

## Who is ‘of Christ’? A Grammatical and Theological Reconsideration of 1 Cor 1.12

JAMES B. PROTHRO

36 Selwyn Gardens, Cambridge CB3 9BA, United Kingdom.  
email: [jbp27@cam.ac.uk](mailto:jbp27@cam.ac.uk)

In 1 Cor 1.12 Paul summarises a report he has received about divisions in the Corinthian congregation and attributes four so-called slogans to the Corinthians: ‘I am of Paul; I am of Apollos; I am of Cephas; I am of Christ’. Exegetes have puzzled especially over the final slogan, ‘I am of Christ’. This paper argues that this phrase was written as Paul’s own claim against the divided Corinthians and belongs to no sectarian ‘Christ-group’. I attempt to demonstrate that this reading is grammatically possible, contextually consistent and therefore exegetically preferable.

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λέγω δὲ τοῦτο ὅτι ἕκαστος ὑμῶν λέγει· ἐγὼ μὲν εἶμι Παύλου, ἐγὼ δὲ Ἀπολλῶ, ἐγὼ δὲ Κηφᾶ, ἐγὼ δὲ Χριστοῦ. (1 Cor 1.12 NA<sup>28</sup>)

This verse is crucial to the reconstruction of the historical situation of 1 Corinthians as Paul understood it and, consequently, to the interpretation of his theological response in 1 Cor 1.10–4.21. However, the verse has given rise to much debate and dissent. That Paul understands the Corinthians to boast of their connection to Paul, Apollos and Cephas seems clear not only from 1.12 but also 3.4 and the surrounding co-text, though the precise nature of their claim is disputed in the commentaries. Paul characterises the Corinthians as claiming one ecclesiastical figure over against others, thus ‘cheat[ing] themselves (3.18) out of the varied ministerial resources which are theirs’ in Christ’s church.<sup>1</sup> The greatest source of difficulty, however, lies in the attempt to determine the nature of the final cry: ‘I am of Christ’. Was it the slogan of Jewish-Christians, proto-Gnostics or pneumatic enthusiasts? Could it have been a rhetorical

250 1 A. C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (NIGTC; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2000) 122. Cf. BDAG s.v. ἐξῆπατάω.

insertion by Paul, meant merely to deride the others? As Senft observes, 'du flot des hypothèses aucune certitude n'a encore surgi'.<sup>2</sup>

This paper will argue that the punctuation and, consequently, the sense of the claim 'I am of Christ' are in need of reconsideration. Following the suggestion of Kirsopp Lake, I argue that the final slogan is Paul's own and expresses his position as a positive example of allegiance to Christ in contrast to those of three other Corinthian groups, intended to redirect them to their mutual dependency on Christ. I will attempt to demonstrate that this reading is both grammatically possible and offers the best fit with its contexts and co-text in 1 Corinthians.

### 1. Discerning the Problems: Contextual Difficulties of a Christ-Group

The groups addressed in 1 Cor 1.12 were long understood analogously to modern Christian sects. Many scholars understood the Corinthian factions as groups with competing theological claims, rooted variously in Judaism, Hellenism, forms of Gnosticism, etc. However, Paul openly condemns any preaching of the Gospel – even by Cephas – that he believes opposes his own and instructs his congregations to avoid such teachers in his other epistles.<sup>3</sup> By contrast, there appears to be no open condemnation of Apollos or Cephas in 1 Cor 1.10–4.21,<sup>4</sup> which suggests that Paul did not perceive the divisions in Corinth to be of the same ilk as those in e.g. Galatia. Rather than denouncing them as 'false apostles' or their teaching as 'contrary to what you've received', he asserts that he and Apollos are both equally servants of God (3.5–9), references Cephas positively (9.5; 15.5) and endorses another visit to Corinth by Apollos (16.12).<sup>5</sup>

Paul does denounce their divisions and factions (σχίσματα, ἔριδες, 1.10, 11; 3.3) and diagnoses their behaviour as puffed up and boastful (φυσίωσις, καύχησις; 1.29, 31; 3.21; 4.6, 7, 18). Recent studies have rightly seen that such language invites the reader to understand the situation against a socio-political background – namely, that of patronage. As a client's status was dependent upon that of his or her patron, the client benefited by the public praise of that patron – even if no specific *beneficium* was promised in reward. The public recognition of a

2 C. Senft, *La Première Épître de Saint Paul aux Corinthiens* (CNT 7; Geneva: Labor et Fides, rev. edn 1990) 34.

3 Rom 3.8; 16.17–18; Gal 1.6–9; 2.11; 5.10–12; 6.12–14; 2 Cor 11.4, 13–15; Phil 3.2. See D. E. Garland, *1 Corinthians* (BECNT; Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2003) 50.

4 Pace D. P. Ker, 'Paul and Apollos—Colleagues or Rivals?', *JSNT* 77 (2000): 75–97; G. Sellin, 'Das "Geheimnis" der Weisheit und das Rätsel der "Christuspartei" (zu 1 Kor 1–4)', *ZNW* 73 (1982) 69–96. Neither Paul's dismissal of 'eloquent wisdom' nor his subordination of all to Christ and God is directed against Apollos, as will be made clear below.

5 Cf. S. M. Pogoloff, *Logos and Sophia: The Rhetorical Situation of 1 Corinthians* (SBLDS 134; Atlanta: Scholars, 1992) 99–104.

patron's superiority entailed a boost in status for those publicly affiliated with that patron.<sup>6</sup> Analogously, Corinthian Christians had begun to claim allegiance to particular apostolic figures and praised them in contradistinction to others in the interest of distinguishing themselves within the Christian community. These behavioural patterns had already been carried over from the realm of politics to academia by Paul's day, with students praising their master to the derision of others' with not a little self-interest.<sup>7</sup> Such claims of allegiance may have been implied, if not denoted, by Paul's use of the phrase 'I am of X' in 1 Cor 1.12 and 3.4.<sup>8</sup> This background likewise accords with Paul's ecclesiological correctives to this behaviour in 1 Cor 1.10–4.21 (on which, see below).<sup>9</sup>

This idea of publicly praising one's patron in the interest of personal glory makes sense of groups centred around the apostolic figures of Paul, Apollos and even Cephas.<sup>10</sup> If a person's allegiance to one of these figures was known within the church, that public relationship would leave them with much to gain

