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Theology and Fundraising: How does current Canadian Mennonite praxis compare to Paul's Collection for Jerusalem?

by

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presented to the University of Waterloo
in fulfilment of the
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I hereby declare that I am the sole author of this thesis. This is a true copy of the thesis, including any required final revisions, as accepted by my examiners.

I understand that my thesis may be made electronically available to the public.

Abstract

This paper compares the theology and praxis of Canadian Mennonite giving to the biblical texts of Paul's collection for Jerusalem, particularly 1 and 2 Corinthians. It is based on interviewing Mennonite donors and fundraisers, and using the resulting issues about giving to probe the Pauline texts for practical details about asking for money and donating money. The paper suggests how Pauline theology and praxis might further inform giving and fundraising in the Mennonite church.

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Dedicated to my husband Barry, who models generosity

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Glossary of Abbreviations Used

| | |
|-----------|---|
| CSGVP | Canadian Survey on Giving, Volunteering and Participating |
| MC Canada | Mennonite Church Canada |
| MC USA | Mennonite Church USA |
| MCEC | Mennonite Church Eastern Canada |
| MCC | Mennonite Central Committee |
| MEDA | Mennonite Economic Development Agency |
| MFC | Mennonite Foundation Canada |

Introduction

North American Mennonite institutions increasingly solicit donations in order to survive and to perform their work: schools, churches and mission agencies do not usually generate (sufficient) revenue on their own. Mennonite theological study today is supported by donations, yet the theological study of fundraising is neglected: fundraising supports theology but theology has not contributed enough towards fundraising. Fundraising done badly can spiritually impoverish both donor and recipient; so, this lack of interaction proves worrisome.

Assuming that Mennonite institutions matter,¹ the dearth of theological conversation around Mennonite giving and fundraising suggests an awkward silence. While giving money is a tangible expression of faith and an example of theology in action, little has been written about the theology² of asking for and donating money. My own background of fundraising and non-profit marketing analysis, as well as pastoral ministry, has convinced me that thinking theologically about fundraising and giving is important for the future of the church. This study begins with donor interviews on the subject of donating money, and then proceeds to interview fundraisers who see donating money from a different perspective. I compare the resulting living text of Mennonite praxis to the biblical texts about Paul's Collection for Jerusalem, as described in the Pauline letters. How does current Canadian Mennonite praxis and theology compare to Paul's Collection for Jerusalem?

Survey of research on Mennonite giving

The work of Mark Vincent, a primary author of the *Giving Project* materials published in 1997, represents a significant milestone in the discussion of Mennonite stewardship. Jeff Steckley from Mennonite Church Eastern Canada (MCEC) cites the *Giving Project* as the inspiration

¹ In the sense that Mennonite institutions play an important role in the stewardship of Anabaptist thought.

² I am using a practical definition of theology. Theology describes how one thinks and sees the world in light of God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit.

for the *Generosity Project*, a 2007 study of Mennonite generosity in MCEC.³ Mennonite Church USA (MC USA) undertook a more formal study of Mennonite giving by surveying its constituency in 2005.

Mennonite Church USA 2005

Advancement Associates Inc. and MC USA staff conducted a “*Research Study of Denominational Giving*” in 2005. This study involved telephone contact with 600 lay members of MC USA, as well as four focus groups. The research involved many aspects of giving: motivations, amounts, types of charities supported as well as how attitudes towards the denomination impact giving. There were a variety of understandings of what constituted Mennonite identity, with a particular divide between those members over forty years old and those forty years old and under.⁴ The study concluded that while there was support for MC USA’s work and a spirit of giving, the “potential for giving is limited by church size, personal income and diffused giving.”⁵ I will refer to this research throughout my study.

MCEC Generosity Project 2007

The Generosity Project is ongoing and was a focal point of the MCEC Fall Conference sessions in October 2007. Prior to this, Mennonite Church Eastern Canada held a series of dinners for representatives of almost every member congregation, asking three questions:

In what ways has your congregation experienced and practiced generosity this past year?
Identify the greatest stewardship struggle or challenge that your congregation faces.
Identify the theme that seems to be emerging.

