taken into account, it seems significant that in the crucial texts, 'love' is represented by the ἀγαπάω word group and not the φιλέω word group, which tends to signify the (closed) bonds of friendship. Love is love of the *other* (Rom 13.8). The wigwam (or tipi) of trust that Morgan offers may signify a closed circle.[49] Furthermore, most of the social relationships where πίστις and *fides* were expected were hierarchical. Then as well as now, this expectation of faithfulness or loyalty was subject to abuse. There are times and places in which the demand for faithfulness must be met with the greeting of Goethe's Götz. Yet even here, ἀγάπη, which transcends both πίστις and ἐλπίς, is to be present.

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Warm thanks are due to Professor Wolter for convening this debate, to Professor Seifrid and Professor Watson for their papers, and to members of SNTS for their contributions to the discussion. Constraints of space preclude a full response to all the issues on which Seifrid and Watson touch, but the main point of disagreement between us is the relative importance of trust and belief to New Testament writers, especially Paul, so I begin there before turning briefly to other points and a few minor corrections to misunderstandings of *Roman Faith and Christian Faith*'s argument.[50]

Both respondents argue contra *Roman Faith* that belief rather than trust is central to early Christian πίστις. '[B]eliefs come first'; they are 'credal' and 'counter-intuitive' and 'believing is the intended perlocutionary effect of preaching'.[51] If Christians did not need to believe in the 'fundamental, paradoxical content' of the 'proclamation of "the word of the cross"', why could they not

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49 The Johannine writings do not present the idea of 'love' within a closed circle. They insist that love is present only within the light of Jesus, whose witnesses are to bring that light and faith to the world (John 17.17, 20).

50 I use 'belief' here as in the book to refer to what philosophers call 'propositional belief' or 'the attitude of belief': the disposition, short of knowledge, to think that a certain thing is true.

51 Watson, pp. 243–4. 'First' seems to refer to significance rather than timing, but we cannot assume that belief comes first chronologically either (cf. Paul's emphasis on the importance, perhaps even temporal priority, of the non-verbal aspects of his impact on the Thessalonians and Corinthians (1 Thess 1.5; 2.7–8; 1 Cor 2.4; cf. Origen, *Cels.* 1.10). I am sympathetic to the argument that the counterintuitiveness of Christian preaching may be part of its strength, but

simply trust in the God of Abraham; why did they need to be baptised in the name of Jesus and acknowledge the lordship of Christ?[52]

It is worth noting that *Roman Faith* never claims that early Christians trusted in God or Christ without believing anything, nor that '[i]t was only with time that propositional content came to prominence within early Christianity'.[53] In fact, it argues that trust and belief are always entwined, across ancient and modern cultures and in early Christian texts (pp. 20–2 and *passim*). It recognises, however, that πίστις, *fides* and their relatives are complex concepts, involving diverse objects and a wide range of cognitive/affective/relational attitudes and practices. It seeks to interpret these with more precision than previous studies, in their many contexts, including in New Testament texts (recognising that it is not always possible to distinguish what concepts or practices are in play, and that sometimes an author is deliberately exploiting the multivalence of a term). For example, it aims to distinguish whether, in particular contexts, Christians are responding, or being encouraged to respond, to the good news with trust, belief, faithfulness etc. or some mixture of them, and on what basis their trust, belief, faithfulness etc. rests.

By close reading of dozens of passages, the book shows how πίστις varies subtly but significantly in meaning between different New Testament writers, books, passages, layers of redaction, and strands of tradition. From this analysis it concludes that trust tends to dominate early uses of πίστις language (though typically both trust and belief play a role, and usually other concepts and relationships too), and that even where belief is prominent (as it often is), it is above all trust in God and Christ that leads to righteousness or salvation and entry into the community of οἱ πιστοί/πιστεύοντες. In the latest books of the New Testament and the earliest non-canonical writings, however, *Roman Faith* argues that we can see belief becoming more significant (e.g. pp. 437–41, 509–14), to the point that in the second century we can see belief emerging as the dominant arbiter of community membership in certain (though not all) contexts.