- 6 See D. B. Martin, *Slavery as Salvation: The Metaphor of Slavery in Pauline Christianity* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990) 30–42; W. A. Meeks, *The First Urban Christians: The Social World of the Apostle Paul* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983) 20–3, 29–32; E. R. Wolf, 'Kinship, Friendship, and Patron-Client Relations', *The Social Anthropology of Complex Societies* (ed. M. Banton; New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1966) 1–22, at 16–17; E. C. Stewart, 'Social Stratification and Patronage in Ancient Mediterranean Societies', *Understanding the Social World of the New Testament* (ed. D. Neufeld and R. E. Demaris; New York: Routledge, 2010) 156–66.
- 7 See B. W. Winter, *After Paul Left Corinth: The Influence of Secular Ethics and Social Change* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2001) 31–40, 190–2. To seek a precise classification of the groups as either academic, political or ritual unnecessarily burdens interpretation. Competitions over political, religious and scholastic leaders, as well as social benefactors, all operated within the patron-client framework. See A. D. Clarke, *Secular and Christian Leadership in Corinth: A Socio-Historical and Exegetical Study of 1 Corinthians 1–6* (AGJU 18; Leiden: Brill, 1993) 94–5; Stewart, 'Patronage', 158–60.
- 8 See esp. Clarke, *Secular and Christian Leadership*, 89–107; D. Zeller, *Der erste Brief an die Korinther* (KEK 5; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2010) 91 n. 36. Cf. G. Theissen, *The Social Setting of Pauline Christianity* (ed. J. H. Schütz; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1982) 54–67; L. L. Welborn, *Politics and Rhetoric in the Corinthian Epistles* (Macon: Mercer University Press, 1997) 1–42. Due to a lack of political parallels found in the first person singular, M. M. Mitchell has suggested that the form 'I am of X' does not reflect direct speech from Corinthians but rather Paul's own caricature (*Paul and the Rhetoric of Reconciliation: An Exegetical Investigation of the Language and Composition of 1 Corinthians* (Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox, 1991) 83–6; for other views, see Zeller, *Der erste Brief*, 91 n. 35). The abruptness of the formula's introduction in 1.12, the somber tone of 3.4, and its rhetorical reversal in 3.21–3, suggest that, at least, Paul expected the Corinthians to recognise their own behaviour in his use of the phrase immediately, no matter whether the 'slogans' were partial or full reproductions of first-person partisan claims in Corinth.
- 9 Contra G. D. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* (NICNT; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1987) 47–8.
- 10 For a plausible discussion of how these may have originated, see R. E. Ciampa and B. S. Rosner, *The First Letter to the Corinthians* (PNTC; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2010) 77–8.

if that figure were recognised as superior. Self-interested praise of one's spiritual 'patron' would be expected to raise the 'client's' status by connection.

However, the milieu of patronage still leaves readers with the question: who claimed to be 'of Christ'? Though several suggestions have been proposed,<sup>11</sup> the contextual and historical difficulties in identifying such a group abound. Fee summarises these difficulties in five points, on which we will comment in succession.<sup>12</sup>

1. Claiming allegiance to Christ is certainly of a different ilk than claiming allegiance to one of his human preachers.<sup>13</sup> Paul's positive correlation between patronal factionalism and baptism in 1 Cor 1.14–15 implies that such initiatory rites were seen as indicative of patronal relationships in the social realm.<sup>14</sup> One of the few baptised by Paul would have reason to praise him to the derision of the impressive Apollos; one baptised by Apollos likewise had an interest in praising him at the expense of Paul. But if apostolic patronage was publicly secured through the administration of baptism, no Corinthian had an analogous claim to Christ. Though one can debate whether Cephas ever baptised in Corinth, Jesus did not.

2. Furthermore, being 'of Christ' is probably one way that all the Corinthians were *taught* to identify themselves. Paul himself speaks in this way in his letters (Rom 8.9; 1 Cor 3.23; 15.23; 2 Cor 10.7; Gal 3.29; 5.24; cf. Rom 14.8),<sup>15</sup> and

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For a discussion and defence of a Cephas-group, see C. K. Barrett, *Essays on Paul* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1982) 28–9.

- 11 Thiselton, *First Epistle*, 129–33, lists six in the history of interpretation, to which many nuances have been added: (1) Jewish or Judaising Christians, perhaps extremists in Torah observance; (2) spiritual enthusiasts, claiming allegiance to no apostle but to Christ alone; (3) the phrase is a misreading for ΕΓΩ ΔΕ ΚΡΙΣΤΟΥ, preserved in no textual exemplar; (4) the phrase is a marginal insertion by a scribe or even Paul's amanuensis, copied into the only manuscript eventually preserved; (5) it is a declaration of Paul himself; (6) the phrase was conjured by Paul and put into the mouth of a fictitious fourth group to reduce the other claims *ad absurdum*.
- 12 Fee, *First Epistle*, 58; cf. the similar list in H.-C. Kammler, *Kreuz und Weisheit: Eine exegetische Untersuchung zu 1 Kor 1,10–3,4* (WUNT 159; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003) 11–14. For the sake of clarity, I have altered Fee's sequence slightly.
- 13 Cf. Thiselton, *First Epistle*, 122; K. Lake, *The Earlier Epistles of St Paul: Their Motive and Origin* (London: Rivingtons, 1911) 127.
- 14 Thus Theissen, *Social Setting*, 66 n. 58; Meeks, *First Urban Christians*, 117; Barrett, *Essays on Paul*, 29; Thiselton, *First Epistle*, 125–6; Senft, *Première Épitre*, 33; H. Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians: A Commentary* (Hermeneia; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1969) 33 n. 23. Tertullian also sees the relationship between divisions and baptism as causal (*propter quod*, *CSEL* 20.213.19).
- 15 See J. D. G. Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1998) 406–7 for a discussion. On 2 Cor 10.7, see below.

the same designation was preserved in the Markan tradition (Mark 9.41). Conceptually, being 'of Christ' is one way in which one is said to be 'in Christ' (1 Cor 1.30; etc.), which is attained by being baptised *into* Christ (Gal 3.27; etc.). In 1 Cor 3.23, 'you are of Christ' is 'a positive expression of Christian existence'.<sup>16</sup> If four groups are in view here, Paul's condemnation of all four indicates that claiming to be 'of Christ' is a problem – even though it is what he himself proclaims in 3.23 as the solution to division! As Fee observes, this is 'certainly what Paul would have wanted them' to be saying.<sup>17</sup> To think that Paul in 3.23 employs as a solution what he denounced as the problem in 1.11–12 – and that he did so without explaining himself – requires tenuous speculation.<sup>18</sup>

3. In connection with the above, it is also likely that being 'of Christ' is how *all* of the groups would have thought of themselves in contradistinction to the pagan world of Roman Corinth. When patronal ties promised upward mobility and demanded exclusive praise within a society, the clients praised their local leaders to distinguish themselves from others within their own midst. Claiming allegiance to Christ would not distinguish them within Corinthian Christianity.<sup>19</sup> On the other hand, claiming allegiance to figures like Paul, Apollos or Cephas would have provided precisely that distinction within a wider body of believers who all saw themselves as 'of Christ'. If one group claimed allegiance only to Christ, however, they would have nothing to gain.

