Paul the Cosmopolitan?*

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**The apostle Paul has been viewed by many as a cosmopolitan thinker who called
Christ-followers to embrace the ideal of a single humanity living in harmony with
a divinely ordered cosmos. A close comparison of Paul's apocalyptic theology
with various interpretations of 'cosmopolitanism' over the centuries, however,
shows few points of agreement. Paul was fundamentally a Jewish sectarian
whose vision for a better world embraced only Christ-followers and involved
the cataclysmic end of the present world order. Those who accepted and lived
by this vision were effectively relegated to the same marginal position in civic
life as the local Jewish community.**

Keywords: Paul, Cynic, Stoic, cosmopolitan, universal, sectarian

Introduction

Was the apostle Paul a cosmopolitan thinker? If not, did he at least lay the
groundwork for the later development of Christian cosmopolitanism? Many seem
to think so, especially in the relatively new interdisciplinary field of 'cosmopolitan
studies', where Paul is named alongside ancient Cynic and Stoic philosophers
such as Diogenes, Zeno and Chrysippus as one of the fountainheads of cosmopolitan thought.[1] Verses such as Gal 3.28, Eph 2.19 and Col 3.11 are often cited as

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1 See, for example, G. Delanty, *The Cosmopolitan Imagination: The Renewal of Critical Social
Theory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009) 28; D. M. McMahon, 'Fear &
Trembling, Strangers & Strange Lands', *Daedalus* 137 (2008) 5–17, at 10–11; A. A. Long, 'The
Concept of the Cosmopolitan in Greek & Roman Thought', *Daedalus* 137 (2008) 50–8, at 51,
57; R. Spencer, *Cosmopolitan Criticism and Postcolonial Literature* (Basingstoke: Palgrave
Macmillan, 2011) 2. A recent Christian theologian who reads Paul through the lens of ancient
cosmopolitan thought is N. Kang, *Cosmopolitan Theology: Reconstituting Planetary Hospitality,
Neighbor-Love, and Solidarity in an Uneven World* (St. Louis: Chalice, 2013) 13–14, 24, 130–4.
For the opposite view that early Christian thought constituted a sharp break with the unified
vision of Stoic cosmopolitanism (without specific reference to Paul), see C. Douzinas, 'The
Metaphysics of Cosmopolitanism', *After Cosmopolitanism* (ed. R. Braidotti, P. Hanafin and

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evidence that Paul envisioned (and perhaps even sought to create) a world in which all merely local attachments and identities are relativised and transcended by the loftier ideal of a single humanity living in harmony with a unified, divinely ordered cosmos.

My own view is that these interpretations represent a serious misreading of Paul's rhetorical strategies and his related efforts at community-building and identity-formation in the multiethnic context of the Greek *polis* or the Roman *colonia*. They underestimate the extent to which Paul was embedded in a Jewish symbolic universe that required non-*Ioudaioi*[2] Christ-followers to renounce central elements of their own world-view, social identity and status in favour of a fundamentally 'Jewish' world-view and social identity that relegated them to a peripheral social location in the *polis/colonia* similar to that held by Diaspora Jews. In short, Paul remained a Jewish sectarian even as he laboured to bring non-*Ioudaioi* into the nascent Christ-movement, which he regarded as a thoroughly Jewish project.

My argument is divided into two parts. In the first section I offer a brief and selective overview of the various ways in which 'cosmopolitanism' has been understood from ancient times to the present. In the second half I examine how Paul's thought and practice, insofar as we can reconstruct them from his letters, relate to these various theories of 'cosmopolitanism'. My aim is to demonstrate that Paul does not fit well under any of these rubrics and that he in fact stands far removed from any 'cosmopolitan' vision of human social life, with the partial exception of the ancient Cynics. My reasons for defining Paul as a Jewish sectarian will become clear during the course of my analysis.[3]

B. Blaagard; Milton Park: Routledge, 2013) 57–76, at 61–3. For the claim that Paul represents a form of cosmopolitanism more in line with the early Cynics than later Stoic developments of the concept, see F. G. Downing, 'A Cynic Preparation for Paul's Gospel for Jew and Greek, Slave and Free, Male and Female', *NTS* 42 (1996) 454–62; F. G. Downing, *Cynics, Paul and the Pauline Churches: Cynic and Christian Origins II* (London/New York: Routledge, 1998); and most recently K. B. Neutel, *A Cosmopolitan Ideal: Paul's Declaration 'Neither Jew not Greek, Neither Slave nor Free, Nor Male and Female' in the Context of First-Century Thought* (LNTS 513; London/New York: Bloomsbury T. & T. Clark, 2015).

2 I use the transliterated *Ioudaioi* when speaking of the people-group historically known as 'Jews' in order to avoid the contentious debate over whether it is better to translate the word as 'Jews' or 'Judaeans', since neither rendering is adequate for all circumstances. I do, however, occasionally use the term 'Jewish' in contexts where the 'religious' dimension of *Ioudaios* identity is clearly in view.

3 The term 'sectarian' is used here and elsewhere in the sense popularised by Rodney Stark and William Bainbridge, who developed their model out of an earlier analysis by Benton Johnson that arrayed all religious groups on a continuum with 'churches' at one end and 'sects' at the other. According to Johnson, 'A church is a religious group that accepts the social environment in which it exists. A sect is a religious group that rejects the social environment in which it

1. A Brief History of Cosmopolitanism

1.1 *Cosmopolitanism from Diogenes to Kant*

The earliest known use of the term 'cosmopolitan' is attributed to Diogenes the Cynic (412–323 BCE), a social gadfly and wanderer who, when asked where he came from, replied, 'κοσμοπολίτης' (i.e. '[I am] a citizen of the world/universe').[4] What Diogenes meant by this answer, however, is unclear, since virtually all of what we know about him is late and second-hand.

Judging from the way he is reported to have lived, most scholars have concluded that his meaning was more negative (i.e. rejecting the social norms and conventions of the *polis*) than positive (implying a vision for a new social order). He regarded freedom as the supreme virtue and nature as his model, living as a vagabond and performing in public all kinds of 'natural' acts that other Greeks viewed as shameful.[5] He regularly and publicly mocked Plato and his philosophy as abstract and worthless, and Plato just as regularly returned the favour. More pertinent to our concerns, he taught that Greeks and barbarians are the same and that women were just as capable as men. He sought to persuade others to view the cosmos as he did and to follow his example of ignoring social norms, but few were willing to make this leap. He also produced a number of (now-lost) writings, including a *Republic*, which might have offered a holistic vision for what a community that embraced his teachings would look like or may have been only a satire on Plato and other political philosophers. If it was

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exists' (B. Johnson, 'On Church and Sect', *American Sociological Review* 28 (1963) 539–49, at 542). Stark and Bainbridge complicate this model by adding 'cults' as a third point on the spectrum and distinguishing between 'religious movements' and 'religious institutions'. 'Cults' differ from 'sects' in claiming to bring innovation into the religious sphere while 'sects' aim to purify an existing tradition. The Christ-movement could fit under either of these headings depending on the perspective from which it is viewed: it was 'sectarian' in relation to Judaism but 'cultic' in relation to the broader Greco-Roman religious world. The former term is used here to avoid the negative and confusing connotations that surround popular uses of the term 'cult'. For more on this model, see R. Stark and W. S. Bainbridge, *The Future of Religion: Secularization, Revival and Cult Formation* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985) 19–37.