Watson's argument focuses on 1 Corinthians 15, claiming that belief rather than trust is central to this passage. The discourse of belief is prominent here, of course, as *Roman Faith* recognises (pp. 229–30). This does not, though, prove that 'belief comes first' in general; one cannot argue against a cumulative analysis on the basis of one example.

Roman Faith argues that although belief is clearly important in 1 Cor 15, even here the attitude of belief does not in itself lead to participation in the kingdom of

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Paul's appeal to the apostles' experience (*Roman Faith*, 242–3, cf. 39–41, 145–6) suggests that he does not regard this preaching as counterintuitive.

52 Seifrid, pp. 253–4.

53 Seifrid, p. 248; for further discussion, see L. Driediger-Murphy, D. Howard-Snyder, D. McKaughan and T. Morgan, 'Book Symposium', *Religious Studies*, forthcoming.

God. Preaching is the (or, bearing in mind 1 Cor 2.4, a) vehicle by which the Corinthians came to πιστεύειν (15.2, 11). No doubt the Corinthians thought something about what they were told in order to respond positively to it – not necessarily that it was true, in fact, but that it was true or plausible, or worth investigating, or worth a risk. In any case, their response was to leave behind their sins (15.17), to be cleansed and become part of the community through baptism (15.29), and not to sin in the future (15.34) in the hope ultimately of sharing the victory of Jesus Christ (15.57) in the kingdom of God (15.24). What it takes to participate in the kingdom is not simply thinking that what Paul preaches is true, but responding to it with new actions and new relationships. When, therefore, πίστις/πιστεύειν brought the Corinthians to salvation, more than belief *stricto sensu* was involved in it.

Two strands of Paul's thinking need to be distinguished here. He accuses the Corinthians of thinking wrongly about resurrection, and wants them to share his view of it, which he doubtless believes is true. But he does not say that sharing his belief, in itself, leads to participation in the kingdom. *Roman Faith* argues (pp. 440–1) that the 'belief' aspects of Christian πίστις come most to the fore when community members are disputing, for example, how the nature and work of Jesus Christ should be understood. This passage is an example of that, but below that stratum of argument, Paul continues to understand participation in the kingdom itself as dependent on forging a new, or renewed, relationship with God and Christ, and on placing one's trust and hope (15.19) in God and Christ.

Watson may emphasise belief because his category of 'credal' belief implicitly includes all the aspects of commitment that we might elsewhere characterise with the 'trust', 'confidence', even the 'pledge' ranges of the πίστις spectrum. I agree that all these are involved in 1 Cor 15, but to wrap them all up in 'belief' conflates aspects of πίστις which are more usefully distinguished. It also facilitates the addition of more and more attitudes and emotions ('blind faith', faith as an emotion, obedience to bishops ...) into one under-analysed category, leading to a decreasingly precise and interesting analysis of what is a very nuanced concept in the historically and theologically foundational context of the New Testament.

Seifrid and Watson perhaps assume (though neither says so explicitly) that a proclamation that God is the only true and living God, and Jesus Christ his only son and only saviour of human beings, is so intellectually powerful as to compel assent, baptism and change of life. If that were the case, then belief would surely always be central, if not predominant, in Christian πίστις language. This assumption, however, ignores the general principle (widely accepted, for instance, by sociologists and psychologists) that, as belief is always implicated in trust, so trust is always implicated in belief.[54] It also elides intellectual

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54 Morgan, *Roman Faith*, 20–2.

conviction and entry to the community, which in any scenario involves an active and relational commitment which goes beyond the intellectual. And it attributes to every convert a level of intellectual conviction which is surely implausible, and against which there is abundant evidence in early Christian texts. For most converts, throwing in their lot with God and Christ must have been, at least in part, an act of trust; an act of hope; a risk.

There should be nothing very surprising about this. As the Letter of James observes, and numerous stories illustrate, even the demons believe that God is one (Jas 2.19) and that Jesus Christ is the Holy One of God (e.g. Mark 1.24) or the Son of God (e.g. Mark 5.7). Thinking or believing that something is true is not treated elsewhere in the New Testament as in itself salvific. Salvation or new life requires more: commitment to God and Christ in thought, emotion and action; the forging of a relationship which is most often described as a relationship of πίστις.