4. There is no further indication of such a group within the NT canon or elsewhere. Though attractive, the adduction of 2 Cor 10.7 ('If anyone thinks that he is of Christ ...') here is inadvisable.<sup>20</sup> There, Χριστοῦ εἶναι is Paul's own formulation and should not be mirror-read to indicate a slogan of his opponents in 2 Corinthians. Those opponents are intruders who claim to be διάκονοι or ἀπόστολοι Χριστοῦ (cf. 2 Cor 11.13, 23) over against Paul, not against others within the church.<sup>21</sup> Evidence from early Christianity also gives no indication of

16 V. P. Branick, 'Source and Redaction Analysis of 1 Cor 1–3', *JBL* 101/2 (1982) 251–69, at 260. In light of this, Branick agrees that the final slogan is Paul's own sarcastic retort. However, his argument that this indicates the existence of a pre-existent homily on divine wisdom is unnecessary.

17 Fee, *First Epistle*, 58.

18 This difficulty has not dissuaded four-group theorists from positing a rationale for this, however: e.g. A. Robertson and A. Plummer, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the First Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians*, (ICC; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1914<sup>2</sup>) 12–13; W. Meyer, *Der erste Brief an die Korinther* (2 vols.; Zürich: Zwingli, 1947) 1.31–2.

19 See Clarke, *Secular and Christian Leadership*, 95–9. Cf. also T. L. Carter, "Big Men" in Corinth', *JSNT* 66 (1997) 45–71.

20 Thus W. Schrage, *Der erste Brief an die Korinther* (EKKNT VII/1–4; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 1991–2001) 1.147 n. 289; cf. Fee, *First Epistle*, 59 n. 55.

21 Cf. M. E. Thrall, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Second Epistle to the Corinthians* (2 vols.; ICC; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1994) II.620–1; Kammler, *Kreuz und Weisheit*, 13–14.

a Christ-group. Forty years later, Clement of Rome complained to the church of Corinth that even in Paul's day they were 'engaged in partisanship' over Paul, Cephas and Apollos – decisively omitting a 'Christ-group' (1 *Clem.* 47.3).<sup>22</sup>

5. Lastly, if there was a Christ-group, they would neither have been bitten by the sting of Paul's rhetorical questions in v. 13, which were directed against all the groups, nor affected by his reconciliatory pronouncement in 3.21–3. Hurd has aptly demonstrated that Paul's questions in v. 13 ('*Paul* wasn't crucified for you, was he? You weren't baptised into the name of *Paul*, were you?'), intended to undermine the boasting of all the groups, would have only magnified a Christ-group.<sup>23</sup> They could have answered: 'No, Christ is *not* divided. No, Paul was not crucified for us – *Christ* was. No, we were (all) baptised into *Christ's* name'. Likewise 3.21–3 (Paul, Apollos and Cephas are 'yours'; and you are 'Christ's') would only reinforce the Christ-group as superior in the Corinthian social system, forcing the others to desert their human leaders and submit to this fourth party. Paul's rhetorical questions, actually, seem to reinforce the slogan 'I am of Christ' as though it alone were proper.<sup>24</sup>

These difficulties have caused some to abandon the idea of a Christ-group and read this fourth phrase instead as indicating no historical group at all. However, these interpreters feel bound by the syntax of the sentence to maintain the standard punctuation: in Greek editions, the final ἐγὼ δέ must be joined to what precedes by a comma (thus all punctuated editions); in translation, then, it should be contained within quotation marks as the final slogan, separate from the rhetorical question in v. 13.

In order to retain the standard translation *and* to deny a historical 'Christ-group', commentators have been forced to read the phrase as a *reductio ad absurdum* inserted by Paul.<sup>25</sup> Commentators who read the phrase in this way are on the mark in seeing that the 'slogan' is not one of a Christ-group and its intended tone is one of rebuke. One wonders, however, whether this is the best way to characterise Paul's use of the phrase here.<sup>26</sup> The illocution is certainly one of rebuke, but

22 Cf. BDAG, s.v. πρόσκλησις. This need not indicate that Clement's text of 1 Corinthians omitted the final slogan (contra C. K. Barrett, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* (HNTC; New York: Harper and Row, 1968) 44).

23 J. C. Hurd Jr., *The Origin of 1 Corinthians* (New York: Seabury Press, 1965) 104–6; Kammler wittily agrees: 'Der Satz wäre Wasser auf ihre Mühlen gewesen' (*Kreuz und Weisheit*, 12).

24 Ambrosiaster, accordingly, interprets the Christ-group as faithful Christians who are not guilty of division and are thus praised by Paul (CSEL 81/2.1.12, 10.7–15).

25 Thus Schrage, *Der erste Brief*, 1.148; Thiselton, *First Epistle*, 132–3; Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 49–50; R. A. Horsley, *1 Corinthians* (ANTC; Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1998) 45; R. Baumann, *Mitte und Norm des Christlichen: Eine Auslegung von 1 Korinther 1,1–3,4* (NTAbh 5; Münster: Aschendorff, 1968) 54; cf. Hurd, *Origin*, 105–6; Zeller, *Der erste Brief*, 92–3.

26 Kammler has similar reservations (*Kreuz und Weisheit*, 15).

are we to understand Paul as providing merely an ‘ironic dig’?<sup>27</sup> Might this phrase, which is employed positively to supplant their competitive allegiances in 3.22–3, be an earnest and exemplary expression of Christian allegiance in 1.12?<sup>28</sup> In my view the ironic reading, while basically on target, misses the positive place of the fourth ‘slogan’ due to its adherence to the perceived syntactical strictures of v. 12.