4 This testimony comes to us from Diogenes Laertius' *Lives of Eminent Philosophers* (6.63), a work from the third century CE, but most scholars regard it as authentic due to the presence of similar ideas in other Cynic works and in the writings of later Stoic authors influenced by the Cynics.

5 While it is hard to know how far the reports are trustworthy, Diogenes is said to have slept in a large *pithos* that he carried around with him, eaten raw meat, and defecated and masturbated in public, among other acts.

the former, it was no doubt a highly utopian vision, to judge from the writings of Zeno who adopted certain Cynic ideas.[6]

The Stoics developed these Cynic ideas in new directions, beginning with Zeno (334–262 BCE), who started his public career as a pupil of Crates the Cynic before moving on to become the founder of the movement known as Stoicism. Zeno's *Republic*, like that of Diogenes, is no longer extant, but a fair indication of his ideas can be gleaned from references in other Stoic works. For Zeno (and for Chrysippus after him, 279–206 BCE), human society is a microcosm of the divine realm and is thus ordered and permeated by divine Reason. Reason is also present in every individual, so all are equally deserving of respect. Humans should not be divided into competing polities but should strive to live in peace and harmony with one another and thus with the divine order. The life of the *polis* should be regulated by 'the wise', who would provide moral guidance for those seeking to live virtuous lives and exclude bad people from the city.[7] As Reason and Love gain the ascendancy, most of the usual social institutions of the *polis* could be abolished as potential causes of division, including money, courts, temples, gymnasia and even marriage. Men and women (and Greeks and barbarians) would be treated as equals within the *polis*, and wives and children would be enjoyed in common by all men. Such a utopian (and male-centred) social vision was clearly unrealisable in the real world, but scholars disagree about whether it was intended to serve as a model towards which citizens should collectively strive or as a theoretical guide to show 'the wise' how they should think about and relate to those around them.[8]

It was Cicero (106–43 BCE) who transformed this idealised vision into a philosophy to regulate societal life. Cicero accepted the fundamental Stoic notion that the entire *kosmos* is permeated by divine Reason and should therefore be viewed as a city-state ruled by the gods. But he went further in claiming that the universal law of Reason is reflected in the 'law of nations' (a term that he apparently coined) and that humans should fulfil their duties to the state as a means of aligning their lives with Reason. Society is like a body (a concept that he also picked up from the

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6 For more on the 'cosmopolitan' thinking of Diogenes and other Cynics, see J. Ferguson, *Utopias of the Classical World* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1975) 91–7; J. L. Moles, 'Cynic Cosmopolitanism', *The Cynics: The Cynic Movement in Antiquity and Its Legacy* (ed. R. B. Branham and M.-O. Goulet-Cazé; Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996) 105–20; Downing, 'A Cynic Preparation', 458–9; Downing, *Cynics*, 14–23.

7 In this the Stoics differed markedly from the Cynics, who eschewed involvement in civic life.

8 For more on early Stoic cosmopolitanism (including Zeno), see Ferguson, *Utopias*, 111–19; D. S. Richter, *Cosmopolis: Imagining Community in Late Classical Athens and the Early Roman Empire* (Oxford University Press, 2011) 58–80; P. Mitsis, 'A Stoic Critique of Cosmopolitanism', *Cosmopolitanisms* (ed. B. Robbins and P. L. Horta; New York: New York University Press, 2017) 171–88; and especially E. Brown, 'Stoic Cosmopolitanism and the Political Life' (PhD dissertation, University of Chicago, 1997).

Stoics) in which each individual, whether citizen or non-citizen, has a role to play for the common good. This role entails duties and loyalties to family, to friends and to people who share their own tribe, language and *genos*. But the highest loyalty is due to those whom the gods have ordained to promote justice, reward virtue and restrain vice – the rulers. The rulers in turn have a duty to extend divine justice and peace to the entire *oikoumenē*. In this way the burgeoning empire of Rome is given both a divine sanction and a claim for loyalty that transcends all duties to the local *polis*. Cosmopolitanism is equated with submission to Rome.[9]

Tragically for world history, it was this Ciceronian version of Stoic cosmopolitanism that became the foundation for Western (Christian) thought and action towards the 'pagan' peoples of the globe. This paradigm is exemplified in Aelius Aristides (117–81 CE), who in his eulogy *To Rome* (155 CE) glories in the fact that the name 'Roman' is no longer limited to the residents of a single city, but has become the name of 'a common kin group' (γένους ... κοινοῦ τινος). As a result, 'kin groups' (γένη) are no longer divided into 'Greeks' and 'barbarians', having been replaced by 'Romans' and 'non-Romans'. In a similar vein, he rejoices that the whole inhabited world (οἰκουμένη) has now become one city and the members of disparate tribes are now a single tribe (φῦλον) united in kinship (γένος). Daniel Richter summarises the situation well: 'Aristides' Roman empire is, in a sense, "post-local" insofar as its inhabitants have willingly exchanged their various parochial identities for the universal identity of Romanness.'[10]

With the legalisation of Christianity under Constantine and its eventual melding with the Roman state, the Ciceronian vision of Rome's cosmopolitan mission to the nations became inextricably blended with the Christian conviction that all humans are children of God who should be persuaded or compelled to submit to the rule of their heavenly Father. The result was a potent theology of global domination that over the centuries became the driving force behind a long series of missionary efforts and conquests by the European and American successors of Rome with the purported purpose of spreading the blessings of 'civilisation' to the darkened (and dark-skinned) 'barbarians' of the world. These activities could be described as 'cosmopolitan' insofar as they aimed to unite all peoples under a single faith (Christianity), culture (European), government (colonial) and identity that transcended or replaced all previous beliefs, practices and

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9 For more on Cicero's transformation of Stoic cosmopolitanism, see T. L. Pangle, 'Roman Cosmopolitanism: The Stoics and Cicero', *Cosmopolitanism in the Age of Globalization: Citizens without States* (ed. L. Trepanier and K. M. Habib; Lexington, KY: University of Kentucky Press, 2011) 40–69; Brown, 'Stoic Cosmopolitanism', 302–90.