The summary of the regional dinner findings is entirely harmonious with the results of the interviews I conducted for this research. Regrettably, the timing of MCEC’s research meant that it could not be incorporated into this study. The MCEC research discussed broader

³ Jeff Steckley, phone conversation with author, 6 June 2007.

⁴ MC USA, p. 5.

⁵ MC USA, p. 3.

themes of time, talent and money, but many of the same themes emerged in my study: giving in response to a specific need and/or year-end giving rather than ongoing giving, a desire for better communication with institutions and agencies, a need to understand the spiritual components of generosity and a desire for “vision.” The research also looked at practical issues such as celebrating direct debit gifts in worship.⁶

MCEC also set up a web-based survey which attracted 330 responses. The majority of respondents were over forty and most were past or present church leaders. The authors acknowledge that the results might be biased, as would any data resulting from self-selection. I do not attach much weight to the numerical results,⁷ but the written comments are informative. I concur with the conclusion that there is an increasing emphasis on the autonomy of the individual congregation and congregant.⁸

Literature Review

A plethora of commentaries, books and scholarly articles examine the Pauline texts, but it is very difficult to obtain material relating Paul’s collection for Jerusalem to contemporary fundraising. Paul’s collection for Jerusalem is not sufficiently studied,⁹ and when it is studied, the focus is often on fitting the collection into a chronology of Paul. I am a practical theologian and interested in the applications of biblical texts for the contemporary church.

For instance, I am interested in the details of the delegation to Jerusalem, as it is very pertinent to organizing structures around giving. Paul asks his Gentile churches to collect funds for the saints in Jerusalem, and a delegation composed of representatives from the

⁶ “Generosity Project – Regional Dinner Meetings Summary”, undated 2007. Used with permission.

⁷ More than 300 people visited the site but did not complete the survey. Philip C. Bergey and Mark L. Vincent, Design for Ministry, “Survey Results & Analysis for Mennonite Church Eastern Canada Generosity Project Online Survey: Final Summary,” undated 2007, p. 2. Used with permission.

⁸ Ibid., p. 2.

⁹ Larry Hurtado, lecture on Pauline churches, Jesus Devotion and Jewish Monotheism, St. Paul’s Theological College, Brisbane, Australia, 18 July 2007. Cf. Larry W. Hurtado, “The Jerusalem Collection and the Book of Galatians,” *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 5 (1979): 46 where he notes that some studies of Paul do not pay much attention to the collection.

contributing churches travel to Jerusalem with the money. When theologians study the details of the delegation, it is not to explore the contemporary parallels, but more often to fit the delegation into the author's chronology of Paul's journeys, or to identify the delegates and thus further a specific schema of Paul's relationships. I want to acknowledge two works of excellent scholarship which do attempt to relate Paul's Collection to the present day: Dieter Georgi's of *Remembering the Poor*,¹⁰ which includes an afterword exploring such issues, and Craig S. Keener's commentary on 1 and 2 Corinthians.¹¹ Both have been influential in my thinking.

There is also no shortage of books on Christian fundraising, many of them concerned with how to extract more money from a congregation or denomination. While these books are sprinkled with biblical references, they are usually absent of any detailed exegetical study. A significant exception is *Growing Givers' Hearts*,¹² which begins by looking at giving and asking for money in both the Old and New Testaments. This work frequently refers to *God and Mammon: Asking for Money in the New Testament*, which is a uniquely focused study.¹³

The studies of Mennonite giving make important contributions to practical theology, and the scholarly works bring much academic rigour to a study of Paul's collection. However, attempts to bridge the two areas of study are lacking.

Methodology

This research involves two parts: interviewing Mennonite donors and fundraisers, and conducting biblical exegesis based on the results of those interviews. In this section, I will

¹⁰ Dieter Georgi, *Remembering the Poor: The History of Paul's Collection for Jerusalem* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1992).

¹¹ Craig S. Keener, *1-2 Corinthians* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

¹² Thomas H. Jeavons and Rebekah Burch Basinger, *Growing Giver's Hearts: Treating Fundraising as Ministry* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2000).