## 2. A Syntactical Problem and a Possible Solution

An alternative to the traditional punctuation of 1.12 has been suggested by Lake:

I mean that each says ‘I am of Paul, and I of Apollos, and I of Cephas,’—but *I* am of Christ!<sup>29</sup>

Contextually, Lake argued that this reading ‘adds to the force’ of the question in v. 13 (*‘Paul* wasn’t crucified for you, was he? You weren’t baptised into the name of *Paul*, were you?’) and makes it an intelligible response. Grammatically, however, his only defence is that ‘Paul’s style is far from being formally correct’.<sup>30</sup>

Despite the fact that commentators and translators have not adopted this reading outright, it has received some support.<sup>31</sup> Barrett noted the possibility in 1978 and seems to have become more convinced of it by 2003.<sup>32</sup> Kammler, though he does not cite Lake and offers no repunctuation of the verse, has adopted substantially the same reading: rather than a *reductio ad absurdum*, ‘[d]ie Worte ἐγὼ δὲ Χριστοῦ sind eine durchaus ernst gemeinte und theologisch

27 Ciampa and Rosner, *First Letter*, 80.

28 Contra Branick, who thinks that the sarcasm of 1.12 is only realised when the audience reaches 3.23 (*‘Source and Redaction Analysis’*, 260). If all of the Corinthians referred to themselves as ‘of Christ’ generally but as ‘of Paul, Apollos or Cephas within the Christian community, Paul’s insertion would have been effective immediately when the auditor heard Χριστοῦ – and necessarily so, if 1.13 is to have any weight.

29 Lake, *Earlier Epistles*, 127 (emphasis original).

30 Lake, *Earlier Epistles*, 127. Ciampa and Rosner concur that the syntax is ‘not decisive’, but offer no grammatical analysis to support their assertion (*First Letter*, 80).

31 Cf. G. Lüdemann, *Paulus, der Heidenapostel* (2 vols.; FRLANT 123, 130; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1980–3) II.118 n. 48; Branick, ‘Source and Redaction Analysis’, 260. Garland follows Lake’s sentiment but adds quotation marks to mark Paul’s mockery of the other slogans: ‘I mean this: that each one of you is saying, “I belong to Paul”; “I belong to Apollos”; or “I belong to Cephas”; but “I belong to Christ”’ (1 *Corinthians*, 40).

32 Compare his notes in *First Epistle*, 45 (1978) with his comments in ‘Sectarian Diversity in Corinth’, *Paul and the Corinthians: Studies on a Community in Conflict: Essays in Honour of Margaret Thrall* (ed. T. J. Burke and J. K. Elliott; NovTSup 109; Leiden: Brill, 2003) 287–302, at 289–90: ‘there is something to be said for the view that the words should be regarded as a marginal gloss or as Paul’s own outraged comment on the party cries’.

begründete *Antithese des Paulus*, die er den zuvor mitgeteilten Parolen emphatisch entgegenstellt'.<sup>33</sup>

The contextual grounds for this reading are widely acknowledged. Schrage notes that, had Paul not spoken these words, we would have been forced to assume that being 'Christ's' was an antithesis to membership in one of these three parties.<sup>34</sup> Fitzmyer likewise intimates that the context demands only the three groups that feature in Paul's discussion in 1.13–4.21 (cf. 3.4, 22) and that reading 'I am of Christ' as a counter-claim by Paul himself 'accords well with the following v. 13'.<sup>35</sup> Meyer, who espouses an enthusiastic Christ-group here, nevertheless reacts: 'Gibt es eine bessere Parole als diese?'<sup>36</sup>

For these commentators, neither the context nor co-text makes much sense of a 'Christ-group', nor does it seem likely that Χριστοῦ εἶναι can be a negative thing in Paul's theology. But they are reticent to read 'I am of Christ' as Paul's own declaration based on these factors alone. The cause of this reticence is the simple syntax of the verse, which appears to require the standard punctuation as follows:

What I mean is that each of you says, 'I belong to Paul,' or 'I belong to Apollos,' or 'I belong to Cephas,' or 'I belong to Christ.' (1 Cor 1.12 NRSV)

Collins comments that for Lake's punctuation to be correct, 'one might have expected Paul to have employed a strongly adversative "but" (*alla*), but he does not do so'.<sup>37</sup> Fascher concludes that the fourfold repetition of ἐγὼ with a genitive is so 'eindeutig konstruiert' that Lake's reading is impossible.<sup>38</sup> Kammler, however, objects that Paul's original auditors knew precisely how many groups there were, and could have understood him clearly despite the grammar, which, to us, is unclear.<sup>39</sup>

The grammatical structure appealed to here is the pattern ἐγὼ μὲν | ἐγὼ δέ | ἐγὼ δέ | ἐγὼ δέ. As noted in the standard reference books, μὲν | δέ highlights a juxtaposition of verbs, nouns or of two sentences in their entirety.<sup>40</sup> When

33 Kammler, *Kreuz und Weisheit*, 15 (emphasis original).

34 Schrage, *Der erste Brief*, 1.147.

35 J. A. Fitzmyer, *First Corinthians: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 32; New Haven: Yale, 2008) 145, cf. 137; compare Kammler, *Kreuz und Weisheit*, 16. Contra Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians*, 33.

36 Meyer, *Der erste Brief*, 1.31.

37 R. F. Collins, *First Corinthians* (SP 7; Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 1999) 72. Cf. E.-B. Allo, *Saint Paul: Première Épître aux Corinthiens* (EtBib; Paris: Gabalda, 1934) 82; Ciampa and Rosner, *First Letter*, 80; Fee, *First Epistle*, 58 n. 54; Schrage, *Der erste Brief*, 1.148.

38 E. Fascher, *Der erste Brief des Paulus and die Korinther* (THKNT VII/1–2; Berlin: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 1975) 1.92.