10 Richter, *Cosmopolis*, 4; cf. 124–5. Excerpts from Aristides (all cited by Richter) are taken from *To Rome* 28, 30, 36, 59, 60, 63, 64. For more on Rome-centred cosmopolitanism, see Pangle, 'Roman Cosmopolitanism', 44; Douzinas, 'Metaphysics', 61; McMahon, 'Fear & Trembling', 9–10.

identities. Similar intentions lay behind the drive to establish a unified Christian society in medieval Europe (including the persecution of 'heretics' who refused to conform to this 'cosmopolitan' vision) and the union of church, state and people that persisted across Europe with the rise of nation-states and survived intact through the Reformation.[11]

The Enlightenment undermined the theological basis of this vision, but few questions were raised about the desirability of the civilising/colonising mission of the white European (and American) peoples or the inevitability of their success, despite the stubborn resistance of many native peoples who insisted on clinging to their 'pagan' ways even after coming under Western sway. Immanuel Kant provided the intellectual foundation for this secularised version of cosmopolitanism with his arguments for the creation of a new international order beyond the nation-state that would maintain peace and promote cooperation among the 'civilised' nations while they pursue their competing missions of exploration and conquest. Kant encouraged teachers to educate their students in 'love towards others' and 'feelings of cosmopolitanism' in order to promote progress towards 'a universal cosmopolitan condition' that he viewed as the ultimate goal towards which history was progressing. That this condition presupposed the universal adoption of European values and culture goes without saying. In fact, Kant's descriptions of the native peoples of the world are replete with crude racial stereotypes.[12]

1.2 *Cosmopolitanism under Fire*

As a result of these developments, the idea of cosmopolitanism became integrally linked with the Western colonial project in the minds of both colonisers and colonised. Its influence began to wane in the late nineteenth century due to the growing nationalism of the period,[13] but it was not until the twentieth century that the concept came in for critical scrutiny with the rise of global anti-colonial movements and the discovery of 'Third World' literature by Western intellectuals. Colonial and post-colonial writers led the way in exposing the European cultural foundations of Western models of cosmopolitanism, noting how it gave Western

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11 For more on the history, see Douzinas, 'Metaphysics', 61–3; McMahon, 'Fear & Trembling', 10–15.

12 For more on the cosmopolitanism of Kant and other Enlightenment thinkers (and the modernist project more generally), see Delanty, *Cosmopolitan Imagination*, 30–9; P. Cheah, 'The Cosmopolitical – Today', *Cosmopolitics: Thinking and Feeling beyond the Nation* (ed. P. Cheah and B. Robbins; Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998) 17–44, at 23–4; Douzinas, 'Metaphysics', 61–73; P. Kleingeld, 'Kant's Second Thoughts on Race', *The Philosophical Quarterly* 57 (2007) 573–92; M. C. Nussbaum, 'Kant and Cosmopolitanism', *The Cosmopolitanism Reader* (ed. G. W. Brown and D. Held; Cambridge/Malden, MA: Polity Press, 2010) 27–44; M. P. Nichols, 'Kant's Teaching of Historical Progress and its Cosmopolitan Goal', *Cosmopolitanism*, ed. Trepanier and Habib, 119–38.

13 As described in Delanty, *Cosmopolitan Imagination*, 40–51.

leaders 'a kind of rhetorical cover for the imposition of political and intellectual presuppositions that are in fact provincial and self-interested'.[14] Western culture is invariably constructed as 'normal' in European versions of cosmopolitanism, while other cultures are defined as 'barbarian' and their members assessed according to whether they are on the road (or not) towards achieving (superior) Western standards.[15] The negative impact of this Western form of cosmopolitanism on global peoples is described in trenchant terms by Costas Douzinas:

> Cosmopolitanism and its cosmopolitical alter ego promise to bring together empirical and normative humanity (humanity as quality shared or as project to be achieved) through the redeeming intervention of the West. Either the diseased, unworthy, inferior parts will be cut off or they will be 'humanized' and integrated once they accept the wrongness of their ways and agree to be 'civilized': severing or prosthesis, these are the ways of 'making human'.[16]

More recently, questions have been raised about the universalistic premises of traditional forms of cosmopolitan thought. From the Cynics and Stoics to the nineteenth-century colonial and missionary movements, proponents of cosmopolitanism have insisted that all humans share in some sort of fundamental nature or identity that justifies their call to attend to the good of humanity above (or in place of) such parochial loyalties as city, nation or people. The nature of the commonality varies with the writer – participation in a divine mind or spirit, being made in the image of God, possessing a common moral nature or a set of inalienable human rights, etc. – but the basic premise is the same. The validity of such universalistic claims has been seriously undermined by post-modern philosophy, which insists that they reflect the socially situated viewpoints and power interests of particular groups or individuals.[17] Post-colonial theorists have also criticised these ideas for ignoring the fundamentally local and diverse nature of human cultures.[18]

Finally, Western forms of cosmopolitanism have been faulted for their elitism. It seems obvious in hindsight that only those in the upper echelons of European and American societies possessed either the education to know about people in

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14 Spencer, *Cosmopolitan Criticism*, 13.

15 On this point, see V. Jabri, 'Solidarity and Spheres of Culture: The Cosmopolitan and the Postcolonial', *Review of International Studies* 33 (2007) 715–28.

16 Douzinas, 'Metaphysics', 71.

17 Cf. Delanty, *Cosmopolitan Imagination*, 9, 18, 52–3, 67–71, 178–81; Kang, *Cosmopolitan Theology*, 13, 18, 31. Kang (31) describes Western cosmopolitanism as 'a Eurocentric universalizing discourse, disembodied, unworldly discourse, a discourse wallowing in a privileged and irresponsible detachment, a discourse incapable of participating in the making of history'.

