Here it is clearer than in Paul that belief in the future bodily resurrection has its natural habitat within a form of life characterised by holiness and a personal relationship of πίστις towards one who is πιστός, justified trust in a trustworthy deity. Yet credal belief remains fundamental here too. The trust in question is quite specific, consisting in the conviction that the God who in Jesus' resurrection promises the bodily resurrection of all will in due time fulfil that promise. It is that counter-intuitive belief – a belief in the resurrection of Jesus construed as a divine promise – that engenders the relationship of trust. Trust is oriented not towards an abstract creator deity but towards a God who has made a promise with a specific content in a specific way. That promise and that content can be articulated in verbal and indeed credal form, and it is the credal belief that forms the basis of interpersonal trust – and not the reverse.

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doi:10.1017/S0028688517000388

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Teresa Morgan's remarkably thorough work, with its provocative thesis, will undoubtedly stimulate further discussion of the understanding of faith in earliest Christianity.[12] Three features of Morgan's treatment of the topic deserve

First Epistle of Clement to the Corinthians', *Renaissance Studies* 12 (1998) 523–44, at 531). Himuro's article also includes valuable discussion of patristic interest in the phoenix, initiated by 1 Clement.

12 It stands alongside A. Schlatter's *Der Glaube im Neuen Testament*: *Eine Untersuchung zur Neutestamentlichen Theologie* (Leiden: Brill, 1885), offering a Greco-Roman background to early Christian faith, rather than the Jewish background that Schlatter presented. It also may be compared to R. Bultmann's substantial contribution 'πίστεύω, κτλ.', *TWNT* VI.174–230 (including A. Weiser, 'Der at.liche Begriff', VI.182–97). Among recent works, see T. Schumacher, *Zur Entstehung christlicher Sprache: Eine Untersuchung der paulinischen Idiomatik und der Verwendung des Begriffes πίστις* (Bonner Biblische Beiträge 168; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht/Bonn University Press, 2012); K. Haacker, "Glaube II/1-3", *TRE* 13, 277–304; and the massive collection of essays found in J. Frey, B. Schliesser and N. Ueberschaer, eds., *Glaube: Das Verständnis des Glaubens im frühen Christentum und in seiner jüdischen und hellenistisch-römischen Umwelt* (WUNT 373; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2017). See further the review of literature in B. Schliesser, *Abraham's Faith in Romans 4: Paul's Concept of Faith in Light of the History of Reception of Genesis 15:6* (WUNT II/224; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2007) 7–78.

recognition. First, she approaches the topic by seeking to reconstruct the way πίστις (under the influence of the Latin usage of *fides*) was understood in everyday life within the early Roman Empire (*l'histoire des mentalités*). The concepts of faith and faithfulness appear regularly in description of the social relations between masters and slaves, patrons and benefactors, husbands and wives, and, of course, also of that between gods and humans.[13] Secondly, Morgan treats the πίστις word group as expressing a relational idea that centres on reciprocal trust and trustworthiness.[14] This conception of trust was fundamental to the earliest Christian mission, which made use of the Greco-Roman conceptual environment in which it emerged and evolved. It was only with time that propositional content came to prominence within early Christianity and πίστις came to take on the sense of 'faith' or 'belief'.[15] Thirdly, Morgan commends the ethical relevance of the conception of πίστις as trust/trustworthiness, especially as it appears in the New Testament writings and the Scriptures. Abraham appears, through time and the experience of God's trustworthiness, as one who came to trust in God. In this experience of trust he came to be trustworthy himself, resulting in a 'cascade' of trust and trustworthiness – faith and faithfulness – that continued into the subsequent life of Israel. Within earliest Christianity, Jesus came to be regarded as playing a fundamental role in mediating faithfulness/faith between God and human beings as he mediated salvation itself. He was faithful both towards God and towards human beings, and thereby came to be the font of a new community of trust and trustworthiness.[16]

In various significant ways Morgan's treatment of faith touches on issues both ancient and modern that we cannot explore here.[17] I would like to raise questions with regard to three dimensions of Morgan's work: linguistic, contextual and ethical.