39 Kammler, *Kreuz und Weisheit*, 16.

40 See H. W. Smyth, *Greek Grammar* (Harvard: Harvard University Press, rev. edn 1956) §§2905, 2915. Often, when highlighting a contrast, the elements to be juxtaposed precede the particles.



correlating more than two elements, the commonest way to introduce the added element is with δέ,<sup>41</sup> as in Eph 4.11 or Matt 16.14. In view of this principle, it is entirely possible that reading of ‘I am of Christ’ as a fourth slogan is correct. I do not contend that this rendering is unwarranted or grammatically unlikely; I do contend that this reading is not *necessitated* by the syntax. Interpreters argue that, based on this syntactical convention, the final δέ is too weak a disjunctive to provide the syntactical break required by Lake’s reading and, therefore, must add a further element to the list of slogans. However, an analysis of the strength of δέ to provide a break from a μέν | δέ correlation is lacking. What is necessary in our assessment of 1 Cor 1.12 is, first and foremost, a re-evaluation of the particle δέ and whether it could have provided a sufficient break from the preceding μέν | δέ clauses.

### 3. A Grammatical Re-Evaluation of 1 Cor 1.12

If he desired to express himself as Lake reads, Paul could have done so in many ways. Collins’ suggestion of ἀλλά is possible.<sup>42</sup> Paul could also have used μέντοι or added γέ. Perhaps the clearest revision (save replacing ἕκαστος and ἐγώ with ἄλλος μέν . . . ἐγὼ δέ, etc.) would have been ἐγὼ δέ εἰμι Χριστοῦ. But Paul chose none of these. In a discussion of this text, the question is not whether Paul was *able* to express Lake’s translation differently, but whether or not he was *bound* to do so. Provided below are examples of the difficulties in discerning the pattern μέν | δέ | δέ, arguing (1) that δέ is strong enough to provide a break in the syntax of 1 Cor 1.12 and (2) that at least one ancient Greek reader read it this way.

1. *The pattern μέν | δέ | δέ.* The particle δέ alone can provide a sufficient break from a μέν | δέ correlation, even when the constructions are grammatically parallel.

(a) Firstly, δέ can easily provide a break in the construction: ‘A μέν, B δέ. 2 δέ’. In this instance the elements ‘A, B’ agree in case, whereas element ‘2’ does not, and the period ‘.’ marks a full break in thought. Due to element ‘2’, these examples do not parallel 1 Cor 1.12 exactly, but they do illustrate the dependence of editors and interpreters on extra-grammatical features when choosing where to divide μέν | δέ from a following δέ. For example,

ἢ μὲν πρῶτα ἐρείσασα ἔμεινεν ἀσώλετος, ἢ δὲ πρῶτα ἐλύετο ὑπὸ τῆς βίας [τῶν κυμάτων]. Τῶν δὲ στρατιωτῶν βουλή ἐγένετο ἵνα . . . (Acts 27.41–42)

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But this rule was not rigid even in Attic Greek, much less in κοινή. See J. D. Denniston, *The Greek Particles* (Indianapolis: Hackett, rev. edn 1950) 369–74, esp. 371–2; Smyth, *Greek Grammar*, §2914.

41 Cf. Smyth, *Greek Grammar*, §§2905, 2907.

42 E.g. *Barn.* 10.7–8; *Herm. Vis.* 2.3.2 (11.2).

Whereas the bow (μέν) remained immovably fixed, the stern (δέ) was coming loose at the force of the waves. Now (δέ) the soldiers' plan was to ...

Here μέν and δέ juxtapose the activity of the bow and stern of the ship. The next clause, using the postpositive δέ, is rightly divided by the editors with a period. Here, this choice of punctuation is facilitated primarily by two factors, obvious to most readers: (1) the context demands it; (2) the change of case from two contrasted nominatives to a genitive provides a more obvious grammatical break.<sup>43</sup>

(b) However, the question of textual division is not always so simple. At times, the construction 'A μέν, B δέ. C δέ' occurs, where the particles correlate three elements ('A, B, C') of the *same case*, but a break in thought ('.') is still understood from context.<sup>44</sup> For example,

ὅς μὲν εἰς τὸν ἴδιον ἀγρόν, ὃς δὲ ἐπὶ τὴν ἐμπορίαν αὐτοῦ· οἱ δὲ λοιποὶ κρατήσαντες τοὺς δούλους ... (Matt 22.5-6)

Here, the author contrasts those who refused the invitation to the wedding banquet (both nominative in case). But how are we to understand the final δέ clause, also with a nominative? The editors have rightly chosen to understand the sentence not as a continued correlation or list (i.e. 'one went home; another went to his business; the rest seized the servants') and to punctuate in such a way that indicates this interpretation: 'One went to his own field; the other went to his business. The rest, *however*, seized his servants and ...' But the syntax, at first glance, is ὅς μὲν | ὅς δέ | οἱ δέ. The shift to the plural in itself does not indicate a break in the juxtaposition.<sup>45</sup> The only thing in this instance that causes such a choice in punctuation and (therefore) in translation is the *context*. It makes better sense to understand a break in thought between the two groups who merely declined the invitation and those who took action against the messengers.

The same interpretive decision is reflected also here,

καὶ οἱ μὲν ἐπέιθοντο τοῖς λεγομένοις, οἱ δὲ ἠπίστουν· ἀσύμφωνοι δὲ ὄντες πρὸς ἀλλήλους ... (Acts 28.24-5)

43 For a further sampling of this construction, including instances where '2' is not only of a noun a different case but also another part of speech, see e.g.: Gen 38.23-4; 2 Macc 5.22-4; 10.28-9; 12.1-2; 4 Macc 1.22-4; Ep Jer 54-5; Bel 7 (LXX); Acts 9.7-8; Rom 8.10-11; 2 Cor 10.1-2; 2 Tim 4.4-5; 1 Pet 4.6-7; *Barn.* 5.2; Josephus, *AJ* 1.40-1, 49; *Herm. Vis.* 3.2.7-8 (10.7-8). Classical sources illustrate the same interpretive difficulties: Homer, *Il.* 2.444-5; 4.364-5; 7.473-5; 12.469-70; 13.614-16; 17.430-2; 20.462-3; Herodotus 2.84.3-85.1; Thucydides 1.28.4; 1.30.1-2; 1.46.1, 1-2; Apollonius Rhodius, *Argon.* 2.981-2; 3.1282-4; 4.1627-8.

44 In addition, see 4 Macc 5.26-27; 13.11-13; Wis 14.2-3; Josephus *Ant.* 1.134-135, 269.

45 Cf. Luke 10.2: ὁ μὲν θερισμὸς πολὺς, οἱ δὲ ἐργάται ὀλίγοι. The μέν | δέ still juxtaposes two contrasting elements, of which one is singular and one plural by necessity (also Heb 12.10, below).

