

METAPHOR AND MORALITY: EXAMPLES OF PAUL'S MORAL THINKING IN 1 CORINTHIANS 1-5

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Abstract

During the last thirty years or so the cognitive sciences have achieved extraordinary results in understanding how our human minds think, reason, and create meaning, as well as how we communicate the results of our thinking, reasoning, and meaning making through language. One of the places where cognitive psychology and cognitive linguistics come together is in metaphorical thinking and the pervasive use of metaphors in everyday human language. In this paper I present an introductory exploration of Paul's metaphorical thinking in his moral reasoning by examining some of the moral metaphors in 1 Corinthians 1-5. I begin by introducing the cognitive understanding of metaphorical reasoning and its relationship to the profoundly metaphorical character of moral reasoning as discussed in various writing, both individually and collectively, by George Lakoff and Mark Johnson. I then turn to 1 Corinthians 1-5 to demonstrate that metaphors play a crucial role in Paul's moral reasoning. I conclude that the understanding of metaphor by contemporary cognitive sciences offers a valuable, in fact, indispensable tool for examining Paul's moral concepts, moral thinking, and moral reasoning.

1. Introduction

During the last thirty years or so, the way we understand human thinking, language, and reasoning has begun to change in significant ways. One of the key areas turns out to involve the nature of metaphors in human thought, language and experience. Traditionally metaphors were thought of as rhetorical tropes or artistic figures of speech, a view going back to the classical rhetoricians (Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca 1969, 398–399). More recently, according to Danesi (2004, 19, 44–45) the highly influential

linguistic theorist, Noam Chomsky, has claimed that metaphors are deviations from linguistic rules and therefore should be ignored in linguistic theory. The work of scholars like George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, who wrote the highly influential work *Metaphors We Live By* (2003, originally 1980), has helped change our understanding of metaphors in a fundamental way.¹ They have shown that metaphors, far from being mere rhetorical embellishments, are fundamental to the way that we think, reason, communicate, and act. In fact, without metaphors and metaphorical thinking we probably could not make sense out of our common human existence since our abilities to conceptualize; to create abstract categories such as love, fairness, morality, importance, and meaning; and to use language itself are heavily dependent upon our capacity for metaphorical thinking (Lakoff and Johnson 2003; Gibbs 1994; Danesi 2004). This results from the fact that metaphors and metaphorical thinking actually originate out of the embodied experience of our minds, that is, our minds function by receiving sensory perceptions from our five senses and this provides the raw data upon which metaphorical thinking is built, even before we are cognitively self-aware (Lakoff and Johnson 2003, 254–257).²

If a metaphor is not simply a particular type of trope, but something fundamental to human thought and language, how is a metaphor defined in the current cognitive approach? Barcelona (2003b, 3) offers the following definition:

Metaphor is the cognitive mechanism whereby one experiential domain is partially ‘mapped’, i.e. projected, onto a different experiential domain, so that the second domain is partially understood in terms of the first one. The domain that is mapped is called the *source* or *donor domain*, and the domain onto which the source is mapped is called the *target* or *recipient* domain. Both domains have to belong to different superordinate domains.

1 Mark Johnson is a philosopher who works broadly in the field of Philosophy and Cognitive Science. George Lakoff is a linguist who works in the field of Cognitive Linguistics.

2 Recent studies have shown that a close link exists between metaphor and metonymy in language and thought (Barcelona 2003a), but in this paper my focus will be almost exclusively on metaphors.

In order to illustrate this definition, Barcelona makes use of a well-known metaphoric example of Lakoff and Johnson: “love is a journey.”³ The source domain, “journey,” of this metaphor is actually a subdomain of the domain of movement. In the “love is a journey” metaphor the domain of journey is mapped onto the target domain, “love,” which is itself part of the much larger domain of emotions. This leads to such metaphors as:⁴

We’ve come so far together.
 We can’t go on like this.
 We’re going to have to change our ways.
 We’ve only just begun.
 We’re going too fast.

In these metaphoric expressions associated with love relationships, the mapping of the source domain onto the target domain transfers a variety of “attributes, entities, and propositions” from our experience of the domain of journeys to the experience of the domain of love. For example:

The lovers correspond to travelers.
 The difficulties in the love relationship correspond to obstacles encountered on a journey.
 The lovers changing their relationship corresponds to a change in direction on a journey.
 The early stages of a love relationship correspond to the beginnings of a long journey.
 The love relationship corresponds to a speeding car that needs to be slowed down.

These are what are called “*ontological submappings or correspondences*,” a concept that refers to “the entities (people, objects, etc.), actions, or states in the source [that] are mapped onto their counterparts in the target domain.” There can also be “*knowledge (or epistemic) submappings / correspondences*” (Barcelona 2003b, 3). “The main constraint on metaphorical mapping seems to be . . . that the mapping cannot violate the basic structure of the target domain” which accounts for the fact that “most metaphors are only partial” (Barcelona 2003b, 4). One further point that Lakoff and Johnson (1999, 65) make with regard to the conceptual metaphors such as “love is a journey” needs to be emphasized.

3 See, e.g., Lakoff and Johnson (1999, 63–65).

4 The examples which follow are my own.

Such metaphors are actually used in reasoning. “The Love Is a Journey mapping does not just permit the use of travel *words* to speak of love. That mapping allows forms of *reasoning* about travel to be used in reasoning about love. It functions so as to map inferences about travel onto inferences about love, enriching the concept of love and extending it to love-as-journey.” It is this mapping aspect of reasoning entailed in conceptual metaphors that make them so interesting in analyzing a writer like the apostle Paul, as we shall see.