¹³ Jouette M. Bassler, *God and Mammon: Asking for Money in the New Testament* (Nashville, Abingdon: 1991).

explain why donor interviews precede biblical exegesis in this thesis, detail the interview protocol and disclose the biases I bring to this research.

To find out the details of the theology of giving and fundraising, I began at the source – with donors. The donor interviews provide a living text of Mennonite theology and praxis around giving. I want to examine theology in action, not what motives theologians ascribe to donors, but what motives donors ascribe to themselves.¹⁴ Dieter Georgi initially declined writing on 2 Corinthians 9 because he felt it was “insufficiently theological.” However, he writes that a decade later “political and ecclesial experience had begun to convince me that praxis instigates and informs theory.”¹⁵ He is speaking of both his contemporary situation and the praxis of the Pauline church. I am similarly convinced. Donor interviews attempt to determine the praxis and theology of Mennonite giving starting from donors’ own experiences.

Mennonite giving has become such an elaborate enterprise that professional fundraisers are involved as well. Based on my own experience in fundraising, I suspected that fundraisers might have different hermeneutical lenses; thus, I interviewed them also. The fundraisers both read and annotate the living text on the theology and praxis of Mennonite giving.

I bring the resulting texts of Mennonite praxis to the biblical texts. For Mennonites who believe that the “Bible is the essential book of the church,”¹⁶ there can be no other destination. Paul’s collection for Jerusalem is a rich source for looking at giving and fundraising in the primitive church: there are some of Paul’s letters asking for money plus glimpses of the actual process of collecting and delivering the funds. Understanding Mennonite giving enables us to approach the biblical text with new questions. I cannot

¹⁴ For a methodological precedent, I claim the study of early Anabaptism by reading testimonies of sixteenth-century Anabaptists.

¹⁵ Georgi, *Remembering the Poor*, p. ix.

¹⁶ “Article 4: Scripture,” *Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective* (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1995), p. 22.

follow up on every question raised by donors and fundraisers. Instead, I will concentrate on some of the main issues raised and probe the New Testament texts on Paul's collection for Jerusalem for relevant insights. Thus, the resulting study becomes a comparative exegesis of the collection, looking to see to what extent Mennonite theology and praxis is informed by Pauline theology and praxis.

Interview methodology

I interviewed twenty-five Mennonite donors. Twelve donors attended focus groups in Ontario and the rest were e-mail and phone conversations conducted from Australia. The Mennonite Foundation of Canada very kindly encouraged its consultants to ask people to contact me if they were willing to participate in my research. I did not ask for conference or church affiliations, but it was clear that more than just Mennonite Church Canada (MC Canada) members participated.¹⁷

Non-response bias is a statistical term for the differences between those who respond and those who do not. Non-response bias is inherent in any type of research involving humans. A MC USA giving survey notes that:

[T]here is the possibility that survey participants reflect those in the population that are most involved in the church. Persons marginally involved in the church may be underrepresented. This may mean that the attitudes and behaviour of financial giving may reflect the "best case scenario" within the membership.¹⁸

Similarly, research conducted by Statistics Canada found that volunteers were likely overrepresented among respondents to a survey on charitable giving. Almost half of the respondents to my survey were associated with the Mennonite Foundation of Canada.

Therefore, it seems likely that the results are the "best case scenario" from people who are

¹⁷ This broader participation does create one problem with wording. Mennonite Church Canada is composed of regional churches, which were formerly known as regional conferences. Some other Mennonite denominations, and many members of MC Canada, still use the word "conference" to denote a regional grouping of churches.

¹⁸ Michael D. Wiese and Richard L. Gerig, Advancement Associates Inc., "Report of Findings: Research Study of Denomination Giving – Mennonite Church USA," 9 April 2005, p. 14. Used with permission.

involved in the church, and who are predisposed both to give and to think theologically about giving.

This research provides a small sample of Mennonite giving, enough to raise theological questions but not an exhaustive study. Women were the majority of the focus group participants but the e-mail respondents were almost entirely men. There is roughly a sixty year span of ages represented from a twenty-five year old to over eighty years old, tilted more to the fifty years plus end of the spectrum. It would be worthwhile to conduct research on a larger scale as MC USA has recently done, with attention paid to contacting younger donors and obtaining ethnically and regionally diverse responses.

