

FROM SOLIDARITY TO SODALITY: COMPASSIONATE MISSIONS, LOCAL CHURCHES, AND THE FOSTERING OF CROSS-CULTURAL MISSIONARY BANDS¹

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In a series of essays and articles in the 1970s, Ralph Winter articulated what he at one point labeled “the two structures of God’s redemptive mission” (1974). In this, Winter distinguished between what he considers the two redemptive structures of Christianity as “modalities” and “sodalities,” wherein the denomination and local church both constitute a modality and the missionary band or missions agency a sodality. According to Winter, it is sodalities that have historically broken through to take the Gospel to new frontiers, and that have often been the source of renewal within the church. Winter also argues that where sodalities were absent, the church often has lapsed into a dangerous nominalism (1974; p. 131).

In this essay, I attempt to offer a slight corrective to Winter’s understanding of these terms, and also to carry Winter’s argument forward on a couple of key fronts. Specifically, I will argue that Winter’s terminology of “two redemptive structures” is problematic, even though he is basically correct in distinguishing between the purpose and function of the local church and that of the mission band. Winter’s error, as I will show, relates to not clearly enough distinguishing between the two and thereby failing to make the local church more normative. I will also develop what Winter briefly refers to as “Second Stage Mission” as it relates to compassionate outreach, and argue that compassionate missions, properly understood and practiced, constitutes a necessary ingredient in the establishment of indigenous missionary sodalities. Whereas Winter provides a basis for distinguishing between modalities and sodalities, calling for “the intentional and deliberate implantation of mission sodalities,” (1974; p. 135), I will follow through on that

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thought by focusing on precisely how that might be accomplished. To do so I will argue that the concept of “solidarity,” defined as oneness in Christ, forms an essential link between mission churches (modalities) and the propagation of indigenous mission bands (sodalities). My thesis is this: Solidarity is an essential feature of corporate holiness according to the New Testament and as such, its practice is necessary for the emergence of indigenous missions movements which depends on the work of the Holy Spirit within the congregation. To make this argument, I will rely on a convincing body of evidence presented by David G. Horrell regarding the centrality of solidarity in Paul’s vision of the church. I will then further develop Horrell’s argument to demonstrate the important link between corporate holiness and the presence of the Holy Spirit among God’s people. I will argue that it is fundamentally the work of the Spirit to call forth missionaries and missions movements. Furthermore, I will argue that solidarity between missions receiving churches and their surrounding community is often hindered by the way(s) in which missionaries and missions agencies go about compassionate missions. As a remedy, I propose that greater attention be given to the important link found in both Luke-Acts and key Pauline texts regarding the role of the Spirit in both community formation and missionary impulse.

Modalities and Sodalities

In his article titled “The Two Redemptive Structures of God’s Mission,” (1974) Winter makes the case that Christian missions emerged as the apostle Paul followed the pattern of Jewish Rabbinical missions. A key idea for Winter is that Judaic missions were an extension of the synagogue but were not the synagogue itself. So too for Paul. His missionary activity was “more than the extended outreach of the Antioch church” (Winter, 1974; p. 123). Winter

describes the two component parts of the pattern both in Judaism and in the missions of the early church as “modalities” and “sodalities.”

According to these designations, “a modality is a structured fellowship in which there is no distinction of sex or age” (Winter 1974; p. 127). That is to say, participation is open to all comers. A sodality, on the other hand, restricts participation based on an adult second decision beyond modality membership, and includes limitations of age, sex, or marital status. Winter says, “in this use of these terms, both the denomination and the local congregation are modalities, while a missions agency or local men’s club are sodalities” (Winter, 1974; p. 127). Thus, a sodality can be understood as a more specific structure in function that moves beyond the broader structure and function of the local church. Sodalities by definition have a more limited participation and limited scope. It is important to also note that Winter (1979) argues elsewhere that modalities and sodalities together form the fabric of the *ecclesia* of the New Testament (p. 143). Winter intends this to mean that neither can be properly understood apart from the other. “The two are indeed interdependent and the evidences of history do not allow us to understand either of them as complete without the other” (1979; p. 144). In fact, one of Winter’s (1979) constant concerns regarding modalities and sodalities lies in the Protestant tendency to foster a “schism” between these two structures (p. 143).