18 See B. Robbins, 'Actually Existing Cosmopolitanism', *Cosmopolitics*, ed. Cheah and Robbins, 1–9, at 1–3; C. Calhoun, 'A Cosmopolitanism of Connections', *Cosmopolitanisms*, ed. Robbins and Horta, 189–200, at 191, 196–7.

other lands or the funds to support programmes of global exploration and conquest. Even Christian missionaries generally came from the sons (and occasionally daughters) of the gentry. As members of the elite, they naturally presupposed the superiority of Western culture and disdained the local cultures of other peoples. On top of this, their views of people in other lands were heavily informed by educational and social systems that were suffused with racist images of people outside the European orbit. The cosmopolitanism of the elites was at best a form of racist paternalism.[19]

1.3 The New Cosmopolitanism

As a result of these and other critiques, the idea of cosmopolitanism was increasingly relegated to the backwaters of intellectual discourse until the 1990s, when it experienced an unexpected resurgence in response to a series of global developments that presented fundamental challenges to the existing global order. Factors commonly cited include the collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War; the rise of locally based forms of international terrorism; the unprecedented global threats posed by climate change, communicable diseases and nuclear proliferation; and the growing influence of 'globalisation' and neo-capitalism.[20]

In the face of these challenges, theorists in a variety of disciplines, including many from the formerly colonised nations, began to reconsider cosmopolitanism as a possible intellectual and moral framework for promoting international cooperation and global solidarity. Their aim was to preserve and develop the positive elements of cosmopolitan thought while stripping it of its Western colonial trappings. The result has been a multiplication of 'cosmopolitanisms' that can be difficult to categorise.

19 Noted especially by Kang, *Cosmopolitan Theology*, 31–4, 44–5; P. Werbner, 'The Cosmopolitan Encounter: Social Anthropology and the Kindness of Strangers', *Anthropology and the New Cosmopolitanism: Rooted, Feminist and Vernacular Perspectives* (ed. P. Werbner; Oxford/New York: Berg, 2008) 47–68; A. González-Ruibal, 'Vernacular Cosmopolitanism: An Archaeological Critique of Universalistic Reason', *Cosmopolitanism Archaeologies* (ed. L. Meskell; Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2009) 113–39, at 117–18; G. Prakash, 'Whose Cosmopolitanism? Multiple, Globally Enmeshed and Subaltern', *Whose Cosmopolitanism? Critical Perspectives, Rationalities and Discontents*, (ed. N. G. Schiller and A. Irving; New York/Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2015) 27–8.

20 For more on this point, see R. Lettevall, 'The Idea of Kosmopolis: Two Kinds of Cosmopolitanism', *The Idea of Kosmopolis: History, Philosophy and Politics of World Citizenship* (ed. R. Lettevall and M. K. Linder; Huddinge, Sweden: Södertörns högskola, 2008) 13–30, at 13; R. Spencer, 'Cosmopolitan Criticism', *Rerouting the Postcolonial: New Directions for the New Millennium* (ed. J. Wilson, C. Şandru and S. L. Welsh; London/New York: Routledge, 2010) 36; C. Calhoun, 'A Cosmopolitanism of Connections', 190; L. Trepanier and K. M. Habib, 'Introduction', *Cosmopolitanism*, ed. Trepanier and Habib, 1–10, at 2–3.

Robert Spencer has classified the various approaches under four broad headings in an effort to bring some methodological order to the diverse and overlapping theories:[21]

(a) *Sceptical* cosmopolitanism, which aims to deconstruct the negative impacts of Western colonial cosmopolitanism while developing new cosmopolitan ideas and institutions that reflect the perspectives of formerly colonised peoples;

(b) *Celebratory* cosmopolitanism, which explores how migration (voluntary and involuntary), interbreeding, cultural borrowings and similar artefacts of colonial rule and globalisation have made cosmopolitanism a lived reality in many formerly colonised nations;

(c) *Socialist* cosmopolitanism, which focuses on remaking the nation-state so that it reflects the cosmopolitan values and practices that ought to prevail on the global stage rather than working to create supra-national cosmopolitan institutions; and

(d) *Dialectical* cosmopolitanism, which tries to maintain a balance between criticising the continued power and destructive influence of imperialism and envisioning and working towards cosmopolitan arrangements that can replace the present system.

Gerard Delanty's 'critical cosmopolitanism', which has gained a strong following in recent years, could be added as a fifth option. Delanty's model focuses on the cultural interactions that give rise to cosmopolitan ideals rather than the ideological or societal structures that they produce.[22] What makes a set of ideas 'cosmopolitan' in his view is not the outcome but the process: 'Cosmopolitanism is a third level of culture … that transforms the culture of all parties'.[23] Such a transformation can only take place when there is a genuine and mutual openness to other cultures, a positive recognition of difference and a willingness to work together to create a shared normative culture.[24]

21 The following material is summarised from 'Cosmopolitan Criticism' and *Cosmopolitan Criticism and Postcolonial Literature*. Different modes of categorisations are proposed by Delanty, *Cosmopolitan Imagination*, 4–5 (global, post-national, transnational and critical), 54–78 (moral, political, cultural and critical); Kang, *Cosmopolitan Theology*, 35–47 (cultural, market, critical, rooted, subaltern and vernacular); and C. Calhoun, 'The Elusive Cosmopolitan Ideal', *Berkeley Journal of Sociology* 47 (2003) 3–26, at 12–16 (ethical universalism, cosmopolitan democracy, urban social psychology and hybridity).

22 Delanty, *Cosmopolitan Imagination*, 20. Among the many authors who have embraced Delanty's views, see J. Haggis, C. Midgley, M. Allen and F. Paisley, *Cosmopolitan Lives on the Cusp of Empire: Interfaith, Cross-Cultural and Transnational Networks, 1860–1950* (Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017) and Schiller and Irving, eds., *Whose Cosmopolitanism?*

23 Delanty, *Cosmopolitan Imagination*, 27.

24 Delanty, *Cosmopolitan Imagination*, 86–7.

Despite their diversity, these newer models share a number of common features that distinguish them from the cosmopolitan ideals that prevailed for much of Western history.

First, they acknowledge the cultural situatedness of all cosmopolitan thinking. Western ideas are only one element in an intercultural dialogue that must not merely include but take seriously cosmopolitan patterns of thinking that originate in other cultures both past and present. Cosmopolitan ideologies and institutions must arise from genuine interchange among equals and remain grounded in local cultures, peoples and experiences rather than being imposed from outside. Participation in this dialogue cannot be limited to the elites; the voices of those on the bottom of society must also be included.

Second, they insist that cultural differences must be preserved and respected rather than being subsumed under some higher cosmopolitan identity, ideology or institutional system. This does not mean that people should be segregated into cultural silos. In fact, cosmopolitan theorists criticise the contemporary emphasis on multiculturalism and pluralism as leading too easily to cultural segregation and identity politics that disrupt rather than promote the development of a truly cosmopolitan society. Group loyalty is not in itself bad, since it can provide a basis for collective action and mutual support among the less powerful. But it must be balanced with planetary vision and openness to the other.

Third, they take a firm stand against narrow, parochial movements that promote exclusivism and violence, whether rooted in nationalism, race, religion or other ideologies. This is true even when such movements cross boundaries and promote international cooperation among their followers.[25] Efforts to assert power from below can be just as dangerous and deadly as power imposed from above when done for illegitimate reasons or by illicit means. Effective transnational institutions and the cultivation of cosmopolitan patterns of thinking can help to prevent many of the grievances that give rise to such ideologies and conflicts.