While this study is not primarily a socio-demographic one, a brief comparison to the larger population of Canadian charitable donors and to American Mennonite donors validates findings from this small sample. For these comparisons, I am using two sources: the Canadian Survey on Giving, Volunteering and Participating (CSGVP) conducted by Statistics Canada in 2000 and 2004 and the donor survey conducted by MC USA in 2005. I have incorporated some comparisons into the interview results.

Biases

Marty Lehman of Mennonite Church USA mentions a dichotomy among Mennonite fundraisers: those who feel there is a shortage of money in the Mennonite constituency, and those who feel there is money but that the money is going outside Mennonite circles.¹⁹ In the absence of hard data about Mennonite giving, all views on Mennonite giving expressed in this thesis are based on personal experience and intuition. I subscribe to the second view that there is money among Mennonites, but that Mennonites are donating less to Mennonite causes.

¹⁹ Marty Lehman, telephone conversation with author, 19 June 2007.

In addition to that rather significant bias, I am a product of and a participant in Mennonite institutions.²⁰ I have done marketing analysis for some of the institutions mentioned in this paper, which will be noted when applicable. I have not drawn on proprietary knowledge, relying instead on the donor interviews conducted for this paper.

²⁰ Writing from Australia does lend a certain critical distance.

Donor interviews

I asked donors to respond to the following six questions:

- 1) What is your favourite charity?
- 2) Where did you get the idea that giving money away is something that people do? What is your earliest memory of giving/receiving?
- 3) How do you decide which charities to support?
- 4) Is giving money connected to being a Christian? How would you explain this to a Sunday School class of ten year olds?
- 5) Do tax receipts matter? Why or why not?
- 6) If you could talk to a professional fundraiser, what would you tell them? How would you like to be asked?

I have included some short anecdotes in my reporting because they contain colloquial wisdom well-expressed. In some cases I have noted when I have treated the focus group comments and the comments from individual donors separately.

What is your favourite charity?

One's home congregation is the most frequent response among the wide variety of responses to this question. I begin with the focus group respondents. There is a group dynamic as people respond to other people's choices for favourite charity. Some donors support the same charity for different reasons. Trust in Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) is a repeated theme. Note the diversity of secular, Christian and Mennonite²¹ orientations in this selection of favourite charities:

- Canadian Blind Mission International and Leprosy Mission²² out of sympathy and empathy for people suffering from "something that's tragic that can be averted."
- Foster Parents Plan - "When you see those children [on TV] ... we have so much here."
- MADD (Mothers Against Drunk Driving).

²¹ I am not implying that Mennonites are separate from Christians. "Mennonite-Christian" is implied when I use the term "Mennonite." Similarly, the Mennonite donors are also Canadians. When I compare Mennonite giving to Canadian giving, I am comparing Canadian Mennonite giving to results representative of the Canadian population as a whole.

²² Conflict of interest alert – author has done consulting work for the Leprosy Mission.

- Mennonite Economic Development Associates (MEDA) is trustworthy. They are businessmen [sic] who can “keep an eye on each other”.
- Mennonite Disaster Service.
- World Vision²³ - the donor had sponsored a child for years and years: “I think they’re a pretty efficient group.”
- mosquito net program run by MEDA in Tanzania.²⁴
- the leprosy charity advertising on TV is “tugging at me.”
- Mennonite Foundation - donor had been on the board there and his wife’s family had established an endowment fund.

One donor cites the Mennonite Church Canada²⁵ as “tops of a fairly long list.” She had attended annual conferences for many years. She has both a pragmatic and a theological rationale. Firstly, since “visible charities are easy to get support for;” she supports conference which she feels people generally ignore. Theologically, she supports the mission work of the conference because “Christ said ‘Go out and make disciples of all nations’.”

MCC enjoys a high level of trust. Rationale varies: familiarity is critical, and history matters. One donor favours MCC, particularly education of women and birth control, because they “don’t proselytize and their overhead is low.” The themes of trust and “what percentage is used for administration” are repeated concerns: is the money being used wisely? Donors believe that MCC is both efficient and effective, directing its work to where it is most needed. MCC provides good value for money.