Following these definitions, Winter argues on historical grounds that modalities and sodalities defined the diocesan and monastic movements up through the middle ages, noting that monastic sodalities functioned as a renewing force for the diocesan modality. “It is clear that the sodality...was almost always the prime mover, the source of inspiration and renewal which overflowed into the papacy and created reform movements which blessed diocesan Christianity from time to time” (1974; p. 129). Winter also argues that early Protestants lost sight of the

necessity of sodalities, with Luther explicitly rejecting the idea. Protestantism recovered the importance of sodalities though only as it rediscovered its missions mandate through individuals such as William Carey (1974; p. 132). However, the modern protestant church, according to Winter, continues to struggle with the legitimacy of sodalities and continues to focus its missionary effort mainly on the establishment of modalities, or local churches (p. 134).

While affirming compassionate missions, or what Winter (1974) refers to as missions “service agencies” that engage in “medical work, orphan work, or radio work, or whatever” (135), he also argues that these “must be aware of, and concerned about, the interface between that activity and and the church-planting function” (135). Beyond this though, there must be by missions agencies an intentional effort to plant missions sodalities, by which Winter means non-Western missions efforts (135). It is this specific aspect of Winter’s argument that I wish to pick up and further develop. However, it will be helpful to first critically examine the legitimacy of Winter’s distinction between modalities and sodalities, as some find this notion problematic. Then, we shall return to this idea of integrating compassionate missions with the creation of missions sodalities and look to specific approaches that would allow for that to happen.

Evaluating the Notion of Two Redemptive Structures

To evaluate Winter’s argument for his two redemptive structures, I will turn to a critique provided by Bruce Camp (1995) who challenges the theological legitimacy of the modality-sodality distinction. While broadly agreeing with Winter that the New Testament does not prescribe precise forms, Camp takes issue with Winter’s understanding of modalities and sodalities as both being equal expressions of the universal church (p. 201). While much of Camp’s critique focuses not on what Winter has said about modalities and sodalities, but rather on what others have said who have picked up on and developed Winter’s ideas, there are a few

criticisms that do apply directly to Winter's two redemptive structure notion, and I will mostly focus my attention on those. My primary concern here is to evaluate whether Winter's distinction between the local church and the mission band is legitimate.

First, Camp argues that such a distinction is not legitimate to the extent that it restricts membership based on age, gender, or marital status. Even though ministry offices, such as that of church elder (1 Tim. 3:6) can limit participation to mature believers, this restriction is possible because the ministry office does not claim to be an extension of the universal church. The same, says Camp, cannot be said of sodalities as Winter defines them. Indeed, Winter's argument to restrict participation in sodalities based on, for example, marital status, seems more pragmatic than biblical. To illustrate, we might consider Winter's statement (1979) wherein he says, "There is no doubt that in many circumstances the missionary family is a clumsy and inefficient instrument of ministry" (p. 169).

Camp's critique is correct, not on the illegitimacy of the modality-sodality distinction, but rather on the criteria by which such a distinction is made. This provides for us a point on which we might clarify Winter's argument. Rather than a sodality being restricted by age, gender, or marital status as Winter suggests and which indeed does seem to go beyond what Scripture says, I propose that the primary criteria according to the New Testament for participation should be the call of God. This appears to be the point in Acts 13:2: "While they were ministering to the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, 'Set apart for Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.'" The text here seems to underscore not the will or desire of Barnabas and Saul, nor any other characteristic such as age or marital status, but only that God had called them to the missionary task. In fact, Paul frequently describes his own calling as owing to the initiative or grace of God. We see this in Gal. 1:15 where Paul describes his call by declaring "But when

God, who had set me apart even from my mother's womb and called me through His grace." In Eph. 3:7 he also describes his calling in nearly identical language, as having come from God. Plus, the words attributed to the Holy Spirit in Acts 13:2, "separate for Me," seem to lend credibility to the notion that the function of the missions band is not just different from but also more narrow than that of the local church. Why else would a separation from the larger body of believers be necessary unless there was a narrower role unfolding?