Does this mean, ‘Some heeded what was spoken; others disbelieved; *still others*, disagreeing with one another, ...’? No. The editors, by inserting a semicolon, indicate that they understand the final ‘C δέ’ clause to mark a break in thought. But why? Again the controlling factor is the context. The final subject includes both those who heeded and those who disbelieved and therefore should be understood as a separate thought, but the grammar alone does not necessitate this.

One further NT example comes in the Epistle to the Hebrews,

οἱ μὲν γὰρ πρὸς ὀλίγας ἡμέρας κατὰ τὸ δοκοῦν αὐτοῖς ἐπαίδευσαν, ὁ δὲ ἐπὶ τὸ συμφέρον εἰς τὸ μεταλαβεῖν τῆς ἀγιότητος αὐτοῦ. πάσα δὲ παιδεία ... (Heb 12.10–11)

Must this, then, mean, ‘*They* disciplined us for a few days as seemed best to them, *he* [does so] for our benefit that we may share in his holiness, but *all* discipline ...’ as though the three nominatives were all elements in the same correlation?<sup>46</sup> Here again, the context suggests that the final δέ indicates a break in thought with the preceding correlation: ‘... holiness. Now, (δέ) all discipline ...’

(c) One further complication of Lake’s reading is that not only is δέ used to end a μὲν | δέ correlation, but also that Paul, in asserting something of himself, gives the impression of anaphora in positing the contrast. For this phenomenon, we adduce a parallel from the *Shepherd of Hermas*:

οἱ μὲν γὰρ ἐχόρευον, οἱ δὲ ὠρχοῦντο, οἱ δὲ ἤδον. ἐγὼ δὲ σιγὴν ἔχων ... (Herm. Sim. 9.11.5 (88.5))

For some (μὲν) were dancing, others (δέ) were skipping, still others (δέ) were singing. But *I* (ἐγὼ δέ) kept silent and ...

We have already noted that Paul could have expressed Lake’s punctuation in other ways. But he could also have used δέ to mark a break in thought, as in this example from the *Shepherd*. Here, the break is facilitated by the shift from οἱ to ἐγώ, but otherwise the syntactical pattern is no different. Here the final δέ not only marks a change in subject within the construction but also marks a sharp contrast between the fourth party’s action with those of the first three. This is exactly how Lake reads Paul’s construction of 1 Cor 1.12, where the final ἐγὼ δέ both marks a shift to the author’s first person ἐγὼ from ἕκαστος, and intends to indicate the contrast between his final first-person ‘slogan’ and the first three. Paul contrasts his final, first-person, claim with ‘everyone’s’, which he impersonates also using the first person (ἐγώ). His repetition of ἐγώ is compulsory, not anaphoric.<sup>47</sup>

46 This is the meaning of the similar construction in 1 Cor 12.8–11: ‘To one (ὃ μὲν) is given ..., to another (ἄλλω δέ) ..., to another (ἄλλω δέ) ... , [etc.,] but *all* these things (πάντα δέ) ...’

47 Cf. J. D. Denniston, *Greek Prose Style* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1952) 86.

(d) One final complication remains: we need to understand not only where the break in thought occurs in the context of 1 Cor 1.12–13, but whether the fourth δέ can also indicate the end of a quotation. Quotation marks, like other punctuation, are of course always determined by context.<sup>48</sup> But are there any examples of “A μέν, B δέ.” C δέ’, where the correlated elements, within a quotation, are of the same case as the fronted subject of the new sentence, not included in the quotation *and* separated by δέ’?

Yes. This example comes from well beyond the dialectical milieu of the NT but is nevertheless fully illustrative of the phenomenon, and not by any grammatical principle foreign to later Greek:

‘σὲ μὲν κύνες ἢ δ’ οἰωνοὶ | ἐλκήσουσ’ ἀϊκῶς, τὸν δὲ κτεριοῦσιν Ἀχαιοί.’ | Τὸν δ’ ὀλιγοδρανέων προσέφη κορυθαίολος Ἴεκτωρ ... (Hom., *Iliad* 22.335–7)

‘Dogs and birds will tear at *you* (μὲν) viciously, but the Achaeans will bury *him* (δὲ) with full honour’. Now (δὲ) shining-helmeted Hector addressed him feebly ...

Here we have an example of editors punctuating a parallel construction with exactly the punctuation for which we argue in 1 Cor 1.12, both regarding the period and the position of the quotation marks. But no merely grammatical case can be made for this in Homer, as in 1 Corinthians. The obvious contextual break between the two elements signals to modern editors, as it would have to ancient audiences, that a new thought is beginning.

2. *Patristic support.* The final piece of evidence for Lake’s reading is John Chrysostom, who expounds 1 Cor 1.12 thus in a homily:

But why did he add, ‘I am of Christ’? For if those who aligned themselves to men sinned, surely those who dedicated themselves to Christ did not. But he did not accuse them of calling themselves by the name of Christ, but of not all calling themselves by that name *alone*. And I think that he added this of himself, hoping to make his accusation more weighty ...<sup>49</sup>

Chrysostom spoke and wrote in Greek. His indication of this as his own opinion (οἶμαι) perhaps betrays his awareness that this is not the most natural reading of the syntax. Still, he gives his proposal without any grammatical apology, as he does elsewhere with difficult syntax.<sup>50</sup> This evidence should demonstrate that reading ‘I am of Christ’ as Paul’s own ‘slogan’ is at least possible. Chrysostom’s

48 Note e.g. the difficulties involved in placing quotations in Gal 2.14–21 and Jas 2.18–19.

49 τίνος δὲ ἔνεκεν προσέθηκεν, Ἐγὼ δὲ Χριστοῦ; Εἰ γὰρ οἱ ἀνθρώποις προσνέμοντες ἑαυτοὺς ἡμάρτανον, οὐ δήπου καὶ οἱ τῷ Χριστῷ ἑαυτοὺς ἀνατιθέντες. Ἄλλ’ οὐ τοῦτο ἐνεκάλει, ὅτι τὸν Χριστὸν ἑαυτοῖς ἐπεφήμιζον, ἀλλ’ ὅτι μὴ πάντες μόνον. Οἶμαι δὲ αὐτὸν καὶ οἰκοθεν αὐτὸ προστεθεικέναι βουλόμενον βαρύτερον τὸ ἔγκλημα ποιῆσαι ... (PG 61.24).

