 96.

41. Williams, "Imitation of Christ in Paul," 411. Gamble, in an appendix of his book on the ending of Romans (*Textual History*, 146), states flatly, "The τὸ λοιπὸν of 3:1 cannot be called an immediate transition to the epistolary conclusion." Despite its similarity to 2 Cor. 13:11, the phrase is not common to Pauline conclusions and is used in contexts that precede by quite a bit epistolary conclusions in 1 Thess. 4:1 and 2 Thess. 3:1 (cf. 1 Cor. 7:29).

42. Caution must be exercised against arguing too much from a change in tone. First, the rejoicing in Philippians is usually set in a situation of trial and even hostile teachers, as mentioned earlier. Second, Paul's tone toward the recipients of the letter does not change here. His anger is directed toward outside judaizers, not to the Philippians themselves, as in Galatians. Besides, it is common in correspondence for one's tone to change according to the topic being discussed. In my own letters I have found drastic mood changes as I turned from happy topics to those that saddened or angered me. See also Furnish, "Place and Purpose of Philippians III," 83–84, 86–87, on verbal explanations by the letter carriers.

43. See Koester (*Introduction to the New Testament*, 134), who says the invectiveness of 3:2 and 3:18–19 is not against libertines but perfectionistic judaizers. On hazards of the mirror-reading that is so common in New Testament studies, see L. T. Johnson, "On Finding the Lukan Community: A Cautious Cautionary Essay," in SBLASP, 1979 (2 vols.; ed. P. J. Achtemeier; Missoula, Mont.: Society of Biblical Literature, 1979) 1:87–100.

44. Koester, "Pauline Fragment," 325. One can accept his arguments for an overall structure throughout Philippians 3 even if not fully persuaded by all the details of his reconstruction of the *Sitz im Leben*.

45. See Moehring, "Remarks on *Sarx*," 434–36. A passage from the Jerusalem Targum on Gen. 40:23 blames Joseph for putting his confidence in the chief butler, trusting "in the flesh" rather than God. Moehring argues that trusting in the flesh refers to human means, even Jewish religious practices, in Paul.

46. See J. Behm ("κοιλία," *TDNT* 3 [1965] 788) on a context of judaizers rather than libertines, citing Theodore of Mopsuestia, Ambrosiaster, and Pelagius (n. 14). See Koester ("Purpose of the Polemic," 326–27) but without his parallel between ἀπώλεια, κοιλία, and αἰσχύνη; contra R. P. Martin (*Philippians*, 145) and many others.

47. BAGD, s.v., ἐπίγειος.

48. "The Epistles of Socrates and the Socratics," *Epistle* 8, in A. Malherbe, ed., *The Cynic Epistles: A Study Edition* (SBLSPS 12; Missoula, Mont.: Scholars Press, 1977) 245. See also 124 line 25, and 176 line 12.