The notion that the primary criteria for participation in a sodality should be a divine call, also finds support in the fact that, as James Thompson has noted, Paul never instructs the churches he planted to send missionaries. This is not because he didn't expect them to engage in missions or evangelism, but rather because Paul's mission "is clearly distinguishable from the mission of his churches" (Thompson 2014; p. 159). It seems likely that Paul's lack of instruction to the churches to send missionaries flowed from the fact that Paul trusted that the sending of missionaries would always happen by divine calling, and not by human prerogative as was the case in his own calling and sending. In fact, John Calvin (1874) made precisely this argument in his *Commentary on Acts*, when he argued regarding the sending of Saul and Barnabas (Acts 13:2–3) from Antioch, that the selection of *apostles* ("sent ones") was of an especially divine nature (n.p.).

Camp therefore is wrong to say that there can be no limiting participation in sodalities, and Winter is likewise wrong to limit participation according gender, age, and marital status. Rather, one can make a case for limited participation in a sodality-like entity based on having experienced a divine call to participate in missions work. The question then of course arises as to how one establishes and/or verifies this call, and again the instance of Barnabas and Saul appears instructive. In that case, the church witnessed to the call and confirmed it in their sending of Paul

and Barnabas. Thus, one sees here both the operation of individual and collective calls, wherein the modality, in this case the Antioch church, recognizes the activity of God in their midst in creating and forming a sodality, taking the form of the missions band, whom they then sent out. Therefore, the sodality operates only within the permission and sanctioning of the modality. It is an outflow of the life of the local church. The modality, or local church, therefore functions as the more normative structure.

Winter (1979), however, is reluctant to make one structure more normative and indeed he describes Pauline sodalities as sort of mobile local churches, which as we've already observed, in Winter's understanding are fully reflective of the universal church (1974; p. 122). And here is where Winter's proposal becomes problematic (p. 143). In making this move, Winter removes from the missions band its fundamental connection to and dependence upon the local church as the God-ordained source and authority for its mission. By seeing both modalities and sodalities as "two redemptive structures," Winter minimizes the uniquely redemptive role of the local church. He does this by ascribing to another structure that which the NT only ascribes to local congregations.

Camp has also rightly criticized those who have moved beyond Winter's distinction between the local church and the missions band by claiming that local churches are "nurture structures" and that missions bands are "outreach structures." While acknowledging that Winter himself never makes this claim, Camp (1995) declares that "the Bible does does not teach or allow for a distinction between local and cross-cultural witness in the sense that a church can do one and not the other" (p. 204). I would add that even though Winter never seems to have endorsed this distinction, the very phraseology he uses of "two redemptive structures" opens up the possibility and even likelihood of precisely this sort of misunderstanding. One cannot limit

the local church to near neighbor evangelism and relegate concern for missions to missions agencies or missions bands. Rather, the local church must do both. Camp (1995) therefore suggests a solution that “empower[s] local churches to fulfill their God-given duties,” and that avoids equating the role of missions agency or missions band with the mandate of the local church. “Legitimacy ascribed to missions agencies stems from their service with churches, not from usurping the local church’s biblical mandate” (207). What Camp leaves off however is precisely how that movement from local churches to missions bands should develop, and it is at that point which I will pick up the argument.