The pervasiveness of metaphors in everyday thought and language is overwhelming (Fauconnier 1997, 168; Danesi 2004, 20), even if we are largely unaware of it.⁵ This claim applies to the category of ethics or morality as much as to any other aspect of our human existence since morality involves a set of abstract defining categories that are essentially conceptual in nature such as freedom, obligation, rights, justice, fairness, virtue, and empathy. These and virtually all of our abstract moral categories are concepts that have a metaphorical structure because the concepts are almost always defined by metaphors.⁶ This is the reason that ethical or moral systems are invariably metaphorical in character. The conceptual metaphors that are the basis of our moral systems are utilized in making sense out of experience since they provide the grounds for our moral reasoning and for our moral judgments. “Because our metaphorical moral concepts are grounded in aspects of basic experiential morality, they tend to be stable across cultures and over large stretches of time” (Lakoff and Johnson 1999, 325). Lakoff and Johnson proceed to point out that the universal character of the metaphors used in different ethical systems do not lead to absolute uniformity since different cultures emphasize and develop the basic moral metaphors in strikingly different ways. For example, moral balance, which is a concept that has a metaphorical basis in the balancing of weights, is a good thing in Western culture, but plays a far more important role in the ethical system of Japan and other Eastern cultures. As Fauconnier

5 Gibbs (1994, 123) cites a study in which it was determined that speakers use 1.8 original or novel metaphors per minute in speaking and 4.08 frozen metaphors (i.e., metaphors that are so commonly used that they are thought to be literal, e.g., the leg of a table, the hands of a clock) per minute. It was computed that assuming two hours of conversation a day, the average person would utter 4.7 million novel metaphors in a 60-year period, and 21.4 million frozen metaphors.

6 Cf. Held (1996, 81), though she is critical of the role of cognitive science in moral philosophy.

and Turner (2002) would say, the moral concepts are imaginatively blended to address new and different situations (see also Lakoff and Johnson 1999, 326).

In this paper I will explore the metaphorical basis of some of Paul's moral reasoning in 1 Corinthians 1-5 from the perspective of cognitive science, especially the work of George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, who are particularly concerned with the cognitive basis of the moral tradition of Western thought. In order to achieve this goal I will first set out a number of insights from their work, and then apply these to several examples of moral reasoning in 1 Corinthians 1-5.

2. Morality and Metaphor

Morality in its most basic form is concerned with human well-being according to Lakoff and Johnson (1999, 290). "All our moral ideals, such as justice, fairness, compassion, virtue, tolerance, freedom, and rights, stem from our fundamental human concern with what is best for us and how we ought to live" (Lakoff and Johnson 1999, 290). Morality, however, is also understood as contributing to the well-being of others (Lakoff and Johnson 1999, 291) so that there is an intrapersonal and interpersonal dimension to morality.⁷ As a result of this, the source of metaphors that play a crucial role in moral thought across cultures and over time involve what people believe is important to their well-being (Lakoff and Johnson 1999, 290–291). Well-being includes things like "health, wealth, strength, balance, protection, nurturance, and so on" (Lakoff and Johnson 1999, 292).

In the Western tradition of morality, which has its roots in the Judeo-Christian tradition, we have inherited what Johnson (1993, 19) calls the "Moral Law folk theory—a set of shared values plus certain assumptions about human nature, reason, and action that underlie and support those values."⁸ The moral system of the Western tradition itself is driven by metaphors in two distinct ways. "(1) Our most important moral concepts (e.g., will, action, purpose, rights, duties, laws) are defined by systems of metaphors. (2) We understand morally problematic situations via conventional metaphorical mappings" (Johnson 1993, 33). One of the most

7 On the twofold character of ethics as relating to intrapersonal well-being and the interpersonal well-being of others see the comments of Flanagan (1996, 34).

8 For a discussion of the Moral Law folk theory see Johnson (1993, 13–19).

important moral concepts in the Western tradition is *well-being is wealth*. In the Biblical tradition, the connection between moral well-being and wealth is perhaps most powerfully embedded in the story of Job, a blameless and upright man who feared God. When Job lost his wealth, family, and health because of Satan's challenge to God (Job 1:13-2:10), he lost his well-being. But he remained faithful to God, gaining a huge moral credit, and as a result God blessed Job with greater wealth and the good things of life, restoring and even improving his well-being in the end (42:10-17). As I will discuss in a moment, without the restitution at the end of Job, God would have indeed been unjust.

In the New Testament the Gospels in particular are filled with examples of metaphoric expressions that involve well-being as wealth. For example Jesus tells his disciples to store up for themselves treasures in heaven and offers the reason that where one's treasures are, there is where one's heart is (Matt 6:19-21). This metaphoric construction works because heaven equates with the ultimate place of human well-being and one gains it through moral wealth since these are the only kind of treasure that would be of value in God's realm. The story of the man in Mark 10 who asks Jesus what he must do to inherit eternal life is a quintessential example of moral well-being equating with wealth since Jesus offers treasure in heaven, the ultimate value in human well-being, in exchange for financial sacrifice and commitment to Jesus' way of life (Mark 10:17-22).

A second major concept of the Western moral metaphor system identified by Lakoff and Johnson concerns what they describe as "moral accounting schemes." They maintain that there are only a few moral accounting schemes available, and among those they discuss are reciprocity, retribution, revenge, restitution and altruism (Lakoff and Johnson 1999, 293-298). In an earlier work Lakoff (2002, originally 1996, 51-54) described another one that is worth keeping in mind, reward and punishment. The principles upon which moral accounting schemes operate are 1) "(m)oral action is giving something of positive value; immoral action is giving something of negative value" and 2) "(t)here is a moral imperative to pay one's debts; the failure to pay one's debts is immoral" (Lakoff and Johnson 1999, 293). But each of the metaphors associated with moral accounting has its own unique logic.