Fourth, they are deeply suspicious of internationalist programmes such as globalisation, neo-liberalism and neo-capitalism that serve as cloaks for continued domination of the formerly colonised nations by Western powers. Many would argue that the system of nation-states must be replaced by global democratic institutions in order to protect the world from such hegemonic projects. All would agree that colonialising domination of some nations and peoples by others must come to an end.

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25 As Pnina Werbner cogently observes, 'Not all boundary-crossing, globally oriented groups are cosmopolitan' ('Introduction: Towards a New Cosmopolitan Anthropology', *Anthropology and the New Cosmopolitanism: Rooted, Feminist and Vernacular Perspectives* (ed. P. Werbner; Oxford/New York: Berg, 2008) 1–30, at 11).

Finally, they are deeply concerned about promoting and protecting the human rights of people around the globe. A mentality that views all humans as equals regardless of their nationality or location has no room for oppression and abuse of anyone, anywhere. Oppressive institutions must be confronted and either transformed or eradicated. National and ethnic self-interest must give way to global solidarity. Everyone must be free to pursue their own destinies. Justice and peace must prevail everywhere.

2. Paul the Cosmopolitan?

So where does the apostle Paul fit into all of this theorising? Do his letters reveal a cosmopolitan theology? Was he working towards the creation of a cosmopolitan community? If so, what was the nature of his vision? Did he succeed? The best way to answer these questions is to compare Paul's letters with each of the cosmopolitan models described in the previous pages.

2.1 Paul and Cynic Cosmopolitanism

Paul's theology and actions, including the way in which he chose to position himself vis-à-vis the broader society of the *polis*/*colonia*, have a number of points in common with Cynic philosophy.[26] Like the Cynics, Paul viewed himself and his followers as citizens of a higher polity (Phil 3.20) that freed them from any duty to conform to the social mores and conventions of the *polis*/*colonia*. Common hierarchies of ethnicity, gender and status did not apply in their community; all were to be treated the same.[27]

Like some of the Cynic preachers, Paul followed an itinerant lifestyle that involved working with his hands as he instructed his followers. Like them, he practised strict self-discipline, living with meagre food and clothing, and revelled in his sufferings as a path to virtue. Like them, he presented himself as a model to his followers and claimed divine backing for his teachings.

Like the Cynics, Paul promoted standards of behaviour among his followers that differed markedly from those of their neighbours, including some that placed them at odds with local authorities: refusing to honour the civic deities, ignoring social distinctions at meals, condemning the sexual practices of others, promoting foreign gods, meeting in secretive conventicles, etc. Joining a group such as the one that Paul promoted would have produced as sharp a break

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26 The parallels have been discussed by Gerald Downing in several publications and more recently by Karin Neutel – see n. 1.

27 The closest literary parallels to Paul's tripartite formula in Gal 3.28 and Col 3.11 come from Cynic sources – see Downing, 'A Cynic Preparation' and *Cynics*, 14–23. More recently, Karin Neutel made this the focal point of her 2015 monograph, *A Cosmopolitan Ideal*, though curiously she only cites Downing twice in the entire book.

with family, friends and civic life as becoming a Cynic. Some of those who heard him might even have categorised him as a sort of Cynic.[28]

Despite these similarities, Paul's vision for the community of Christ-followers, including the supposedly 'cosmopolitan' elements of his teaching, is quite different from that of the Cynics. While the Cynics questioned the necessity of temples and rituals, they did not reject the civic deities whose worship provided the social 'glue' of the Greek or Roman city. They also did not claim loyalty to foreign deities as the Christ-followers did, nor did they swear allegiance to a foreign ruler and his laws (whether the Jewish Torah or the 'law of Christ'). They subverted the mores and conventions of society, but not the political order. Christ-followers did the opposite. Their standards of personal morality and their manner of relating to others, while peculiar in some respects, were generally admirable; they certainly did not flout their differences in public as the Cynics did. But their evident disloyalty to the city and its gods marked them as politically subversive. Cynics may have been offensive, but Christ-followers were (potentially) dangerous.

Equally distinctive is the nature of the vision that they offered to their followers. Cynics were at root quirky individualists; they never formed the kind of cohesive social network that the Christ-followers did. They taught that all people should be treated the same, but they did not attempt to build a community on that basis. Whether they ever developed a vision for a society operating on Cynic principles is unclear, but they definitely made a point of mocking the existing system. Implicit in this ridicule is a social model that they wished for all in the city to follow.

Paul, by contrast, offered no model for reforming or revisioning civic life. In fact, he barely even acknowledges the existence of the local political authorities, and most of his references to people outside his group consist of injunctions to behave differently than they do. He does have a vision for a better world, but it is an apocalyptic vision of radical transformation which will take place at the *parousia* of Christ, when the current social order will be obliterated and replaced by a new (though vaguely defined) world in which all forces opposed to the God of Israel (including the civic deities) are vanquished and the one true God reigns in and over all (1 Cor 15.24–8). Only those who are devoted to Christ at his coming will share in this world. This is no cosmopolitan vision; it is sectarian to the core.

The same can be said for Paul's acceptance of people from all walks of life. Despite a superficial similarity to the teachings of the Cynics in this area, Paul's practice is fundamentally different from theirs. His symbolic universe and social

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28 This is the central argument of Downing's *Cynics, Paul and the Pauline Churches*. Downing points to numerous passages in Paul's letters where he claims that Paul is working to counter false conclusions that others have drawn about him and his teachings on the presumption that he is a Cynic.

vision were framed by Diaspora Judaism, not by Greek or Roman civic institutions, and his eagerness to bring non-Jews into his movement was driven by his Jewish conviction that the end of the present order was near. Non-Jews who wished to join his group were required to renounce key elements of their cultural identities and practices as Greeks, Phrygians, Macedonians, Galatians, etc., and adopt a new identity as members of a Jewish-defined collective, 'the nations' (τὰ ἔθνη), as part of their resocialisation into the community of Christ-followers. Their thinking also had to be reprogrammed to embrace the world-view and values of Judaism and its scriptures, including a new valuation of their former lives as 'godless' and degenerate. They could no longer participate in the civic cult, and the new lifestyle that they were trained to follow would have distanced them from many of their friends and family. As members of a marginal and potentially suspect group within the city, their social position would have been similar to that of the Jews: respected by a few, mocked or avoided by many, despised and hated by some. This is the inevitable lot of sectarians.