One further possibility for the role of belief, though not canvassed by Seifrid and Watson, is worth mentioning here. If salvation or new life requires more than believing that something is true, it might, in principle, still be the case that Paul thinks one must believe something – even the right things – in order to enter one of his churches or participate in the kingdom. Right belief, in other words, might be a necessary, if not a sufficient, condition for community membership. On the evidence, however, I am not convinced that this is the case in Paul's letters. Clearly Paul thinks that certain things about God, Christ, the resurrection and so on are true. He preaches them and wants community members to think that they are true. He claims (with what plausibility we cannot know) that the Corinthians as a group 'received/accepted' them (παραλαμβάνειν) when they heard them (1 Cor 15.1). But we do not know whether or how would-be entrants to Pauline communities were tested as to the rightness of their views. More significantly, perhaps, Paul never says that holding a wrong view (in Paul's terms) would, in itself, cause anyone to be excluded. Paul wants people to agree and get on together (1 Cor 1.10; Phil. 1.27–8; 2.2). He says it is shameful (though not an expelling offence) that some community members 'have no knowledge of God'.[55] He commends apostles who preach differently from himself to the judgement of God (Gal 1.9; 5.10).[56] He says that those who practise 'works of the flesh' (which include idolatry but not wrong beliefs) will not inherit the kingdom of God (Gal 5.19–21). He has no difficulty recommending that a community member be expelled for incest (1 Cor 5.2), and tells members not to associate with the immoral (5.11). But neither in 1 Corinthians 15 nor anywhere else does

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55 1 Cor 15.34, though he also thinks that knowledge can be dangerous (8.1).

56 Whatever the nature of Paul's disagreement with the other apostles, it is significant that he leaves judgement to God rather than to the human community. Cf. J. B. Lightfoot, *Saint Paul's Epistle to the Galatians* (London: Macmillan, 1890[10]) ad loc.

he suggest that anyone should be expelled from the community for what they think about the Gospel.[57] We must, I believe, conclude either that Paul did not think that holding particular views was the necessary condition for inheriting the kingdom – as opposed to putting one's trust and hope in God and Christ, repenting, being baptised, joining the community of the cleansed, refraining from sin and loving one's neighbour – or that he did not think anyone in his communities was in a position to enforce the holding of particular views – or both.[58]

Turning to Seifrid's argument about the use of language in new communities: is *Roman Faith* wrong, as he suggests, to observe that new communities forming themselves within an existing socio-cultural landscape do not typically take terms in use in the world around them and assign them radically new meanings, and that our investigation of ideas and practices of πίστις should take this into account?

We need to distinguish here between the evolution of ideas within communities and what new members to communities might have been expected to learn on admission. Seifrid rightly notes (and *Roman Faith* does not dispute) that converts to ancient Judaism and Christianity (and other cults) often acquire some new vocabulary and new concepts. That is not the same as claiming that insiders immediately, intentionally change the meaning of the language they use as a new cult develops. Seifrid alludes to sociological studies of modern cults, which he implies might show this happening, but does not give an example; modern cults are beyond my expertise, but I do not know of an ancient community in which we can see anything of the kind occurring. The Jewish and Christian examples Seifrid offers do not illustrate sudden changes in usage. The metaphorical use of ὁδός, for example, goes back to early Greek, while its use to mean a philosophical path goes back at least as far as Parmenides of Elea and is found in the early Principate, particularly of Cynics.[59] The idea that an object of worship might be called the 'son of (a) god' had been familiar to inhabitants of the Hellenic world for centuries.[60]

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57 Cf. 2 Cor 2.6–7. In 1 Corinthians 13, he goes further, downplaying the importance of knowledge compared with love (13.2, 8–9) and underlining the incompleteness of human knowledge before 'perfection' (15.12).

58 This puts Christians more in line with Greek and Roman worshippers than we usually expect: cf. T. Morgan, 'Belief and practice in Graeco-Roman religiosity: Plutarch, *De Iside et Osiride* 379c', *Christianity in the Second Century: Themes and Developments* (ed. J. Carleton-Paget and J. Lieu; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017) 200–13.

59 E.g. Parm. fr. 2 (Proclus, *In Tim.* 1, 345, 18), cf. Epict. 3.22.26 citing Socrates in the context of advice on the Cynic 'true way'.