50 Cf. the similar use of Chrysostom in M. Silva, *Philippians* (BECNT; Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2005<sup>2</sup>) 27.

witness does *not* mean that this reading is correct, but it certainly means that it is *Greek*. What will decide the matter, then, is *context*.

#### 4. Supporting the solution: contextual factors

1. *Being in Christ: Paul's solution to Corinthian divisions.* Most of the contextual factors against reading a Christ-group have been listed above. But our reading does not rest on negative evidence alone. There are also positive indicators that 'I am of Christ' is Paul's own utterance. Throughout the letter, Paul's theology of the church and incorporation into Christ are the fundamental means he employs to combat patron-based factionalism.<sup>51</sup> Membership 'in Christ', which is little different than being 'of Christ',<sup>52</sup> relativises all social paradigms.<sup>53</sup> Paul employs this 'ongoing ordering principle' to make the many realise unity in the social sphere within the church.<sup>54</sup> Its antithesis is worldliness or, as Paul terms it in 3.3-4, 'human'-ness.<sup>55</sup> This is implied by the fact that Paul can counteract patronal factionalism throughout the letter by reminding the Corinthian Christians of their incorporation into Christ.<sup>56</sup>

According to Mitchell's rhetorical analysis, Paul's treatments of the several troubles in Corinth are aimed at reinforcing his single *πρόθεσις* that there be 'no divisions among' them (1.10).<sup>57</sup> The theological content of these proofs is primarily served by the metaphors of *incorporation* into Christ, by which believers belong to God and are indwelt and unified by the Spirit.<sup>58</sup> These virtually

51 Cf. G. D. Fee, 'Toward a Theology of 1 Corinthians', *Pauline Theology 2: 1 and 2 Corinthians* (ed. D. M. Hay; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993) 37-58, at 38-9; Fitzmyer, *First Corinthians*, 170.

52 See Dunn, *Theology*, 406-7. If there is any distinction to be made, we may note that Paul's language of 'belonging to' God through Christ is particularly used to emphasise exclusive divine ownership and loyalty in 1 Corinthians (3.23; 6.19-20; 7.23). Conceptually, one's status as belonging to Christ is the consequence of one's incorporation into Christ.

53 See W. S. Campbell, *Paul and the Creation of Christian Identity* (LNTS (JSNTSup) 322; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2006) 159-65; cf. J. B. Tucker, *You Belong to Christ: Paul and the Formation of Social Identity in 1 Corinthians 1-4* (Eugene: Pickwick, 2010) 82-4.

54 Tucker, *You Belong to Christ*, 83.

55 Cf. M. Bouttier, *Christianity according to Paul* (SBT 49; Naperville: Alec R. Allenson, 1966) 62-71; V. P. Furnish, 'Theology in 1 Corinthians', in Hay, *Theology*, 59-89, at 67.

56 On the patronal situations behind various aspects of 1 Corinthians, including lawsuits, idol-meat, the Lord's Supper, etc., see J. K. Chow, *Patronage and Power: A Study of Social Networks in Corinth* (JSNTSup 75; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1992) 133-66. On the nature of this as a reminder, 1.13a and 6.15a indicate that metaphors of incorporation and unity were integrated already in Paul's earlier kerygmatic activity (Furnish, 'Theology', 85).

57 See Mitchell, *Paul*, 200-2. Our interpretation does not rest on a specific rhetorical classification or schema of the letter but on the continual use of ecclesial metaphors against social factionalism.

58 Those in Christ belong to God as 'Christ is God's' (3.23; cf. 11.3). Those purchased by Christ, then, belong to God (6.19b-20; 7.23), are God's temple (3.16-17; 6.19a) and are members of the body of Christ (6.15-17; 12.12-27) by the Spirit (2.10-14; 3.16; 6.11, 19; 12.4-13). These

synonymous expressions are Paul's means of undergirding the Corinthians' primary identity in Christ against other sources of boasting, personal identification and faction.<sup>59</sup> Through Christ they belong to God and in his Spirit they belong to one another.<sup>60</sup> Paul is out to effect social change by theological clarity, and so to explicate theology he will make use of contemporary *exempla* for illustration. Throughout these proofs, Paul's primary *exemplum* is himself.<sup>61</sup>

2. *The argument of 1 Cor 1.10–4.21.* In 1 Cor 1.10–4.21, Paul employs these same theological proofs to the same communal ends and includes similar personal *exempla*. In seeking to understand the coherence of Paul's response, some have misinterpreted this passage to be Paul's attack on Apollos' eloquence or on sophistic rhetoric in general.<sup>62</sup> But this misses Paul's end for his means. While Paul seems aware of a rub caused by his and Apollos' rhetorical styles, his exposition employs σοφία λόγου ('eloquent wisdom', NRSV) as a springboard to a greater contrast between the mechanisms of God (through his servants) and those of the world (exemplified in divisions over Paul, Apollos and Cephas).<sup>63</sup>

The contrast between divine power and human wisdom, with the cross as its evidence (1.18–2.5), is paralleled with the contrast of the mystical and ethical disposition of the baptised with that of the world.<sup>64</sup> the 'mature' (2.6) who possess 'the wisdom of God' (2.7) do so because they possess 'the Spirit of God' (2.11–12) and are thus 'Spiritual' people (πνευματικοί, 2.13–16); by contrast, those who do not possess the Spirit are therefore described as those taught by 'human wisdom' (2.13), 'un-Spiritual' (ψυχικοί, 2.14), 'fleshly' (3.1, 3), 'infants' (3.2) and, therefore, ultimately only 'human' (3.3–4). God's wisdom, as shown in the offensive cross of Jesus, is introduced as primary evidence that God and the world have entirely different modes of operation.<sup>65</sup>

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and other Pauline phrasings are to be understood as expressing incorporation into Christ, whether subjectively or objectively. See Dunn, *Theology*, 396–412.

59 See the excellent analysis in Mitchell, *Paul*, 111–75.

60 For this sequencing, see H. Ridderbos, *Paul: An Outline of his Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1975) 376.

61 Mitchell, *Paul*, 205, 209. Cf. 1 Cor 4.6, 16; 5.3, 9–12; 7.7, 8, 40; 9.1–27; 11.1, 16; 12.31b–13.12; 14.18–19; 15.8–11, 14–15.