In summary, while Paul does share many superficial and some substantive similarities with the Cynics, it is virtually impossible to imagine him, if asked where he came from, echoing Diogenes's one-word reply: 'κοσμοπολίτης'. In fact, Paul has already given us his answer to that question, an answer that is thoroughly Jewish: 'circumcised on the eighth day, a member of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew born of Hebrews; as to the law, a Pharisee; as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to righteousness under the law, blameless' (Phil 3.5–6; cf. Gal 1.13–14; 2 Cor 11.22). His identity was inseparably tied to a particular people, not to humanity in general (nor to the local *polis*/*colonia*).[29] On a personal level, he might have been more comfortable (and more flexible: cf. 1 Cor 9.20–3) in relating to non-*Ioudaioi* than some of his Jewish contemporaries, but both he and his movement remained deeply rooted in Judaism. Neither his theology nor his actions reveal anything like the ideology of 'world citizenship' that was advocated by Diogenes and other Cynics.

2.2 *Paul and Stoic Cosmopolitanism*

If this understanding of Paul's theology and social vision is correct, there is even less reason to associate him with the cosmopolitanism of the Stoics. Paul might have agreed with the broad parameters of the Stoic vision of the cosmos as an orderly sphere governed by a single divine power, and his prescriptions for bearing up under adversity are broadly similar to what we find in the Stoics.

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29 The same can be said for Paul's loyalty to the supra-local *ekklesia* of Christ-followers: devotion to a group that holds an exclusivist ideology can hardly be labelled 'cosmopolitan'. Groups like al-Qaeda and ISIS inspire supra-local devotion today, but no one would call them 'cosmopolitan'. This is what Pnina Werbner had in mind when she stated, 'Not all boundary-crossing, globally oriented groups are cosmopolitan' (Werbner, 'Introduction: Towards a New Cosmopolitan Anthropology', 11).

But his conception of a personal deity, the God of Israel, standing transcendently above the physical cosmos and intervening from there into human affairs is utterly unlike the Stoic vision of an immanent divine mind or spirit that pervades all of reality and comes to expression in humans through their exercise of reason.

The same can be said for Paul's views of human community. Here, too, there is a superficial resemblance as both Paul and the Stoics use the image of the human body with its interdependent parts as a metaphor for human social relationships in which each person has a role to play for the common good. For the Stoics, however, this is more than a metaphor: all humans are in fact connected to one another through common participation in the divine force that fills and energises the cosmos. Paul has no such idea of human connectedness. The only times when he speaks explicitly about humankind as a unified whole are when he describes humans as existing 'in Adam' (Rom 5.12–21; cf. 1 Cor 15.21–2) and thus 'under sin' (3.9–20, 23) and liable to the coming divine judgement (Rom 2.16; 3.5–6; 5.9–10; 2 Cor 5.10).[30] Not once in his letters does he cite anything positive that humans have in common by nature – he does not draw on the Genesis 1 language about all humans being made in the image of God, nor does he describe God as the father of all humanity or the race of humans as the children of God.[31] He also has nothing to say about humans sharing by nature in God's mind or spirit.[32] The universalism that serves as the foundation for the cosmopolitan vision of the Stoics is foreign to his thought.

Paul does of course affirm that the God of Israel rules over all of humanity (Rom 3.29–30) and that he offers mercy and salvation to all (Rom 1.14–16; 10.5–13), but the language of divine sonship and possessing God's spirit is applied only to Christ-followers (Rom 8.15–17; Gal 4.1–7). He also reserves for them the language of interdependency and mutual obligation that the Stoics apply to humankind as a whole. He does speak of Jews and Gentiles participating together in the blessings that God promised to Abraham (though by different channels, Rom 4), but he

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30 He does suggest in a couple of places that all humans have the potential to know about God by attending to God's presence in nature (by applying their reason?), but he says this only to indicate that humans have failed in this task and therefore stand under God's judgement (Rom 1.19–23; 10.16–21). He also implies the creation of all humans by God (1 Cor 8.6; cf. Col 1.15; Eph 3.9), though he never explicitly states it.

31 Whether he has Gen 1.27 in mind in 1 Cor 11.7 (cf. Col 3.10) is unclear, but even if he did, he does not use it to make a 'cosmopolitan' point. He does speak relatively often of God as 'our' father, but the context shows that he is referring only to Christ-followers, whom he elsewhere describes as God's 'sons'. Given this fact, it seems likely that this is also what he had in mind in the handful of places where 'our' is omitted (1 Cor 15.24; 1 Thess 1.1; 2 Thess 1.2).

32 For Paul, the human νοῦς (cf. νοήματα) is an instrument that can be turned towards either good or evil (Rom 1.28; 7.23, 25; 12.2; 1 Cor 1.10; 2 Cor 3.14; 4.4; 10.5; 11.3; Phil 4.7). Unlike others, followers of Christ (or possibly Paul himself) can be said to possess 'the mind of Christ' (1 Cor 2.16) and know the 'thoughts' of Satan (2 Cor 2.11), but 'the mind of the Lord [God]' is unknowable to any human (Rom 11.34; 1 Cor 2.16).

also states clearly that these blessings are offered only to those who 'have faith in the one who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead' (Rom 4.24), i.e. Christ-followers. In the few places where he speaks of Jesus dying for and bringing salvation to 'all' (Rom 3.23–4; 5.18–19; 11.32; 1 Cor 15.22; 2 Cor 5.19), he is using the language of potentiality and hope, not of achieved reality (i.e. he means 'all who put their trust in the God of Israel'). The only vaguely 'cosmopolitan' element in Paul's theology is his twofold conviction that (a) all humans are sinners who stand equally under God's judgement and (b) all have the potential to become children of God through faith in Christ, which they reveal by associating with his movement. This is not cosmopolitanism; it is instead the language of sectarians.

A final area in which Paul differs markedly from the Stoics concerns their respective visions for and relations with the broader society of the *polis*/*colonia*. While the early Stoics were ambivalent about personal involvement in politics, they clearly saw themselves as presenting concrete wisdom for ordering social relations within the *polis*/*colonia*. Even the most outlandish elements of their utopian visions (the elimination of money, courts, temples and marriage) were designed to serve a real-world political goal, i.e. to critique the accepted institutions of society and suggest how a more harmonious society might be constructed. The political nature of their vision is clear from the fact that they offer themselves ('the wise') as advisers to the rulers in their idealised city. Only by involvement in politics could they nudge social reality closer to their ideal. Cicero may have hijacked this vision, but he remained true to its spirit: the wise should rule for the good of all.