In the case of reciprocity, people incur moral debts when others do something good for them or to them, and they balance the books by doing something good to that person in return. Jesus' saying, "Do to others as you

would have them do to you” (Matt 7:12), the so-called golden rule, reflects ethical action based on reciprocation. The negative version of this is retribution or revenge. If an evil or misdeed is done to someone (something of negative value is given to them), then to balance the books harm must be returned by doing evil back to the giver of the original evil. Lakoff and Johnson (1999, 294–295) distinguish between revenge and retribution based on who takes action against an offender. They argue that “the balancing of the moral books” through retribution is conducted by legitimate authority, for example, a parent, a headmaster or principal at school, the state through its legal system, or in the Christian view, God. Revenge, on the other hand, involves a balancing of the moral books based on “vigilante-style” action. The spirit of retribution/revenge is perfectly captured in the adage “an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth” (Matt 5:38; cf. Exod 21:22-25). In the New Testament both Jesus, as we encounter him in the gospel tradition, (Matt 5:38-42) and Paul (Rom 12:19-21) reject the principle of revenge, though both clearly look for divine retribution as an alternative since God is the legitimate authority par excellence (Mark 12:1-12; Rom 12:20). The balance between reciprocation and retribution is perfectly captured in Matt 25:31-46 since Jesus reciprocates good for good and institutes retribution against those who have failed to do good.

Reciprocation and retribution as metaphors for a moral accounting system closely correlate with two fundamental features of Greco-Roman culture that have proved the focus of considerable research by scholars of the New Testament and early Christianity. Reciprocation is the basis of the patronage system of antiquity, and retribution is fundamental to the honor-shame system.⁹

Patronage is a social arrangement that replicates in the wider social sphere the domestic order of the family, a fact reflected in the derivation of the term “patron” from the word for father in both Greek and Latin. The patron bestows benefits, often of a material kind, in return for non-material benefits from his clients such as public honor, praise, and political support. In this system “moral action is giving something of positive value; immoral action is giving something of negative value.” Recipients of moral actions or

9 Lakoff and Johnson (1999, 295) recognize the connection between retribution and honor, but have failed to notice the connection between patronage and reciprocation. The connection of ancient honor-shame culture to morality has also been recognized by Flanagan (1996, 19).

benefits are under a moral obligation to repay, while failure to do so is immoral on their part (Lakoff 2002, 47).

Paul's argument regarding the offering for the poor Jerusalem Christians in 2 Cor 8:13-14 fits neatly into the metaphor of moral reciprocation. He calls for a fair balance between different types of abundance and need, and by implication different types of giving and receiving. Paul wants the Corinthians to be generous financial "patrons" of the Jerusalem Christians who in turn will repay through prayer on their behalf to God (2 Cor 9:14). In Rom 15:26-27 Paul approaches the issue of reciprocity from the opposite direction when he asserts that the Christians in Macedonia and Achaia (Corinth) "owe" the Christians in Jerusalem for the fact that they had shared their spiritual abundance with them. The logic of Rom 15:26-27 is that the Jerusalem Christians were actually the patrons of the Gentiles of Macedonia and Achaia by bestowing on them spiritual benefits, and this was the reason that the Gentile Christians had a moral obligation to help the Jerusalem Christians from their financial means.¹⁰ Clearly Paul is applying the moral accounting metaphor here in calling for reciprocation

The morality of retribution and revenge operates on the moral accounting metaphor, just as reciprocation does, but to a very different effect. When someone harms another person, she or he has given that person something of negative value. Retribution says that the person who is harmed must return the harm in order to balance the moral books. To not do so would be to allow the person doing the initial harm to go unrequited for what they have done. The system of honor works on this basis since it presupposes that honor is a commodity that exists in limited supply and when someone challenges another person's honor, or dishonors them, the challenger has harmed the other person by taking some or even all of his honor away from him.¹¹ The dishonored person has "a moral duty to rebalance the moral books by inflicting an equal harm on the person who issued the challenge" (Lakoff and Johnson 1999, 295).

10 Portraying the Jerusalem Christians as patrons and the Gentile Christians as their clients creates the unusual situation in which the clients repay their indebtedness with money, but in this instance the "spiritual blessings" bestowed by the Jerusalem Christians constitute a more valuable benefit than the money that the Gentiles are urged to give.

11 For a recent discussion of honor in the Greco-Roman world and the writings of the New Testament as well as recent bibliography see de Silva (2000, 23–93).

Within the Biblical tradition the very idea of divine judgment reflects the moral principle of retribution. Sin, as disobedience to God, is a form of dishonoring God, and therefore, if God did not exercise retributive justice against sinners, God would not be acting honorably. This is precisely the logic that drives Paul's discussion of the wrath of God in Rom 1:18-2:11. Sinful humanity knew God but did not honor God (1:21). As a result God gave them up to various kinds of depravity (1:24-32). But God will repay people according to their deeds (2:6): reciprocation in the form of eternal life for those doing good (2:7) and retribution in the form of anguish and distress for those doing evil (2:9). Thus the judgment becomes the metaphorical balancing of the moral account books.¹²

Apart from the moral accounting metaphor, Lakoff and Johnson (1999, 299–311) identify a number of other important moral metaphors. Two that will prove to be of particular interest in analyzing 1 Corinthians 1-5 are the closely related moral metaphors of moral authority and moral order. The moral authority metaphor may be put as "moral authority is power." Power, whether physical, emotional, or ideological, is what allows someone to dominate another person. Power provides a source domain that is mapped onto the target domain of moral authority. The mapping makes possible the conception that moral authority is exercised by those who are in a position to exercise power of some sort over others in order to impose their moral decisions. The prototype for moral authority is the parent-child relationship, though in Paul's world it was particularly the father-child relation that was relevant.¹³