62 E.g. Fee, *First Epistle*, 49.

63 Thus Mitchell, *Paul*, 211; Thiselton, *First Epistle*, 147–9, 295; Fitzmyer, *First Corinthians*, 153, 188; Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 59; F. Voss, *Das Wort vom Kreuz und die menschliche Vernunft: Zur Soteriologie des 1. Korintherbriefes* (FRLANT 199; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2002) 206–8.

64 Cf. Voss, *Das Wort vom Kreuz*, 81–7, who argues that Paul incorporates all who are outside the sphere of salvation into the κόσμος in this passage.

65 C. Mihaila, *The Paul–Apollos Relationship and Paul's Stance toward Greco-Roman Rhetoric: An Exegetical and Socio-historical Study of 1 Corinthians 1–4* (LNTS (JSNTSup) 402; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2009) 24, *passim*.

Within this proof, Paul himself is again the primary *exemplum* (1.17; cf. 2.5). His preaching of *Christ* alone is contrasted with those who are arrogant and socially contentious by worldly wisdom (4.19–20), i.e. those who promulgate *patrons* alone. The antithesis of God's wisdom in Paul is not, then, the world's wisdom in Apollos' eloquence, but the Corinthians' misappropriation of worldly categories to the church by their factionalism.<sup>66</sup> Again, the contrast is between the divine and the human, mitigated by Paul the exemplar.

In light of this, we may summarise the passage in this way: against factionalism, Paul elucidates the radical difference between God and the world (1.18–2.16), emphasising the folly of Christ's cross as its primary evidence. The death of Christ is the act of God that saves those who believe (1.21–4), and it is because of this God and his action that the Corinthian Christians are in Christ (1.30).<sup>67</sup> This incorporation is primary over dependence on all patrons – especially, here, those apostolic figures in whom they boast for worldly distinction. These, Paul clarifies, are merely workers in God's field (3.5–11). The Corinthians cannot belong to Paul, Apollos or Cephas: they belong to God alone who brought about their status in Christ and who will judge all his servants at the *parousia* (3.12–15; 4.1–5). They must not corrupt God's temple (3.16–17) by imposing human standards and practices on God in the name of 'wisdom' (3.18–20). Paul redirects their boasting in humans towards its proper place in God through Christ (3.21a; 1.29–31) on these cosmic grounds:

For 'all things are yours',<sup>68</sup> whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas, whether the world or life or death, whether things present or things to come – all are yours; you are Christ's; Christ is God's. (3.21b–23)

Paul pronounces the antithesis of the slogans: they are not 'of Paul, Apollos, or Cephas'; Paul is theirs, and they are 'of Christ'. All things, here as elsewhere in Paul, flow *a patre ad patrem*.<sup>69</sup> Paul reorients them to their primary source of identity: they are Christ's. As such, they must put aside all boasting in these figures, who are merely servants of the Corinthians in Christ (4.1). No longer are they to be puffed up against one another (4.6) in the names of their patrons. In their new existence in Christ, they are to follow the 'father' of Corinthian Christianity, Paul, who himself encourages them by his own example to claim allegiance to Christ over all (4.15–16).

3. *The function of 1 Cor 1.12–13.* To read 'I am of Christ' as Paul's own response to Corinthian boasting and factionalism, then, is consonant with his own

66 See the detailed study of Mihaila, *Paul–Apollos Relationship*, esp. 181–212.

67 Cf. Fitzmyer, *First Corinthians*, 164.

68 For sources of this as a Stoic sentiment, see Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 124 n. 2.

69 Within this epistle, see 1 Cor 1.2, 8–9, 30–1; 3.5, 16–18, 3.23; 6.14–15, 19–20; 7.17; 8.6; 11.2–3, 11–12; 12.4–6, 18, 24, 28.

argumentation and theology in this section of the letter. Paul's argument serves to clarify his identity (and others') as an apostle, not a praise-demanding patron, and to encourage their behaviour in light of this fact and in imitation of him. In 1.12, then, Paul anticipates his subsequent argumentation by his retort and his rhetorical questions. The parallel syntax of ἐγὼ δὲ Χριστοῦ actually *heightens the contrast* between their boasting in men and his boasting in Christ – though they believe they are all 'of Christ' and merely competing within the body, Paul's juxtaposition of himself with ἕκαστος implies jarringly that even in the sphere of patronage they should claim only Christ. As the first of many personal *exempla*, he offers his own 'slogan' alongside theirs to emphasise the contrast between them, which he will invite them to follow over the course of his argument. No group in Corinth is following Christ; Paul is following Christ. That is the point. He adds the questions 'Is *Christ* divided? Was *Paul* crucified for you? Or were you baptised into the name of *Paul*?' (1.13) to redirect their boasting to its proper place and to distance his name from the competitive arena of boasting. This contrast transitions to that of the divine and the human by way of highlighting the act of God that incorporated them into Christ. Paul does not reduce their claims to absurdity; he reorients their self-understanding into the entirely un-'human' realm of God's counsel and grace.

## 5. Conclusions

Affirming that social strife in the Corinthian church is at issue in 1 Cor 1.10–4.21, this enquiry has attempted to make three points: (1) that the existence of a Christ-group in Corinth is unlikely; (2) that the syntactical structure of 1 Cor 1.12 does not necessitate that 'I am of Christ' be read as a Corinthian slogan; (3) that Paul's theological argumentation in 1.10–4.21 best fits with reading 'I am of Christ' as Paul's exemplary claim, intended to supplant factionalists' allegiances with Christian identity. This analysis suggests that Lake's punctuation of 1 Cor 1.12 has been greatly underestimated. The grammatical and contextual conclusions above may be reflected in this punctuation of 1 Cor 1.12–13:

λέγω δὲ τοῦτο ὅτι ἕκαστος ὑμῶν λέγει· ἐγὼ μὲν εἶμι Παύλου, ἐγὼ δὲ Ἀπολλῶ, ἐγὼ δὲ Κηφᾶ. ἐγὼ δὲ Χριστοῦ· μεμέρισται ὁ Χριστός; μὴ Παῦλος ἐσταυρώθη ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν, ἢ εἰς τὸ ὄνομα Παύλου ἐβαπτίσθητε;

The opening sentence of Paul's call to return to proper Christian allegiance, then, comes not with 'Is Christ divided?' (v. 13) but with 'I am of Christ' (v. 12). With this claim Paul here offers his own 'slogan' as an example to supplant divisive Corinthian slogans and summon them to ecclesial unity.