The needed corrective to Winter’s distinction then is this. His criteria for participation in a sodality was more practical than biblical and is corrected by positing a biblical divine call as the primary criteria. Second, his phrase “two redemptive structures” could be construed to rob local congregations of their missions mandate by relegating that responsibility solely to missions agencies. I would add at this point, once again though, that the second issue seems more a problem with Winter’s interpreters than with Winter himself, as Winter held to a very close and necessary connection between local churches and missions bands. Such an interpretation is consistent with the book of Acts, wherein the missionary band sent out in Acts 13 was tied to both the church at Jerusalem who first sent Barnabas to Antioch, and to the church at Antioch, who sent out Barnabas and Saul. Therefore, I find the distinction between modalities and sodalities to be helpful, so long as one is careful to hold them together with the local church functioning more normatively than the missions band. This represents a point of divergence with Winter (1979), who though understanding the two as interdependent, refuses to make either structure more central (p. 143). It is the local church and not the missions band or missions agency that alone functions as a local expression of the body of Christ. The missions band is an

extension of either the local church or denomination or both, but cannot substitute for either (Camp 1995, 207; Tennent 2010, 454).

Second Stage Missions

I would like at this point to begin to develop further than Winter does what he refers to as “Second Stage Missions.” In establishing a means by which to evaluate Protestant missions structures or sodalities such as missions agencies and parachurch organizations, Winter proposes five general questions as a rubric. Of those, the fifth question is particularly relevant for our present discussion for it asks, “For what function is the agency designed?” In this “agency” refers to the sodality, whether a missions agency or missions band. In response, Winter lists the distinction of *First Stage Missions*, *Second Stage Missions*, and *Consolidation Missions*. Winter only clarifies the meaning of the first two of these, stating that First Stage Missions consists in crossing geographic borders to plant the church where it does not exist. Second Stage Missions refers to missions partnerships that ideally strengthen the capacity of established churches through “interchurch aid” (Winter 1979, 173). More specifically, this aid or partnership should endeavor to especially strengthen the capacity of indigenous churches toward their own missionary enterprises (173). Leslie Newbigin has argued similarly in distinguishing between “fraternal workers”—or those who are merely sent from one church to another, and those rightly called “missionaries” who either directly work to plant the church where no Christian witness is present, or those who “assist another church in its specifically missionary tasks” (Newbigin 1977, 216).

As it concerns the expression of compassion in cross-cultural work, this notion of both modalities and sodalities, along with Second Stage Missions becomes vital. Missionaries who go to work with other national churches in the area of compassionate ministry must understand their

role as not only as strengthening the capacity of local churches, but of doing so with a specific missions agenda in mind. That agenda should be to foster cross-cultural missions bands (sodalities) among the missions receiving churches (modalities). The ultimate goal in Second Stage Missions, if it is to remain missions, must be to see missions receiving churches become missions sending churches. And compassion constitutes a key link in achieving this.

However, much will depend on the manner in which Second Stage Missions proceeds and the ways in which missionaries engage in compassionate work. If missionaries act as the primary “doers” of compassion, then often the result is that local congregations become robbed of their role as salt and light in the community (Matt. 5:13–14). It is instructive in this regard to consider Acts 11 and the pattern we find there regarding the ministry of Barnabas and Saul at Antioch. In 11:26 we read that Barnabas and Saul spend a whole year teaching the church. It is also noteworthy that Barnabas and Saul in this passage function as a sodality. Barnabas was sent from the more mature church in Jerusalem to Antioch and he in turn went to Tarsus to find Saul. Thus, they were not the local church in Antioch, but an extension of the church in Jerusalem sent to aid a fledgling congregation and help it mature. A key point is that Barnabas and Saul were not supposed to be the local church in Antioch but were there to equip that church. It is also noteworthy that between chapters eleven and thirteen of Acts, the Antioch church moves from being a missions receiving church to becoming a missions sending church. When their work is finished at Antioch, Barnabas and Saul are called by the Holy Spirit and commissioned by the church to continue moving on toward unreached areas (13:2–3).