The moral order metaphor is "based on the Folk Theory of the Natural Order" (Lakoff and Johnson 1999, 303). According to this theory there is a hierarchical order based on the natural order of dominance. The Indian caste system and the former system of apartheid in South Africa are examples of social systems that assume a natural order of domination among humans and structure society on this basis. The metaphor "the moral order is the natural

12 For an additional discussion of the moral accounting metaphor see Johnson (1993, 40–50).

13 As Lakoff (2002, 76) observes, the authority of the parent derives from the fact that 1) children do not initially know what is in their own or their family's best interest nor do they naturally act on those best interests; 2) parents' (normally) have the best interests of the child and the family in mind, and act on them; 3) parents have the ability to act on the best interests of their offspring and the family more generally; and 4) there is social acknowledgement that the parent has a primary responsibility for the well-being of the child and the family.

order of domination,” maps the hierarchy of dominance from the supposed natural order onto the moral order so that those who are dominant in the natural order are morally superior and should dominate in the moral order.

3. Morality and Metaphor in 1 Corinthians 1-5

A key issue in any moral system concerns the question of who exercises moral authority. Within Christianity as articulated by Paul, ultimately moral authority resides with God. Paul argues from the outset of 1 Corinthians that God, as the patron of the Corinthians, has acted with parental-like moral authority in caring for their well-being or best interests through his benefactions.¹⁴ The opening thanksgiving in 1 Cor 1:4-9 recounts the favors and gifts given by God to the Corinthians: they have been made rich in all speech and all knowledge, and they lack for no divine gifts. They have been called by their faithful (πιστός) patron, God, into a close relation involving sharing and mutual interests with God’s own son, Jesus Christ. All of this contributes to their well-being as Christians since the quality of their lives has been improved by coming under the patronage of God. Moreover, in v. 8 Paul promises that Christ, or possibly God,¹⁵ will continue to strengthen them (βεβαιώσει ὑμᾶς) until the end so that they may be irreproachable (ἀνέγκλητοι) on the day of the Lord.

3.1. Moral strength and moral accounting in 1 Cor 1:8

The metaphoric character of Paul’s moral reasoning comes to the fore in v. 8 in several ways. First, the expression, βεβαιώσει ὑμᾶς which is best

14 Patronage is based on what Lakoff and Johnson (2003, 10–14) term a structural metaphor. Structural metaphors are instances “where one concept is metaphorically structured in terms of another” (14), though the structuring is always only partial since if it were complete the two concepts would be the same concept. In the case of patronage, the family, and in particular the father-child relationship within the family, provides the basis for the hierarchical or “vertical dimension of exchange between higher and lower-status persons” (Neyrey 2004, 249) that constitutes a patronage relationship. Patronage as the conceptual target of the father-child source concept takes over some but not all of the dimensions of the father-child relation, e.g., the patron does not procreate the client. For a succinct discussion of the phenomenon of patronage in the Greco-Roman world see Osiek and Balch (1997, 48–54). For a discussion of patronage in 1 Corinthians see Neyrey (2004, 144–154).

15 The immediate context suggests that Christ is the one doing the strengthening, but scholars like Conzelmann (1975, 28) and Fee (1987, 44) maintain that it is God.

translated, “he will strengthen you” (BDAG 2000, βεβαιόω), is metaphoric. The strengthening that is to take place is obviously not physical in character. The context speaks about the Corinthians being blameless or irreproachable (ἀνέγκλητοι) on the day of judgment. Thiselton (2000, 102) claims that the word ἀνέγκλητοι in v. 8 is concerned with the divine pronouncement of the verdict “free from any charge,” while “issues of the human moral condition remain secondary.” This seems too narrow an interpretation. Blamelessness on the day of judgment is based on the moral behavior of the Corinthians as 1 Cor 6:9-11 makes perfectly clear, and this strongly points to the fact that the strengthening will take place in the moral sphere. As Lakoff and Johnson (1999, 298–299) note, “[a]n essential condition for moral action is strength of will. Without sufficient moral strength, one will not be able to act on one’s moral knowledge or to realize one’s moral values” (Lakoff and Johnson 1999, 298–299). The same is true for the Corinthians who according to 1 Corinthians were confronted with a variety of ethical issues from gross immorality (ch. 5) and sexual ethics (ch. 6), to ethical issues regarding marriage (ch. 7), the eating of meat sacrificed to idols (chs. 8, 10), and the abusive behavior taking place during the Lord’s supper (ch. 11). In each case, the Corinthians needed moral strength to do the will of God. What is unusual is that Paul claims the moral strength is a gift from God, rather than a human achievement (cf. 1 Cor 10:13)

Second, Paul uses the metonymic expression,¹⁶ “the day of our Lord Jesus Christ” (cf. 1 Cor 5:5; 2 Cor 1:14; 1 Thess 5:2; 2 Thess 2:2), to refer to the divine judgment that is to occur at the time of the “revelation of the Lord Jesus Christ” (1:8). My concern, however, is not with the metonymy in which the “day of the Lord Jesus Christ” stands for God’s eschatological judgment, but with the fact that judgment in Paul has its real basis in the accounting metaphor, as mentioned above. God will balance the moral accounts of humans by inflicting punishment on those who have done evil or as Paul says in 1 Cor 6:9-11, by withholding access to the ultimate state of well-being, participation in the kingdom of God. On the other hand, those who are found blameless on the day of judgment will be appropriately rewarded with their inheritance, the kingdom of God. The day of judgment

16 Metaphor and metonymy are related phenomena in that metonymies, like metaphors, are not merely rhetorical or artistic devices, rather they are crucial to the way we think and serve to create understanding for us. See Lakoff and Johnson (2003, 35–40) and especially the essays in Barcelona (2003a).

is crucial for Paul and the early Christians precisely because it assures them of divine justice being done towards those who commit deeds of evil, as well as towards those who through faith in Christ have sought to be morally virtuous in their lives (1 Thess 5:1-11).¹⁷ The latter will receive the reward of salvation (cf. 1 Thess 5:9-11), while the former will endure God's wrath (cf. Rom 1:18).