First, the linguistic questions. I must confess that I never have been convinced that the two distinct ideas of 'faith' and 'faithfulness' are consistently conjoined in the usage of πίστις. Only in specific collocations, such as the giving of a promise,

13 Morgan, *Roman Faith*, 11–15.

14 Morgan, *Roman Faith*, 15–23.

15 Morgan, *Roman Faith*, 2–4, 501–4. This conceptual evolution was present only incipiently in the New Testament writings. Not even in the Pastoral Epistles does ἡ πίστις signify 'the faith' as a body of doctrine in the way that it appears in later Christianity.

16 Morgan, *Roman Faith*, 179–204, 350, 392.

17 One note with respect to antiquity is in order. By the end of the second century, Christian apologists were concerned to define the relationship of 'faith' to knowledge in response to Platonic tradition, in which faith was regarded as something less than knowledge, even if it was more than opinion. This shift took place, however, precisely in response to Greco-Roman conceptions of faith as something inferior to knowledge. The question might be raised as to whether a *l'histoire des mentalités* approach may focus too narrowly on common social interactions and not fully take into account Hellenistic philosophical usage, which may well have been known to common people. See Bultmann, 'πίστεύω, κτλ.', 179–81.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0028688517000406 Published online by Cambridge University Press

do the two ideas of believing and trusting coincide. Morgan is fully aware of this issue and for most part avoids confusion.[18] Occasionally, however, a fusion of language and thought seems to emerge in her work, as for example when she states the aim of her study: 'And I shall try to show the importance of an aspect of *pistis* …: the fact that it is, first and foremost, neither a body of beliefs nor a function of the heart and mind, but a relationship which creates community.'[19] While πίστις generally (although not always) implies a relationship of trust or fidelity, (1) it is not clear that this relationship is expressed by the term *itself* (or those related to it) and not instead by the context in which it appears; (2) nor is it clear that such a relationship constitutes an 'aspect' of a larger concept.[20] As Morgan observes, each context must be examined for itself, without prior assumptions. This comment is directed towards traditional interpretation of the New Testament, which has been, perhaps, too quick to render given instances of πίστις as 'faith' or 'believing'. But it applies to Morgan's thesis as well. Everything depends on context. And it is the question of context – which may be extended quite broadly – that is central to any debate about Morgan's thesis.

Secondly, Morgan's thesis depends considerably on the priority that she assigns to the concepts of 'trust' and 'trustworthiness' in the usage of πίστις (under the influence of the usage of *fides*) within the early Roman Empire. Morgan's dispute with Bultmann may be seen in this light. She criticises Bultmann's description of faith for Paul as determined by its object, so that it is something other than a general trust in God. It bears instead a 'dogmatic' character.[21] Morgan herself affirms that πίστις generally does have some dogmatic dimension, since as a signifier of 'trust' it presupposes a relationship in which duties are defined. In her view, however, Bultmann stretches the meaning of πίστις beyond acceptable limits. Faith is something more than assent to the propositional content of the Gospel. Bultmann would agree with this objection. He,

18 Morgan, *Roman Faith*, 9. This distinction between 'word' and 'concept' was at the heart of James Barr's critique of the *lexicographica sacra* that lay behind the *Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament*. See J. Barr, *The Semantics of Biblical Language* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1961) 187–205, where he offers a trenchant critique of essays by A. G. Herbert and T. F. Torrance on biblical usage concerning faith, righteousness and truth. It is of relevance, too, that both of these studies from the 1950s (undoubtedly under the influence of Martin Buber) seek to incorporate the idea of 'faithfulness' on the basis of 'Hebrew thought' rather than by appeal to the Greco-Roman mindset.

19 Morgan, *Roman Faith*, 14.

20 On this topic, see Schumacher, *Zur Entstehung christlicher Sprache*, 17–72, 469–73, who engages the semantic question and locates 'meaning' (and especially innovation in meaning) largely – in my judgement too largely – in context rather than in terms.