What is particularly important in the way Luke has presented the story in Acts 11 is that the teaching/equipping ministry of Barnabas and Saul (v. 26) leads directly to the indigenous compassionate response of the local church. In 11:27 we read that a prophet arrives in Antioch

proclaiming a coming famine. Acts 11:29 states, “And in the proportion that any of the disciples had means, each of them determined to send a contribution for the relief of the brethren living in Judea.” It was not Barnabas and Saul who spearheaded the response. Rather each of the disciples determined according to their own means how to respond. In fact, this appears to be a consistent pattern in the New Testament, as we read something strikingly similar in 2 Cor. 8:3, which says of the Macedonian church that “according to their ability, and beyond their ability they gave of their own accord.” In both cases, the emphasis is on the indigenous compassionate response of the local church to freely and voluntarily give according to their means.

If Barnabas and Saul were part of many missions organization today though, one wonders if any room at all would be given for an indigenous response. It seems to me that the modern tendency would be to start a project— perhaps “The Judean Famine Fund”—commission foreign missionaries to head it up, print up some nice JFF tee-shirts, and launch a fundraising campaign among supporting churches. But such actions become highly problematic precisely because they fundamentally confuse the role of the sodality, in this case the missions band or agency, with that of the local church, the modality. And this in fact underscores the need for our revised version of Winter’s distinction between these two entities. What ultimately gets neglected in the process of missionaries doing compassion that should be (and could be) done by local believers is the important biblical concept of solidarity. In what follows I will unpack this concept a bit more to show that solidarity is the key to fostering local expressions of missions—or, indigenous sodalities.

Solidarity in the Pauline Epistles

David Horrell (2014) in his monograph on Pauline ethics, *Solidarity and Difference*, has argued that Pauline ethics consists of two foundational “metanorms”—namely, corporate

solidarity in Christ regarding the Christian community, and other-regard modeled on Christ's own self-less compassion. Corporate solidarity regarding those in Christ focuses on the formation of moral virtue among the believing community, and thereby on an observable distinction between the church and the world. Solidarity therefore refers essentially to oneness in Christ. This oneness though, as Horrell's title suggests, does not obliterate differences within the community, but foster's mutual love and concern for one another. That is, differences are allowed for, even celebrated, so long as they do not impinge upon the solidarity of the community.

According to Horrell, Paul's ethics is concerned not so much with providing specific ethical instructions, though those are present, but rather with declaring the values necessary for the formation of a moral community (Horrell 2015, chapter 9.1.1). The *summum bonum* for Paul is that which contributes to the flourishing of the community and avoids the creation of divisions. This intra-communitarian ethic, however, is not limited to the church but overflows from the church into the world, as believers seek to "do good to all people, but especially to those who are of the household of faith" (Gal. 6:10; see especially Horrell chapter 4.5 and 9). Furthermore, Paul understands the achievement of this solidarity to depend on the rites of baptism and the Lord's supper, on the important use of familial language among believers (especially "brothers"), and through the imagery of the church as the body of Christ (chapter 4).

Baptism

Regarding baptism, Horrell notes that Paul refers to the baptism of believers as incorporation into Christ. Referring especially to 1 Cor. 12:13 and Gal. 3:26, Horrell notes the emphasis in both passages on baptism resulting in a profound revaluation of various ethno-social distinctions that existed prior to baptism. For example, in 1 Cor. 12:13 Paul says, "For by one

Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.” In Gal. 3:26–29 Paul states the issue even more strongly, declaring “For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.” Thus the rite of baptism “constructs a new form of human solidarity which transcends the lines of previous distinctions” (Horrell 2015, chapter 4.1).