3.2. *Unity and moral metaphors in 1 Cor 1:10*

For Paul, morality is not merely an individual concern or accomplishment. It is also a communal matter since communal well-being requires moral knowledge and action just as individual well-being does. In 1 Cor. 1:10 Paul begins addressing a key moral issue that impacts significantly on communal well-being, and forms the core issue addressed throughout the letter as Mitchell (1992, 65–183, 198–200) has clearly demonstrated. Faced with a situation of factionalism within the Christian community at Corinth (1:11-13), Paul appeals for unity through concord among the Corinthians Christians. The language Paul uses, not only in 1:10, but throughout 1:10-4:21, has been shown to have close connections with the well-known *topos* of political concord in antiquity (Welborn 1987; Mitchell 1992, 68–111). What has not been discussed is the metaphoric and moral character of the language in 1:10.

The moral character of what Paul says in 1:10 is signaled by the verb, *παρακαλῶ*. While this verb has several possible meanings, such as “encourage” or “invite,” the context requires the sense of “exhort” or “implore” because Paul invokes “the name of our Lord Jesus Christ” to authorize the behavior in which he wants the Corinthians to engage. This metonymic appeal to Christ (the name of Christ, standing for the living Lord Jesus Christ) constitutes an appeal to the moral authority of Christ for sanctioning the behavioral change that Paul wants. The behavior Paul requires is itself essentially moral in character since the well-being of the community depends upon it. From the present subjunctive in the sentence, *μη̄ ἤ ἐν ὑμῖν σχίσματα*, it is clear that the community was divided by factionalism, a fact that is confirmed by 1:11-13. The negative statement, “that there be no *σχίσματα*” is a metaphoric expression that requests a change in the existing behavior to prevent the continuation of the divisive

17 On the moral aspects of 1 Thess 5:1-11 and their relation to Christian salvation, see Wanamaker (1990, 182-190).

social problems within the church. The term *σχίσμα* literally refers to the tearing or splitting of some physical object, and therefore implies harm, if not destruction, to something that at one stage was whole and complete. This is clearly based on the physical experience of tearing an object, such as a garment, apart with the resultant harm to that object. This not uncommon physical experience provides a conceptual basis for understanding harm to a non-physical object, in this case the Christ-based religious community that Paul established in Corinth. The source domain of the metaphor, the physical harm to an object through its being torn apart, contributes to the target domain, the Christian community in Corinth, not only by suggesting the dividing up of the target domain must cease, but also by implying that the community as a single, coherent unit, can be harmed, if not destroyed if divisions within the community are not stopped. This corresponds to the widespread metaphorical conception that “social (or psychological) harm is physical harm” (Lakoff 1987, 448).

A second metaphor in 1:10, though the first in the sequence of the four metaphors occurring in the verse, is found in the words, *ἵνα τὸ αὐτὸ λέγητε πάντες*. This expression is used in Greek literature contemporaneous with the beginnings of Christianity to describe socially based concord that is the opposite of factionalism. This is very similar to a common modern metaphor: “we are all saying the same thing.” This modern metaphor is often used in interactions where two or more individuals or parties seem to be misunderstanding one another. The metaphor is then used to invoke a sense of unity or harmony in the interaction by getting the participants to think about their views in a more cooperative manner. The metaphor in 1:10a functions in a similar way. The metaphor that 1:10a invokes is “community unity is speaking the same things.” This is obviously an issue in the morality of the Corinthian Christian community since communal well-being depends upon a degree of unity. Certainly the sort of factionalism envisaged by 1:10-13 is harmful to the health and well-being of the community which is what led Paul to intervene in the situation through his letter. The metaphorical source, “speaking the same things” maps onto unity since to speak the same things implies a common way of thinking that manifests itself in the public performance of unity. Thus for Paul the metaphor becomes what Mitchell (1992, 68) calls his “plea for unity” since

the expression τὸ ἀντὸ λέγειν describes “the opposite of factionalism” in the Greek literature of the period.¹⁸

The final two metaphorical expressions in 1:10 are connected by καὶ and share the same present verbal phrase, ἦτε κατηρτισμένοι. Paul calls for the restoration of the same mind and the same purpose in the community. The verb καταρτίζω has the sense of restoring something to its proper working condition. In this case it is the community itself that must be restored to its proper function. As in the previous metaphor, the target domain of the two interrelated metaphors is unity, while the source domain, νοῦς, which is mapped onto it, refers to “the sum total of the whole mental and moral state of being” (BDAG 2000). The source domain, γνώμη, refers to “that which is purposed or intended” (BDAG 2000). Thus the metaphors are “unity is the same mental and moral state” and “unity is having the same purpose.” The well-being of the community depends upon unity since without it, the community ceases to exist and becomes a collection of individuals and competing factions, exactly what Paul seems to suggest was happening among the Corinthians (e.g., 1 Cor 1:11-13; 5:1-2; 8:1-2, 7-13) (Neyrey 1993, 88–91). But unity, according to Paul, is to be achieved by the members of the community sharing a common mental and moral state and a common purpose, hence Paul’s injunction to the Corinthians to be restored to their initial condition of existence in which they formed a unified community.