21 It should be noted that the passage that Morgan cites is drawn from Bultmann's treatment of 'the human being under faith' and does not represent the whole of his understanding of faith in the New Testament. See R. Bultmann, *Theologie des Neuen Testaments* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1961[4]) 315–24.

too, finds that πίστις and πιστεύω may express the sense of 'trust', as well as 'faithfulness' and also 'obedience'.[22] He differs from Morgan – and this marks the critical question in debate – in that he finds a specifically Christian sense of πίστις, namely, the acceptance of the message concerning Christ which is marked as a 'saving faith'.[23] That is not to say that other ideas such as trust, hope and faithfulness are excluded, or that 'acceptance of the kerygma' is the only meaning of πίστις that appears in the New Testament.[24] Bultmann merely regards it as a distinctive usage of early Christianity that arises from the particularity of its object.[25] Here we touch on the nineteenth-century question as to whether the historically particular is possible,[26] and return to the question of the determinative context for understanding the early Christian conception of 'faith'.

I likewise must confess that I remain unconvinced of Morgan's claim, drawn from cultural historiography, that 'new communities forming themselves within an existing culture do not typically ... assign [language] radically new meanings' or that the evolution of new meanings within the community requires time.[27] In the first place, it is not clear that 'faith' regarded in terms of cognitive content was radically new. Would the Greek philosophical tradition have been entirely alien to the first Christians?[28] One may further raise the question as to whether this description applies to earliest Christianity. A good number of the first converts to this new religious movement came from the synagogue, where

22 Bultmann, 'πιστεύω, κτλ.', 205–8. Despite the uniqueness of Christian faith, Bultmann thus regards the tradition of the Hebrew Scriptures and early Judaism as having its effect on the usage of earliest Christianity.

23 Bultmann, 'πιστεύω, κτλ.', 209.

24 Bultmann does, however, conjecture that where other ideas such as trust and faithfulness appear, the idea of the acceptance of the message of Christ might well be connoted. Bultmann, 'πιστεύω, κτλ.', 209.

25 Consequently, for Bultmann – *mirabile dictu* – in agreement with Schlatter, faith in the New Testament cannot be adequately understood as a human disposition, but finally in terms of the power and working of its object. See his review of the 4th edition of Schlatter's *Der Glaube im Neuen Testament* in *ThLZ* 54 (1929) 195–6.

26 Although Morgan's study certainly does not carry the baggage of German idealism, her insistence on the evolution of Christian faith out of its Greco-Roman context and the gradual developments within the Christian community is in some measure reminiscent of F. C. Baur's understanding (under the influence of Schelling) of the emergence of Christian faith. It was precisely at this point that Albrecht Ritschl broke with Baur, insisting that history cannot be understood merely as a causal nexus, but that the emergence of the *particular* and *new* must be taken in to account. On Ritschl's break with Baur, see J. Zachhuber, *Theology as Science in Nineteenth-Century Germany: From F.C. Baur to Ernst Troeltsch* (Changing Paradigms in Historical and Systematic Theology; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013) 135–210.

27 Morgan, *Roman Faith*, 4.

28 See n. 17, above. This seems directly relevant in view of the Septuagint, Philo and Josephus, where the usage of 'faith' language includes a cognitive dimension.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0028688517000406 Published online by Cambridge University Press

they had been exposed to the language-world of the Scriptures.[29] As we know, it is remarkable with how much Scripture Paul expects his converts in Corinth to be familiar. Many would have learned a new vocabulary already in a Diaspora synagogue, just as they would have learned one upon entering any of the various mystery cults.[30] From the very start, Greeks in contact with the synagogue would have entered into the linguistic world of early Judaism, and would have understood the early Christian call to πίστις in a way shaped by that world. The same is true in some measure for new converts from paganism. Paul expects his readers in Thessalonica to absorb essential elements of early Jewish thought and language, especially apocalyptic expectations, even though he nowhere appeals to the Scriptures in 1 Thessalonians. From the very start the Thessalonians had learned, as undoubtedly others had done, that ὁ Χριστός referred to the Anointed One of Israel. And they waited in expectation for 'the Son' from heaven.[31] Conversion entailed a linguistic conversion: new wine required new wine skins.