60 Certain terms in the Septuagint acquire a distinctive *colour*, but there are few, if any, clear examples of radical change. E.g. the meaning of παρακαλεῖν evolves (especially in Ben Sira), but not quickly or radically, from earlier Greek usage. διαθήκη seems to be used more heavily by Jewish communities than others, but not in a new sense. The ἐκκλησία of Israel is sometimes marked as including women and children (Ezek 10.1, cf. 10.12; Neh 5.7), but usually seems to consist of men, in line with usage in Greek cities.

Roman Faith does not argue that there was no early change in the meanings Christians gave to πίστις language. On the contrary: it argues that by the late first or early second century we can see evolution taking place in several directions. But there is no historical basis for *assuming* that Christian language was discontinuous from its beginnings with that of the world around it. That being so, we should start from an assumption of continuity and identify change inductively, through close analysis of the texts.

Minora

1. πίστις language in the first century is not generally 'under the influence of the Latin usage of *fides*' (Seifrid, p. 250): on the relationship, see *Roman Faith*, 5–7.

2. *Roman Faith* argues that in the Septuagint, Abraham develops a relationship of trust with God through Genesis 12–15 but not that this is the basis for a 'cascade' of trust (Seifrid, pp. 252–3),[61] nor (p. 253) that the relationship develops through the narrative of the sacrifice of Isaac (which does not use πίστις language).[62]

3. Seifrid's argument for the priority of belief is based partly on the view that '[o]nly in specific conditions, such as the giving of a promise, do the two ideas of believing and trusting coincide' (p. 253). This is not borne out by sociological and psychological research into trust and belief or ancient usage.[63]

4. Seifrid (n. 17) suggests that a *l'histoire des mentalités* approach may not take enough account of the importance of philosophy for the New Testament, and that Christians' use of πίστις may derive from Platonism. Aside from the doubtfulness of the suggestion that most first-century Christians would have been familiar with far-from-popular Platonic discourse, Platonic use of πίστις at this period is rather different from Christian.[64] On the contribution of philosophy to thinking about πίστις/*fides* in general in this period and to the New Testament, see *Roman Faith*, 151–7, 183–4.

5. Seifrid (p. 248) rightly notes that *Roman Faith* argues that theological and ethical understandings of πίστις language are connected in the New Testament (as in the world around it), but wrongly implies that *Roman Faith* argues for the centrality of ethical πίστις among early Christians. *Roman Faith* observes

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61 On the 'cascade' elsewhere, see Morgan, *Roman Faith*, 217–18.

62 NB: *Roman Faith* nowhere describes trust as the 'fundamental' meaning of πίστις, as Seifrid suggests, but chs. 2–5 seek to show that certain kinds of thinking, relationship and social practice emerge from a study of the evidence as more widely regarded as common, normal and/or praiseworthy, as less controversial, and/or as more often practised, than others in this period.

63 Morgan, *Roman Faith*, 15–23, *passim*. Seifrid cites Barr in support; on the evolution of sociolinguistics since Barr wrote and the importance of the mentality of users to 'context', see *Roman Faith*, 31–3.

64 Morgan, *Roman Faith*, 152.

that encouragements to πίστις between community members are remarkably rare, and seeks to explain this (pp. 218–20, 350–1). The reasons are complex but are not likely to include that trust is not a community-forming quality: both sociological and historical research suggest the opposite (*Roman Faith*, 15–18, 75–6, 117–20).

6. Watson describes *Roman Faith* as claiming that 'Christians are unusual in the way they project trust and trustworthiness into the sphere of the human relationship with the divine' (p. 243). *Roman Faith* argues that some aspects of the configuration of the divine–human πίστις relationship in the New Testament are distinctive, but (chs. 4–5, *passim*) that πίστις or *fides* in various forms is an important part of divine–human relations for Greeks, Romans and Jews.

7. Watson suggests that *Roman Faith* inappropriately marginalises 1 Clement's treatment of πίστις (pp. 245–6). *Roman Faith* focuses on the New Testament, but pp. 509–14 offer analyses of 1 Clement and passages of the Ignatian letters showing their development of New Testament πίστις discourses.

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