The Lord’s Supper

The Lord’s supper, according to Horrell (2014), also constitutes another important Pauline understanding of corporate solidarity. “While baptism may be defined as a rite of initiation concerned with boundary-crossing and status transformation, the Lord’s supper is clearly a ceremony, practiced regularly, which confirms and celebrates the status and identity of community members” (chapter 4.1.2). Furthermore, the Lord’s supper functions to “confirm and consolidate” the solidarity of oneness in Christ (chapter 4.1.2). And, as Horrell (2014) observes, it is important also to note that the primary criticism Paul has against the Corinthians relates to their fractious quarrelling that stands in direct violation of this supreme value of corporate solidarity, as a violation of having been made one body in Christ (chapter 4.1.2).

Brothers

Paul’s use of *adelphoi* (or brothers) to refer to fellow believers in several texts is intended “to impress an ethical demand” (especially Rom. 14:10–21; 1 Cor. 6:5–8; 1 Cor. 8:11–12; Horrell 2014, chapter 4.2). The designation functions for Paul not merely as a nicety, but as a constant reminder that believers are in a real sense incorporated into a new family. Paul uses this term or some form of it over seventy-five times in his letters and it is his preferred term for

fellow believers. Furthermore, Paul's use of *adelphoi* could refer to men, women, and children and as such represented a highly inclusive concept of family that crossed both gender and social stratifications in a way unknown in that day (Thompson 2014; 44). Paul's preference for *adelphoi* and his efforts to engender a sense of family belonging and responsibility among believers is buttressed by his use of "one another." This would include the instructions to be "devoted to one another" and "give preference to one another" (Rom 12:10), to be "of the same mind with one another" (Rom. 12:16), to "love one another (Rom. 13:8), to "build one another up" (Rom. 14:19), to "accept one another" (Rom. 15:7), and so on (cf. Thompson 2014, 44). As Thompson says, "Paul's frequent use of 'one another' reflects the family relationship and the solidarity of the community" (44). The significance of this is that those in Christ are to understand their relationship to one another according to obligations such as love and support that are characteristic of obligations toward the members of one's own family. Thus:

the reason why believers should show generous concern for one another is precisely because the other is an *adelphos* and as such belongs with them to the same family group. The mutual love that should characterize the congregations is the love of siblings, a *philadelphia* (Rom. 12:10; 1 Thess. 4:9). This solidarity, we should note, is explicitly seen to reach beyond the confines of the local congregation to encompass believers everywhere, who also share this family identity (1 Thess. 4:10). (Horrell 2015, chapter 4.2)

The Body of Christ

Regarding the church as the body of Christ, Horrell (2015) observes that "there are two significant texts where Paul presents the notion of the community as a body to engender the idea of a diversity-in-unity, or solidarity and difference: Rom 12.4-8 and 1 Cor. 12.12-31" (chapter 4.4). Paul's primary point in these references is to foster mutual care and support among the members of local churches and to regard one another as equally valuable.

Horrell's main point is that for Paul, the concept of solidarity functions as the key to community formation, and that Paul's ethics is especially concerned with this above all else. The people of God are to be a transformed people, living in harmonious unity with each other and overcoming former social divisions. This is furthermore meant to stand as a testimony to their participation in Christ. "The basis for solidarity, for the construction of community, as the central Christian rituals show, is found in Paul's Christology: as believers make the story of Christ their own, participating in his death and new life, so they leave behind the old world, and become members of one body, in Christ" (Horrell 2014; chapter 4 under "Conclusion").

The preponderance of Pauline passages focusing on intra-communitarian ethics, that is, on how believers show love and care for one another, has led some interpreters to claim that Paul had no social ethic regarding outsiders (Horrell 2015, chapter 8.5). For example, Rauschenbusch once declared of Paul, "his outlook is almost devoid of social elements" (Rauschenbusch 1991, p. 195). But as I hope to make clear, a better understanding is one that sees intra-community compassion, what we have until now referred to as solidarity, as the requisite characteristic that propels the church into the world in both evangelism and missions.