Paul, by contrast, shows no interest in civic politics. He has nothing to say about who should hold office, how office holders should carry out their duties or how the *polis*/*colonia* should operate. To some extent this might be attributed to his political powerlessness as an itinerant metic in the cities that he visited, but it also reflects his social position as a member of the Jewish community (a marginalised group in virtually every *polis*/*colonia*) and his apocalyptic vision for the future. If all earthly authorities and institutions are soon to be swept away, why should anyone get involved in politics? So at least runs his advice about marriage (1 Cor 7.29–35). The only quasi-political advice that he offers in his letters is to submit to the governing authorities and to pay one's taxes (Rom 13.1–7). What he might have said to a member of his community who held political office is impossible to judge, but his letters reveal no interest in shaping the social and political life of the *polis*/*colonia* beyond his congregations. In this he differs markedly from the Stoics.

2.3 *Paul and the Vision of Christendom*

It is hard to imagine that Paul ever considered the possibility that the Christ-movement might one day be embraced by Caesar and become the official religion of the Roman empire, displacing and even suppressing the worship of all

deities besides the God of Israel. Paul was convinced that the end of all things would occur during his lifetime (1 Cor 15.51–7; 1 Thess 4.15–17); he could not have guessed that his movement would not only endure but conquer the empire over the course of centuries. From an institutional standpoint, his only thought was for the local *ekklēsia*, and even there he evinces little concern for creating lasting structures. Nowhere in his letters do we see any evidence that he was interested in establishing or reforming institutions beyond the *ekklēsia*.

Whether he would have welcomed or condemned what eventually took place under the name of Christianity is hard to say. He did have a profound concern for spreading the message of Christ to new lands where the inhabitants had never heard it (Rom 15.15–24), though he appears to have viewed his actions as an eschatological rescue mission rather than a programme for setting up enduring institutions. Insofar as some of the later Christian missionaries were inspired by similar concerns, Paul might have approved of their activities as an extension of his own, just as he did with missionaries such as Peter and Apollos in his own day. Whether he would have challenged their conflation of Christian teachings and European culture is less clear than we might think; he seems to have had no qualms about compelling non-Jews to adopt elements of Jewish belief and culture as part of their socialisation into the Christ-movement.[33]

What Paul would have thought about the close affiliation of Christianity with colonising military power is even harder to assess. His language regarding other religions is consistently intolerant, but it is hard to imagine that a man who could tell his followers, 'If it is possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all' (Rom 12.18), would condone the use of violence by a Christian state. On the other hand, he does claim that the ruling authorities 'do not bear the sword in vain' but were given it by God to punish evil (Rom 13.4), so it is not inconceivable that he could have countenanced the violent suppression of other religions as a fulfilment of this God-given role of the state. Clearly Augustine read Paul in this way when he advocated the use of state violence against both Donatists and 'pagans'. Even later 'secular' versions of Western imperialism might not lie wholly beyond Paul's approval if they could frame their efforts as a legitimate exercise of the state's God-given 'sword'.[34]

Similar uncertainty attaches to any effort to assess how Paul might have viewed the medieval project of establishing a 'cosmopolitan' Christian state

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33 See the comments above under 2.2 'Paul and Cynic Cosmopolitanism'.

34 In recent years a number of post-colonial biblical interpreters have called attention to various ways in which Paul adopted the language and mindset of Roman imperialism/colonialism while presenting Jesus and his kingdom as a competitor to Caesar and the Roman empire. See, for example, J. Punt, 'Pauline Agency in Postcolonial Perspective: Subverter of or Agent for Empire?', *The Colonized Apostle: Paul through Postcolonial Eyes* (ed. C. D. Stanley; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2011) 53–61; cf. J. Marchal, *The Politics of Heaven: Women, Gender, and Empire in the Study of Paul* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2008).

throughout Europe. Leaving aside the question of what he might have thought about other aspects of how the Christian church developed over time (theology, ritual, hierarchy, etc.), it is still hard to guess how he might reacted to the idea of an entire society based on Christianity. As a contextual theologian, he might have relished the challenge of figuring out how to apply Christian principles to new circumstances, but it is also possible that he would have rejected the entire project as a betrayal of his apocalyptic vision for the future of humanity. The fact that we cannot answer this or any of the other questions raised here shows just how far Paul stood from any 'cosmopolitan' reflection on the future of the Christ-movement or the world in general. Like other sectarians, he was concerned only about his own movement.

2.4 *Paul and the New Cosmopolitanism*

At first glance it might seem that there are more points of connection between Paul and the 'new cosmopolitanism' that arose in the 1990s than with older forms of cosmopolitan thought. The neo-cosmopolitan rejection of universalist ideas regarding the essential unity of humankind removes any basis for criticising Paul for lacking such a theory, while their insistence that cosmopolitan models must begin at the local level and incorporate the thought-patterns and practices of non-dominant groups leaves room for cosmopolitan ideologies that are rooted in a specifically Jewish world-view and culture such as we see in Paul. Their recognition of the hybrid nature of all human cultures, and specifically of those impacted by foreign colonialism, also opens the door for 'mixed' forms of cosmopolitanism that bring together elements from different cultures (e.g. Greek and Jewish) or that draw selectively from a single tradition (e.g. Paul's treatment of Judaism).

Do these shifts in thinking help us to identify patterns of cosmopolitan thinking in Paul's letters that might have escaped us under the older models? The answer is still 'no'. One of the fundamental markers of cosmopolitanism under the newer theories is a genuine openness to 'the Other' that includes a positive attitude towards intellectual and cultural differences and a willingness to engage with cultural 'Others' in a mutually transformative manner. Such an attitude is not merely absent from but contrary to Paul's thinking. Nowhere in his letters do we see any affirming references to, say, Greek philosophy or poetry or Roman governing systems, nor does he have anything good to say about any specific aspect of Greek or Roman beliefs or practices. Not once do we observe him actively working to forge ties between the thought-worlds or moral systems of Judaism or 'Christianity' on the one hand and Greek or Roman ideas on the other, such as we encounter in Philo. This is not to say that Paul ignores all such points of contact, but when he does engage with them in some way, his activity is so subtle that contemporary interpreters regularly disagree about both the presence and the nature of the engagement.

What we do see in Paul is a clear and consistent effort to denigrate vital elements of Greek and Roman culture coupled with frequent injunctions to avoid their influence. Paul's negative view of Greek and Roman deities and their cults is well known, as is his insistence that his followers must 'flee from idolatry' (1 Cor 10.14) in order to demonstrate their devotion to the one true God. In Rom 1.18–32 he traces every form of evil human behaviour to this fatal error in belief. Elsewhere he describes those who stand outside of his community as 'ungodly' (Rom 5.6), 'enemies of God' (Rom 5.10), 'slaves of sin' (Rom 6.20), 'those who are perishing' (1 Cor 1.18; 2 Cor 4.3), 'unbelievers' (1 Cor 14.22–5; 2 Cor 4.4), 'blinded' by 'the god of this world' (2 Cor 4.4), 'unclean' (2 Cor 6.17), 'Gentile sinners' (Gal 2.15), 'enslaved to beings that by nature are not gods' (Gal 4.8) and 'children of darkness' (1 Thess 5.5). He is especially critical of Greco-Roman mores regarding sex, rejecting all forms of sexual activity outside marriage as 'immoral'. These and similar characterisations were part of a concerted effort by Paul to create social and mental barriers between his followers and their friends and neighbours so as to limit the influence that such outsiders might exercise on their lives. This is the polar opposite of a cosmopolitan openness to 'the Other'. It is utterly typical, however, of sectarian movements.