Secondly, it is arguable that new *religious* movements assign new meanings to language in their very genesis. They do so, one may suggest, not because they are 'forming themselves *within* an existing culture', but instead because, in Niebuhrian terms, they are forming themselves *against* an existing culture, constituting a counterculture.[32] Development of language in this instance is not a question of new usage finding a place within the broader culture, but of linguistic innovation taking place in protest within the counterculture. The 'explosive increase' in the language of 'faith' that appears in the New Testament writings itself raises the possibility that a semantic shift may be taking place with respect to this cluster of terms.[33] It furthermore does not seem irrelevant to observe that the small Jewish sect that later came to be called Christianity assigned a

29 Cf. Schumacher, *Zur Entstehung christlicher Sprache*, 469–73, who concludes that Paul's use of πίστις does not differ from the usage of his time, *the distinctive elements of his usage notwithstanding*. The same may be said to hold for Septuagintal usage.

30 In the Septuagint, παρακαλῶ comes to mean 'comfort'; ἐκκλησία comes to signify the gathered people of God; διαθήκη now means 'covenant'. 'To be justified' (δικαιοῦσθαι) or similar expressions in Hellenistic usage was to have punishment rendered to oneself. καρδία appears where a Greek might have used νοῦς. Nor should we forget that the term νόμος itself takes on a special sense in the Septuagint. This sense was new to Greeks who came into contact with the synagogue, yet not *so* new that it was incomprehensible.

31 Indeed, in some instances their continuing education included such Aramaic terms as Μεσσίας (John 1.21; 4.25) and Μαρανα θα (1 Cor 16.22), not to mention the expressions presented as *verba Jesu* in the Synoptics.

32 In fact, the very term 'counterculture' – which immediately became widely used – was coined as a description of youthful opposition to the dominant culture. See T. Roszak, *The Making of a Counter Culture: Reflections on a Technocratic Society and its Youthful Opposition* (New York: Doubleday, 1969).

33 B. Schliesser, 'Faith in Early Christianity: An Encyclopedic and Bibliographic Outline', *Glaube* (ed. J. Frey, B. Schliesser and N. Ueberschaer; WUNT 373; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2017) 3, 17, citing Larry Hurtado and Eberhard Jüngel.

new meaning to language in naming itself 'the Way'.[34] Nor is it without significance that Paul's letters contain a number of neologisms with which he expected his readers to come to terms.[35] The language of the New Testament apocalypse – which understandably has been compared to that of new religious movements – most likely represents an intentional idiolect.[36] The new message of 'the Gospel' resulted in a new genre, the written Gospel, which bore its own semantic implications. None of these semantic changes would have been incomprehensible to a Hellenistic audience. But, like the message itself, they probably would have been heard as something new.[37]

Admittedly, the New Testament writings were composed primarily for internal consumption. This observation, however, touches upon the contested point. It is obvious that the first Christians communicated their good news to their contemporaries. But aside from Paul's open rejection of the usual practice of rhetoric, there is precious little said in the New Testament about communicating the Gospel or how one is to do so. The focus of the community remained on the message itself, which in its very newness – both conceptual and linguistic – proved attractive. I find it therefore altogether likely that early Christians would have been quite ready to use the πίστις word group with a distinct emphasis on the cognitive content of the kerygma, even if that sense was new to their contemporaries.[38] That is not to say that *all* of their usage of πίστις and related terms shifted in this way. Nor is it to say that the relational dimension of πίστις was lost in this shift: the *message* of the Gospel was understood to bring a new and abiding *relation* with the one, true God.[39]

That brings us to Morgan's reading of the Septuagint. Within its stories, I would argue, the childless Abraham's encounter with the Lord's promise of

34 Acts 9.2; 18.25, 26; 19.9, 23; 22.4; 24.14. We should remind ourselves that 'Christian' is apparently an etic description (Acts 11.26). In other ways, too, earliest Christianity showed marks of linguistic innovation. It seems, for example, quickly to have developed a unique vocabulary of honorifics for the risen Jesus that likewise quickly vanished in early Christian usage (παῖς, ὁ ἅγιος καὶ δίκαιος, ἀρχηγὸς τῆς ζωῆς).