Solidarity and 'Other-regard'

Though much of Paul's ethics is devoted to community formation, he also speaks frequently about the broader role of the church in the community. Furthermore, the nature of concern for others in the larger community stems from the essential character of the community, modeled on the life of Christ who gave himself as a ransom for all. In the same way, the Christian community is to be "for all" in a number of compassionate ways. This compassionate stance of the church should not be conceived as a means to an end, even though there are missional implications that follow, most importantly the removal of hindrances to Gospel

proclamation (Horrell 2015, chapter 8.4). Rather, the responsibility to be “for others” is a Gospel-worthy pursuit in its own right.

A number of important passages in Paul provide a basis for the movement of Christian compassion from the community of faith to the outside world. Among these are three passages in 1 Thessalonians (3:12; 4:12; 5:15). 1 Thess. 3:12 states “may the Lord cause you to increase and abound in love for one another, and *for all people*, just as we also do for you” (emphasis added).² Richard Hays (1996) rightly points out that this represents not a command by Paul, but rather a prayer (22). Even so, it shows clearly that Paul expected the Thessalonian church to embody *agapē* for one another and for all those whom its members encountered in everyday life. Plus, a few chapters later, Paul does express nearly an identical idea in more of a command form. In 1 Thess. 5:15 he instructs, “See that no one repays another with evil for evil, but always seek after that which is good for one another *and for all people*.” Paul employs strikingly similar language in Galatians 6:10, wherein he instructs “while we have opportunity, let us do good *to all people*, and especially to those who are of the household of the faith.” Other Pauline texts that present a variation on this theme include Philippians 4:8, Romans 12:14–2, and 2 Corinthians 8:21. In each of these passages Paul expresses in various ways a concern for the way in which local believers are perceived by the larger community. Their witness in the community is to be both in word and deed and there is an inherent expectation that outsiders will take notice. The practice of solidarity within the community was to result in radically transformed lives that stood apart from the world and caused believers to “shine like stars in the universe” (Phil. 2:15; Horrell 2015, chapter 8.4).

² All Scripture references are from the NASB95 version unless otherwise noted.

Solidarity and the Spirit

I now wish to shift directions slightly and begin to develop precisely how the concept of solidarity as described above leads to the formation of indigenous missions bands, or sodalities. To accomplish this, I will argue that one of the functions in both Luke-Acts and in Paul of the notion of solidarity is the cultivation of the presence of the Holy Spirit among the people of God, and that this is especially accomplished through solidarity, which leads to holiness, that is to the people of God being a “a people set apart.” It is through the Spirit’s dynamic presence and empowerment that Luke especially demonstrates to be the primary agent in missions.

Solidarity and Holiness

Whereas it is Paul’s Christology that primarily forms the theological basis for believers’ oneness in Christ (solidarity), it is his Pneumatology that serves especially as the basis to bring about this reality since the Spirit functions “primarily in the role of motivator and enabler of conduct” as it relates to Christian ethics (Horrell 2015, under “*Solidarity and Difference*, Ten Years On, II”). When Paul talks about the oneness of believers in Christ (solidarity), he has in mind the cultivation of the Spirit’s presences as the ultimate goal. Solidarity is about more than merely treating one another well. Rather, the entire concept is rooted in holiness, and it is holiness that generates the kind of community that makes room for the operation and dynamic presence of the Spirit.

Paul’s ethics is especially concerned with, not individual transformation, as we are so inclined to conceive of spiritual formation in the West, but corporately and for molding of the gathered saints to conform to Christ as a body and not merely as a collection of individuals (Thompson 2014, 104). As Thompson (2014) has explained, Paul’s goal in ministry “is a *community* that will be his boast at the day of Christ (2 Cor. 1:14; Phil. 2:16; 1 Thess. 2:19; cf. 2

Cor. 11: 3)” (104; emphasis added). Throughout his letters Paul describes his labors as related to primarily the formation of communities whose spiritual progress continues until Christ’s coming and who are increasingly conformed to the image of Christ (Rom. 8:29; 1 Cor. 15:49; 2 Cor. 3:18; Thompson, 104). Furthermore, this community-oriented spiritual formation is a function of the Holy Spirit. As Paul says, “For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit” (1 Cor. 12:13). Paul’s consistent emphasis on the transformation of believers by the Spirit puts the onus on the work of the Spirit among the churches, and not on the will of the individual. “If by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live” (Rom. 8:13). Thus, Thompson (2014) is right in declaring that “ethical transformation is a gift of the Spirit” (124).