Underlying the moral instruction that Paul directs towards the unity of the church community is what Lakoff and Johnson (1999, 310–311) refer to as “the morality as nurturance metaphor.” Moral nurturance can be directed towards individuals, as for example in 1 Cor 6:15-20, but it can also be directed towards the social bonds that bind the members of a community together as in 1:10. Citing Carol Gilligan, Lakoff and Johnson (1999, 311) suggest that social nurturance requires a “special emphasis on cooperation and compromise in the service of maintaining the social and communal bonds that unite” people into a community. Paul’s communal ethic in 1:10 seems to be directed towards this kind of cooperation (see, e.g., 1 Cor 12:14-

18 Like most scholars who discuss 1 Cor 1:10 see, e.g., Thiselton (2000, 111–120), Mitchell (1992) does not even note that Paul has turned to metaphors in order to explicate his views on the necessary unity within the community at Corinth. Exceptions to this are Williams (1999, 95) and Welborn (1987, 86), who recognizes that σχίσμα is used metaphorically in the period for political rifts in society.

27) and compromise (see e.g., 1 Cor 8:7-13), and explains why Paul emphasizes love (1 Cor 13:1-13), understood in Paul's world as group attachment or bonding (Malina 1993, 110–114), as a “more excellent way.”

3.3. *The temple of God and moral metaphors in 1 Cor 3:16-17*

Another metaphor that plays a significant role in Paul's moral understanding of the community occurs in 1 Cor 3:16-17. In these verses Paul works with the metaphor “You (the Christian community) are the temple of God” and draws several important conclusions from this in his argument. To understand the metaphor we need to go back to 3:9-15 where Paul first develops an elaborate set of metaphors deriving from the notion of constructing a building. The underlying metaphors are “a community is a building” and “a Christian community is a temple building.” This is a structural metaphor since it allows for considerable elaboration while enabling the foregrounding of certain aspects and the hiding of others (Lakoff and Johnson 2003, 61–68). It is also what Kövecses (2003) calls a complex metaphor since there are a number of submetaphors that are controlled by this metaphor and are used to talk about specific target concepts such as the community's foundations (Jesus Christ),¹⁹ the community's originator (architect), the community's leaders (builders), the teachings of leaders (physical building materials), the activities of leaders (building the building), judgment of the leaders' work (testing for the quality of the builder's work through fire) and the reward or loss experienced by leaders (outcome of evaluating the quality of building work). The elaboration of the community as building by the series of submetaphors in 3:9-15 leads Paul to conceptualize the Corinthian Christian community as the temple of God.²⁰ The source domain, God's temple, a concrete reality in the real world of Paul and his contemporaries, allows him to predicate to the Christian community, as a very abstract target domain, such aspects of real

19 The source domains of the submetaphors are the items in brackets. The source domain, “Jesus Christ,” in 3:11, as frequently in 1 Corinthians, is a metonymy for the Gospel proclamation of Paul that centered in Christ's redemptive work.

20 Lanci (1997, 118–119) observes that there is no known ancient source for Paul's metaphorical construction of the Christian community as the temple of God. Until otherwise proven, this means that Paul appears to be the originator of this particular metaphor, a metaphor generated by his use of the complex metaphor, a community is a building in 3:10-15.

temples as divine ownership,²¹ the presence of the deity, and the qualities associated with sacred spaces in the ancient world, such as their inviolability, their holiness, and their use for sacred purposes such as sacrifices. Lanci (1997, 89–113) draws particular attention to the role of temples in creating civic unity and suggests that this is a crucial component in Paul’s use of the temple metaphor in 1 Cor 3:16-17.²² We have already seen that unity in the community is a moral issue in relation to 1:10, but Paul himself draws particular attention to the issue of holiness in 3:17 when he identifies the temple-community as holy (ἅγιος), that is, “pure, perfect, worthy of God” (BDAG 2000). For Paul this is a moral conception as his application of the temple metaphor to the sexual bodies of males in 1 Cor 6:18-20 demonstrates. Thus the holiness of the Corinthian community is not a matter of ritual purity, as in the temple at Jerusalem (Lanci 1997, 132), but it reflects the moral nature of the God served by the community. This is also why anyone who might harm, corrupt, or destroy, all possible meanings of the verb φθείρει, the Corinthian Christian community, metaphorically conceptualized in terms of the source domain of the holy temple of God’s Spirit, is warned of the harm or even destruction that God will visit on them (φθειρεῖ) in the judgment (3:17).

In his famous essay on “Sentences of Holy Law in the New Testament” Käsemann (1969, 67) says of the double occurrence of φθεῖρειν v. 17, “It is evident that the *jus talionis* is being promulgated here: destruction to the destroyer. And at the same time God is being defined with unsurpassable brevity and clarity as the God who rewards every man according to his works.” The negative component of “reward” spoken of in v. 17 is another

21 Cf., 1 Cor 6:19 where Paul applies the temple metaphor to the physical body of the believer and ends by saying that as the temple of the Holy Spirit within them, they are not their own, i.e., they belong to God.

22 Lanci (1997, 131) who realizes that the temple is used metaphorically for the Christian community in Corinth, misses the point of how metaphor actually works when he claims, “Paul invites the community to function symbolically as one of the temples of Corinth, God’s temple.” His move from metaphor to symbolic representation distorts the function of conceptual metaphors like the one found here. In terms of Kövecses (2003), who develops the concepts of the “scope of metaphor, main meaning focus, and central mapping” (91), Paul uses the temple because the scope of the source domain’s applications maps on to meanings Paul wishes to impose on his target domain, the Christian community. But this does not suggest that the target domain symbolically becomes a temple in the real world that can compare and even compete with other real temples in Corinth.

way of talking about the retributive justice of God in which the judgment is presented as the time when God will balance the books in order to create justice. While this fits into the moral accounting metaphor in which “causing a decrease in well-being” is immoral and must be repaid in favor of the one suffering the loss (Johnson 1996, 53–56), Käsemann (1969, 67–68) is correct when he suggests that in 3:17 God’s honor is at issue if the community belonging to God, and characterized by holiness, suffers injury. If this happens the God who is honored by the community is dishonored. In order to defend and restore his honor God must repay the person or persons dishonoring him in the same way that he has been dishonored. Thus in light of the Greco-Roman world where social interaction was based on “a morality of honor” (Lakoff and Johnson 1999, 295), we should not conceptualize the issue in 3:16-17 in terms of the financial accounting metaphor but as based on an honor accounting metaphor in which God balances affronts to his honor through retribution at the time of eschatological judgment. The threat of such retribution is intended to encourage moral behavior, that is, behavior that does not decrease the well-being of the holy community in which God’s Spirit dwells.