35 Think, for example, of θεοδίδακτοι (1 Thess 4.9), ἀνακαινώσις (Rom 12.2), ἀρσενοκοίτης (1 Cor 6.9). Cf. R. D. Anderson, 'Grappling with Paul's Language: How a Greek Might Struggle with Paul', *The Language and Literature of the New Testament: Essays in Honour of Stanley E. Porter's 60th Birthday* (ed. L. K. Fuller Dow, C. A. Evans and A. W. Pitts; Biblical Interpretation Series 150; Leiden: Brill, 2016) 237–56.

36 Cf. A. D. Callahan, 'The Language of Apocalypse', *HTR* 88 (1995) 453–70.

37 U. Schnelle, 'Das frühe Christentum und die Bildung', *NTS* 61 (2015) 130: 'Die Entwicklung einer eigenen Sprachwelt war ein entscheidender Schritt zur Eigenständigkeit der neuen Bewegung der Christen.'

38 Correspondingly, I am not quite persuaded that Augustine's later distinction between *fides qua* and *fides quae* should be regarded as unfortunate.

39 In the sixteenth century, Protestant theologians insisted that 'faith' is no mere *notitia* and *assensus*, but decisively *fiducia*. Knowledge was by no means excluded, but it was dethroned.

offspring appears more as a decisive moment rather than a step in the development of trust, which then, in a cascade, is transmitted to others. The subsequent narratives of Hagar and Abimelech tell of Abraham's violation of his moment of trust in both possible ways. The Lord does not seem intent on building Abraham's trust either. After the birth of Isaac, the Lord's only trust-building measure is to compel Abraham to child-sacrifice, a demand from which he relents only in the last moment. The divine promise prevails against all odds over Abraham and even over God's own self. In the following stories of Scripture, Israel for its part seems hell-bent on frustrating the divine purpose at nearly every step of the way. The faithfulness of God is met repeatedly with the faithlessness of his people, to which God then responds with all the wrath of a betrayed spouse.[40] And yet, as the story goes, God all along the way intervenes savingly for his people in his words and works. The language of 'faith', especially the verbal form πιστεύω, often appears in connection with these events. In such 'oracular' contexts it is frequently the divine word, in the form of a promise, that is either believed and trusted or disbelieved and thus sometimes is said to have been disobeyed.[41] Here it is difficult if not impossible to distinguish between 'believing God's words' and 'trusting God'. The two coincide. To be sure, πίστις terminology also frequently expresses simply the idea of faithfulness in the Septuagint. But it is also clear that 'believing' or 'trusting' God in words of promise appears prominently in the text. In such instances 'believing' and 'trusting' coincide.[42]

These are the texts that the New Testament writers take up.[43] And it is this sense, I think, that predominates in the New Testament writings and which constitutes the particular understanding of faith that appears there.[44] It is hard to explain the diverse 'faiths' that appear there apart from the variations in the articulation of the Gospel to which they are connected. It was God's work in

40 E.g. Deut 32.1–43; Isa 1.1–31; Hos 1.1–14.9, in all of which πίστις appears as 'faithfulness' along with related terms such as ἀλήθεια.

41 Cf. Num 20.12; Deut 9.23; 2 Chron 20.20; Ps 105.12, 24; Isa 7.9 (ἐὰν μὴ πιστεύσητε, οὐδὲ μὴ συνῆτε: NB that this translation turns the warning in a cognitive direction); Isa 53.1 (τίς ἐπίστευσεν τῇ ἀκοῇ ἡμῶν;); Jer 25.8; Hab 1.5; Tobit 14.4. See also Exod 4.1; 19.9; 2 Chron 32.15, where an intermediary delivers the divine word. In some instances, it is God's saving intervention itself that provokes this faith and trust. Yet in these cases God's intervention is generally preceded by a promise to save, cf. Exod 14.13; Deut 1.32; Ps 77.7, 22; Isa 28.16. The divine word of judgement and promise comes not merely to Israel: see Jonah 3.5 (καὶ ἐνεπίστευσαν οἱ ἄνδρες Νινευη τῷ θεῷ).