It is significant to observe in the book of Acts that there is a dual emphasis both on the role of the Spirit regarding solidarity among the members of the fledgling Jesus movement and concerning the unfolding missionary impulse of church. We see this in that the disciples in Acts are described as being “with one mind” (1:14; 2:46), which certainly bears resemblance to the Pauline notion of solidarity outlined above. But the clearest show of solidarity appears in Acts 4:

And the congregation of those who believed were of one heart and soul; and not one of them claimed that anything belonging to him was his own, but all things were common property to them. And with great power the apostles were giving testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and abundant grace was upon them all. For there was not a needy person among them, for all who were owners of land or houses would sell them and bring the proceeds of the sales and lay them at the apostles’ feet, and they would be distributed to each as any had need. (vv. 32–35)

Later, Ananias and Sapphira are presented as the repudiation of this solidarity, and as such are accused of having “lied to the Holy Spirit” (5:3), Whom as we have argued, provides the motivation and power that makes solidarity possible. Thus, not only does the Ananias and Sapphira incident represent a break down in solidarity, but also a hindrance to the working of the

Holy Spirit within the community. The grievousness of their sins stands on the detrimental nature their actions have toward the whole community and the interference with the vital notion of corporate solidarity, much like in the story of Achan in Joshua 7 (cf. David M. Howard, *Joshua*, vol. 5, n.p.).

It is not therefore incidental to the themes of Luke-Acts that when we come to Acts 13 and the sending of Barnabas and Saul, that the context of this sending is the corporate worship of the church. “While they were praying and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, ‘Set apart for Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them’” (Acts 13:2). Their expression of solidarity and the resulting *koinōnia* in which they participate are vital to the proper functioning of the church according to the missional mandate of Acts 1:8. We see this idea of solidarity and community connected to the presence of the Spirit and missions explicitly declared in Acts 9:31: “So the church throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria enjoyed peace, being built up; and going on in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, it continued to increase.”

Conclusion

The great challenge in modern missions, in my view, concerns the need for Western missionaries to increasingly step into the background and allow local churches to flourish both in solidarity with one another and in loving their neighbors in the way that Paul envisioned. This means, if we return to Acts 11 as our paradigm, that we follow the model of Barnabas and Saul, and disciple for compassion, rather than engaging in direct acts of compassion ourselves. For when we are the primary doers, we interrupt this vital concept of solidarity as believers show solidarity for one another and concern for the broader needs of the community.

Absent this “metanorm” of Pauline ethics, the important biblical concept of *koinōnia* mutates into what C. Peter Wagner calls *koinōnitis*, that is, a church whose entire activity and

attention becomes so inwardly focused that the church no longer functions as it was intended, as a radiant expression of the present and coming Kingdom of God (Van Engen 1991, under chapter 6, “Koinonia: Love One Another”). When missionaries engage in compassion in a way that robs local congregations of their role as salt and light in the community, the result will always be churches whose spiritual growth is stunted and whose missionary impulse is dampened. The remedy is therefore to ensure that missionaries maintain a concern for Second Stage Missions in which compassion is seen as an essential ingredient in the formation of local missionary sodalities. By stepping away from a central role in compassionate missions, and by instead focusing on teaching and equipping, cross-cultural workers can remove their own self-imposed hindrances to the expression of solidarity between the members of local churches and between the churches and the communities in which they reside. Because of the broad missional implications for local churches, a focus on discipling for compassion is not only the most compassionate thing that a missionary can do but also that which proves most fruitful.

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