3.4. Incest and moral metaphors in 1 Cor 5:1-5

One final example of the way Paul uses metaphorical thinking in his ethical thought in 1 Corinthians will have to suffice for demonstrating the importance of such thinking in 1 Corinthians. In 1 Cor 5:1-13 Paul deals with a serious moral breach within the community that requires his and the community’s urgent intervention. At issue is a man who has taken his father’s wife or possibly his father’s concubine for his own wife or concubine.²³ Whatever the woman’s exact social status had been and was, Paul places the current relation under the rubric of *πορνεία*, a term originally used of intercourse with a prostitute but later of all forms of illicit sex. In 5:1-2 *πορνεία*, refers to a case of incest rather than mere adultery in light of Paul’s Jewish ethical system, based on Lev 18:6-18; Deut 22:30; 27:20. Of

23 Opinions are divided on this question. Andrew Clarke (1993, 77–80) argues that it was the wife of the man’s father. De Vos (1998, 106–108), on the other hand, concludes that the woman was the father’s concubine, and not the man’s step-mother. Unfortunately, Paul does not provide us with sufficient information to decide this matter. De Vos (1998, 114) is probably correct, however, that for Paul, as a Jew, the distinction between concubine and wife was not important in judging the immorality of the situation.

interest to us is the use that Paul makes of metaphorical thought and language to deal with the situation.

Paul raises his concern regarding the incestuous relation by claiming that he has received a report that there was sexual immorality among the Corinthian Christians of such a kind that it did not exist among unbelievers (τοῖς ἕθνεσιν) in that someone had taken as a sexual partner the wife/concubine of his father (5:1). Paul's statement in 5:1 presupposes what Lakoff and Johnson (1999, 303–304) call the moral order metaphor. The moral order metaphor assumes that there is a hierarchy of moral dominance that is inherent in the world.²⁴ For example, in the contemporary world the United States, particularly under the Bush administration, assumes that it is morally superior to other countries and therefore that it has the moral authority and responsibility to impose its moral views on other nation-states.²⁵ In Paul's moral world Christians should occupy a higher position in the moral hierarchy that God has established than unbelievers (cf. 1 Thess 4:5). This is because in moral terms Christians should be superior to unbelievers precisely because they have a better knowledge and closer relation with the one true God (1 Cor 8:6), the ultimate moral authority in the world. But apart from the argument in 5:1 resting on the moral order metaphor, which, as we will see, plays into Paul's argument in v. 3 as well, the statement itself in v. 1 is metaphoric. The metaphorical thought is as follows: the incest that you are tolerating is a worse form of sexual immorality than unbelievers would allow. The metaphor is signaled by the correlative adjective, τοιαύτη, with the negative, οὐδέ. The reader is thus asked to compare the case of incest, the target domain, with tolerated forms of sexual immorality among unbelievers, the source domain. We are invited to think of what forms of sexual activity that Christians consider to be immoral that are not counted as immoral by unbelievers, for example, prostitution, which was not proscribed in the Roman world. When we map the range of possible sexual practices of unbelievers that are not subject to

24 In an earlier work Johnson (1996, 59) uses the term "moral order" in a somewhat different way. He maintains that society is a system, conceived of metaphorically as "machine, person, building, organism," that requires order, that is things must be in their proper place, for society to function properly. Moral order is a metaphoric expression that pertains to the proper moral functioning of society, in the same way that economic order is considered necessary for a society to function properly.

25 For a discussion of the moral order metaphor in relationship to contemporary United States foreign policy see Lakoff (2002, 412–415).

moral opprobrium for them onto the acceptable range of sexual practices for believers, we would expect that believers, who should have a higher moral standard because of their nearness to God, that is they should be holy like God (3:16-17), would not engage in sexual practices that unbelievers would find unacceptable, or immoral. The opposite, however, was happening according to Paul. Thus the community's toleration of an incestuous relationship of a member has the quality of a counterfactual in the metaphor when compared with what unbelievers would be prepared to tolerate,²⁶ never mind what Christians should be prepared to tolerate.

Paul makes use of the moral order metaphor again in 5:3-5, but this time in association with another metaphorical conception, the closely associated concept of moral authority. Moral authority is metaphorical in that it is modeled on dominance in the physical sphere (Lakoff and Johnson 1999, 301). The prototype of moral authority in the ancient world was the father who was responsible for ensuring the moral development of his offspring through education and disciplining them.²⁷ Children in turn owed obedience to their father. This connection between father and authority is precisely what led Paul to develop his elaborate father metaphor in 1 Cor 4:14-21 in preparation for his assertion of authority in 5:1-5 as I have shown elsewhere.²⁸ When Paul says that although he is physically absent he has rendered judgment against the man committing incest, he does so, on the grounds of his moral authority that rests on the fact that he was the founding apostle of the community. Throughout 1 Cor 1:10-4:21 Paul uses his position as the first to proclaim the gospel to the Corinthians as a justification for his unique position of authority within the community. It is his seminal role in creating the church that leads him to claim in 4:15 to have "fathered" the Corinthian believers (Wanamaker 2003: 135). Thus Paul metaphorically maps the source domain of father, with its scope that includes moral authority and disciplinary power, onto his status as founding apostle in order to support his claim to these attributes associated with physical fatherhood in antiquity.