3. Paul the Sectarian

The results of this study are likely to prove disappointing to many readers, especially those who look to Paul as a guide for contemporary Christian thought and practice. We are of course aware that the early Christ-followers were viewed as odd and even dangerous by many of their contemporaries, but we give less thought to the negative opinions that Christ-followers such as Paul held (and taught others to hold) towards outsiders. As Western (or Western-influenced) intellectuals, we want Paul to share our respect for other cultures and our appreciation of diversity. As supporters of liberal democracy, we want to see Paul upholding basic human rights, including the right to practise (or not practise) religion according to one's own lights. Those of us who are Christians want Paul to embody a spirit of love and acceptance towards others in thought and practice, including people outside of the Christian community.

Paul gives us none of these things. Like other leaders of apocalyptic movements, Paul viewed the world through darkly tinted glasses, with humanity divided between a small party of faithful followers of God who stand under divine protection and the great mass of humanity whose minds and hearts are ruled by the forces of darkness and who are therefore opposed to God and his people. The barrier that divides them is by no means impermeable: those walking in darkness can turn to God and become people of light, while those on God's side can be deceived by the devil or their own desires and slip back

into the realm of darkness. Care is required for the faithful to avoid such a fate; hedges must be built around them to protect them from the wiles of the evil one. Those who remain firm to the end will live joyfully in the presence of God for ever, while those who reject God's ways will be destroyed.

This is the view of reality that Paul sought to instil in his followers. It is not a pretty view, but it is no worse than the visions promoted by other apocalyptic thinkers. It is a thoroughly sectarian view that has virtually nothing in common with cosmopolitan thinking, whether past or present.

It is also a Jewish view. Jews who joined the Christ-movement would have found much that was familiar in Paul's view of reality, even if they had not been exposed to explicitly apocalyptic literature. A serious adjustment in thinking would have been required for them to acknowledge Jesus as the crucified Messiah of the scriptures and to accept the validity of Paul's Torah-free mission to the Gentiles, but the impact on their lifestyles and social positions would have been minimal apart from rejection by some of their peers. Even so, most seem to have felt that the change was unwarranted.

For non-Jews, by contrast, the amount of resocialisation required would have been daunting. Joining the Christ-movement meant abandoning the gods of their people and their city, including cultic practices that had given rhythm to their days since infancy. Given the vital importance of religion in both ethnic identity and civic life, such a decision would have been tantamount to ethnic and political suicide, straining relations with family, friends and neighbours. The fact that the movement had close ties with Judaism, a religion despised by many, would have only made things worse as people classed them with Jews, foreigners and others who lived on the margins of civic society. Those who lacked social status, including poor people and slaves, would have been unaffected by such judgements, but for those who possessed a modicum of wealth and influence, the change would have been traumatic.

Joining the Christ-movement also meant learning a whole new set of ideas, stories and practices that were inseparably tied to Judaism. Unless they had prior experience with the local synagogue, Greeks and Romans would have known virtually nothing about the Jewish scriptures, and any information that they might heard previously about what Jews believed and did probably reeked with distortions and misrepresentations.[35] On top of this, they would have had to navigate their way through the ongoing disputes between various types of Christ-followers and Jews regarding the validity of the theological claims and

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35 On popular images of Jews and Judaism, see the collections of excerpts compiled by M. Stern, *Greek and Latin Authors on Jews and Judaism: From Herodotus to Plutarch* (3 vols.; Jerusalem: Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, 1974); L. H. Feldman, *Jew and Gentile in the Ancient World: Attitudes and Interactions from Alexander to Justinian* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993); and others.

practices of the nascent movement. Along the way, they would have had to embrace a wholly new interpretation of their previous lives that categorised them as 'Gentile sinners' rather than as Greeks, Phrygians, Galatians, Carians or members of the many other people-groups that populated what we call 'the Greco-Roman world'. In short, non-Jews had to abandon key elements of their previous identities and adopt a new Jewish-based identity in order to find acceptance within the Christ-movement.

On a superficial level, such a change might seem 'cosmopolitan' insofar as Christ-followers were called to embrace a higher loyalty than that which they owed to people, city or religion. The fact that the movement was international in scope and included people from all walks of life also gave it a quasi-cosmopolitan aura. But the higher loyalty into which they were socialised was to a group that held an exclusivist ideology towards non-members, and the new world-view into which they were indoctrinated was tied closely to a particular ethnic and religious group, the Jews. Nothing in the instruction that they received from Paul would have induced them to embrace an open, receptive attitude towards the beliefs and practices of people outside the group or to place the good of humankind above that of their own group. In fact, the opposite was true: they were taught to view outsiders with suspicion as potential sources of temptation and to maintain their distance from them except as targets for evangelism. Such a mindset has virtually nothing in common with cosmopolitanism, but it is thoroughly typical of sectarian groups. Despite recent scholarly claims to the contrary, Paul was and remained a Jewish sectarian.[36]

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36 Here I place myself at odds with scholars such as William Campbell, Kathy Ehrensperger, Brian Tucker and others who insist that Paul was not a sectarian. The difference is not as great as it might seem, however, since their conclusions were based on an analysis of Paul's relations with Judaism while mine focuses on the effects of his teachings on non-Jews. I do believe, however, that their analysis is hampered by a lack of attention to the ethnic diversity of those whom Paul labels 'Gentiles' or 'the nations'. Their claim that Paul allowed 'Gentiles' to remain 'Gentiles' founders on the fact that 'Gentile' was a learned identity and not a pre-existing category of ethnic self-definition like 'Greek', 'Phrygian' or 'Galatian'. 'Gentiles' were made, not born; one learned to think of oneself as a 'Gentile' through being socialised within the Christ-movement (or within Judaism). One could remain a Jew and become a Christ-follower, but one could not remain (at least not in the full sense) a Greek, a Phrygian or a Galatian. One had to pass through the (Jewish) category of 'Gentiles' in order to find a place in God's plan of salvation and become part of the *ekklēsia*, a community defined by its roots in Judaism.