42 Cf. D. Lührmann, 'Glaube', *RAC* XI.56–9.

43 E.g. LXX Ps 94.7–11; Isa 28.16; 53.1; Hab 2.4.

44 I can find, for example, no usage of the active voice of the verb πιστεύω in the New Testament writings that in my judgement signifies anything other than 'believe' or 'trust' in some connection or another to a proclaimed message. The usage of πίστις, it seems to me, is weighted in this direction, even if there are a number of contexts in which it clearly means 'faithfulness' or in which its meaning may be debated.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0028688517000406 Published online by Cambridge University Press

the crucified and risen Jesus that the earliest Christians proclaimed and which they articulated in various ways.[45] Within the context of early Judaism this form of proclamation, with its emphasis on content, was necessary. Otherwise, why would one not simply trust in the God of Abraham? Or why would one not simply 'believe (or trust) in the commandments' along with the Psalmist (LXX Ps 118.66)?[46]

Furthermore, the call to 'repentance' that we find in the Gospels and Acts was not limited to the earliest proclamation within a Jewish context. It applied to the Gentiles as well, indeed, especially to them. Paul reminds the Thessalonians that they had 'turned to God from idols, to serve the living and true God' (1 Thess 1.9). The resonance of this vivid expression with the prophetic literature and the psalms is obvious. Coming to trust in the God who raised Jesus from the dead is presented not as a process, but as a crisis. It is a turning away from one object of trust to another. Not to believe or trust the Gospel is to have another object of trust. It is worth recalling that when Paul speaks of justifying faith bringing 'peace with God through our Lord, Jesus Christ' he is speaking of the overcoming of enmity of human beings towards God and not of that of God towards them (Rom 5.1). The Gospel for Paul does not merely build trust. It destroys the rebellion of unbelief. It is for this reason that coming to faith is frequently presented as God's work and not merely a human response.[47]

Finally, the value of Morgan's reminder of the significance of faithfulness for human social relations and human flourishing is not to be underestimated, especially in our time. Nevertheless, in their paraenesis the New Testament writings assign priority above all else to ἀγάπη (and ἀγαπάω), not to πίστις.[48] As significant as faithfulness is to human relations, the Law is said to be fulfilled or summed up in love. This is so, one might suggest, because while 'faithfulness' certainly serves to nurture community, it is not clear that it is said to form community. It operates, or at least tends to operate, within defined social relationships (marriage, family, household, village, ethnic group) in which mutual duties are fairly well understood. That means, however, that 'faithfulness' may bear the dark side of exclusivity, the rejection of strangers or foreigners, who do not find a place in the usual order of things. Although other linguistic factors have to be

45 Likewise, faith in Jesus cannot be separated from his life, death and resurrection. As Bultmann observes, faith in Jesus is not obedience towards a Lord who is already known. The existence of this Lord is recognised and acknowledged in faith itself. Bultmann, 'πιστεύω, κτλ.', 212.

46 In early Judaism faith in God was inseparable from Torah and Temple. See Sir 32.24 (ὁ πιστεύων νόμῳ προσέχει ἐντολαῖς, καὶ ὁ πεποιθὼς κυρίῳ οὐκ ἐλαττωθήσεται); 33.3 (ἄνθρωπος συνετὸς ἐμπιστεύσει νόμῳ, καὶ ὁ νόμος αὐτῷ πιστὸς ὡς ἐρώτημα δήλων). Schlatter argues quite plausibly that the very emergence of 'Scripture' was an act of Jewish faith. See *Der Glaube im Neuen Testament*, 22.

47 E.g. John 3.20–1; 6.44; Acts 11.18; 1 Cor 2.4–5; 2 Cor 4.6; Gal 1.6, 15–16; Eph 2.8.

48 Especially Gal 5.6, 13–14; Rom 13.8–10; 1 Cor 13.1–13; John 13.34–5; 1 John 4.7.

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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doi:10.1017/S0028688517000406

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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

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