26 On counterfactual reasoning see Fauconnier and Turner (2002, 217–247).

27 See Burke (2003, 100–105) for a brief but useful discussion of the father-child relation in antiquity. See especially 104–105 regarding moral education.

28 See Wanamaker (2003, 135–136) and especially (Forthcoming November, 2005) for a detailed discussion of the relation between 1 Cor 4:14-21 and 5:1-5.

The moral order metaphor, which rests on the assumption that there is a necessary hierarchical order in moral power, in the same way that political power was hierarchical in the Roman Empire, leads Paul, who has taken the decision to exclude the man living in immorality, to do so in the name of the Lord Jesus.²⁹ Thus Paul, who stands above the Corinthian believers in the moral order of God, adds authority to his judgment by implicating the Lord Jesus, who stands above him in the moral order, through invoking his name.³⁰ For a similar reason, Paul calls for the Corinthians to act on his authoritative condemnation of the sinful man by handing him over to Satan for the destruction of his flesh when they gather with his (Paul's) spirit being present and with the power of the Lord Jesus Christ.³¹ As someone higher in the moral order and with superior moral authority, Paul seeks to give the community confidence for undertaking a socially difficult task by suggesting that his spirit will be present with the power of the Lord Jesus Christ when they execute his moral judgment against the man.

Yet another moral metaphor appears to be present in the reasoning of 1 Cor 5:1-5 and turns out to be crucial for understanding what Paul means. Paul's condemnation of the incestuous man and the handing of him over to Satan for the destruction of his flesh could be considered retributive justice for the harm caused to the community. This fits with what South (1993, 540–544) calls the dominant “curse/death” interpretation in which it is claimed that the ὄλεθρον τῆς σαρκός refers to the man's physical death.³²

29 The “name of the Lord Jesus Christ” is once again used as a metonymy for the person of Jesus Christ. See the comments on 1 Cor 1:10 above.

30 With the NRSV, but against many interpreters, I take the phrase “in the name of the Lord Jesus” with what precedes it, not with what follows. Just as in 1 Cor 1:10 where the name of the Lord Jesus Christ is used to authorize Paul's moral exhortation, here the name of the Lord Jesus is used to authorize Paul's condemnation of the man who was guilty of committing egregious sexual immorality. In support of this position, it should be noted that there are no instances in Paul or anywhere else in the New Testament where “in the name of the Lord Jesus (Christ)” is used in relation to the gathering of the Christian community in worship or for any other purpose. On the other hand, 2 Thess. 3:6 provides a very close parallel to the usage here and in 1 Cor 1:10 in that the name of the Lord Jesus Christ is called upon to authorize a command that is being given. Cf. Collins (1999, 211–212).

31 The “power of the Lord Jesus Christ” is a metonymy as well.

32 See, e.g., Conzelmann (1975, 97) who says, “The destruction of the flesh can hardly mean anything else but death (cf. [1 Cor] 11:30).” South (1993) provides a strong critique of the curse/death interpretation of 1 Cor 5:5 and argues instead that “handing over to Satan for

But the carrying out of exclusion from the community (5:2, 13) by handing the person over to Satan seems to relate to the moral strengthening metaphor. The negative side of the moral strength metaphor is that moral weakness is itself immorality (Lakoff and Johnson 1999, 301). A more Pauline way of putting it would be that the works or deeds of the flesh (Gal 5:19) are sin. In this metaphor the source domain “sin” is equivalent to immorality, with its various entailments like illicit forms of sex, robbery, idolatry, greed, dissensions, and so forth,³³ and it is mapped onto the target domain “works of the flesh” in order to give this concept its meaning. In terms of this metaphor destroying the flesh is itself a metaphorical way of talking about ending the human desires that lead to sinfulness or immorality (Rom 7:5; 13:14) and ultimately to death (Rom 8:3-8). The destruction of the sinful desires and the concomitant deeds that emanate from them, lead to the possibility of the spirit, or inner essence of the man in 1 Cor 5:5, attaining salvation or state of final well-being on the day of judgment (cf. Rom 8:13; Gal 5:24). Underlying this thought is the moral accounting metaphor that we have previously discussed. First Corinthians 5:5 envisages a situation in which the destruction of the sinful desires associated with unredeemed human existence offer the possibility of rebalancing the man’s moral account, overcoming the debit that arose from the man’s incestuous relationship. It is this that would lead to the man’s salvation.

4. Conclusion

In this paper I have only touched the surface (a metaphorical expression, by the way) of Paul’s use of metaphors and metaphorical thought for dealing with moral issues in 1 Corinthians 1-5. What I have demonstrated, however, is that the understanding of metaphor by contemporary cognitive sciences offers a valuable, in fact, indispensable tool for examining Paul’s moral concepts, moral thinking, and moral reasoning. The reason for this is that metaphorical language and metaphorical thought was the main, if not only, means available for Paul, or for us, to conceptualize and think about

the destruction of the flesh” refers to the man’s expulsion from the community in order to bring him to his senses, a process that would hopefully lead to his restoration to the community. My explanation below of the metaphorical basis of the passage supports this type of interpretation.

33 See 1 Cor 6:9-10 and Gal 5:19-21 for lists of sinful or immoral acts from Paul’s perspective.

morality. As we have just seen in the case of 1 Cor 5:5 recognizing the metaphorical character of language and thought does make a difference since it helps prevent misinterpretation of what Paul sought to communicate. But more importantly further work in Paul's use of metaphorical language, thought, and reasoning holds a great deal of promise for those who wish to understand Paul's thinking and the way in which it is inscribed in his rhetoric. In this sense this essay offers a new point of departure for those interested in the socio-rhetorical analysis of Paul since it opens up the possibility of adding greater depth to the cognitive analysis of Paul's rhetoric.

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