Focus group results suggest that giving decisions are made in church and also in the living room watching TV. This shift in decision making illustrates a trend towards individual rather than communal discernment and highlights the influence of mass media. Despite the level of trust in MCC, many donors choose to support other organizations performing similar work. I will use the example of the donor who trusts MCC and whose favourite charity was

²³ Conflict of interest alert – author has worked for World Vision Canada.

²⁴ Conflict of interest alert – author has worked on MEDA’s fundraising campaigns for this project.

²⁵ She referred to it as “Canadian Mennonite Conference.”

Foster Parents Plan, as seen on television, to represent this very significant shift in giving patterns.

For the individual respondents, the answer “my home church” predominates. Other answers include area churches/conferences, Christian schools, Mennonite World Conference and mission agencies. One donor points out that his “favourite charity is not necessarily the one which receives the largest donation.” This suggests that a more empirical study could yield different results.

The answer “my home church” illustrates diversity in how donors interact with their local church. Local churches support other Christian institutions and organizations to varying degrees. Some donors channel their giving primarily through their local church and others do not. How churches allocate resources is an area of tremendous interest amongst donors.

Early memories of generosity

There were two related questions: “Where did you get the idea that giving money away is something that people do? What is your earliest memory of giving/receiving?” For many people, this question provides an opportunity to reflect on a lifetime of generosity. One donor’s response illustrates the three types of answers to this question: Sunday school offering, family practice of giving and personal experience of hunger and hard times.

I remember as kids going to Sunday school – our father would give us two pennies or so, that was a lot of money back then. He would say, “this is for the poor people.” There must be some really poor people, ‘cuz we didn’t have anything. But that’s how you started - we were taught to give.

The Sunday school offering is a first memory of giving. The coins for the offering and family practice of giving form the typical response of someone born in North America.²⁶ Was this offering an opportunity to put into practice something they had already learned at home? How much did Sunday School contribute to the development of generosity? Several people

²⁶ Cf. The story of Herb and Shirley Schultz in “Stewardship stories of the generous life: Generosity through the generations,” *Canadian Mennonite*, 8 Jan 2007, Vol. 11, no. 1, p. 4.

recall tithing as soon as they began to earn even a small income at a young age. For some respondents, giving is also connected to the stereotypical Mennonite work ethic. Giving is what one did, just like working hard. Donors took generosity more seriously at different stages in their life journeys,²⁷ but it always represents an intensification of a habit begun early.

Family experience is crucial: generosity is more caught than taught. Children who grew up in the Depression remember their parents practicing generosity during hard times. Two people had stories of butchering a cow, and how their parents shared the meat with everyone in need, regardless of what community boundaries were. These events made a lasting impression.

Some donors remember being on the receiving end of generosity and this too makes a lasting impression. I was able to speak with some people who came to Canada as children from Russia and post-WWII Europe. Compassion and empathy run deep in such people. One donor remembers going hungry in Russia but not telling anyone. When she hears people talking about the poor in patronizing ways, she is offended: “[I] wouldn’t like someone talking like that about me, because I had my pride.” This woman is now a generous but discerning donor.

Generosity was taught by example, not by compulsion. “My parents were simply generous people, I was never taught that tithing was a requirement, I was always taught that we were stewards not owners of what God entrusted us with.” Another donor simply states that there is a satisfaction and a good discipline in being a regular contributor.

Comparisons to other Canadian and other Mennonite donors reinforce the importance of early life experiences in forming generosity. The 2000 CSGVP survey found that early life experiences are predictors of charitable giving later in life; the most impactful experience was

²⁷ Marriage, becoming more active in the church, paying off a mortgage and retirement are a few of the milestones reported.

seeing a role model help others.²⁸ Other significant experiences were being active in a religious group and belonging to a youth group.²⁹ Canadians who had these experiences were also more likely to say that they donated because they “felt that they owed something to their community.”³⁰ And understandably, people who were religiously active also were more likely to say they donated to fulfil religious beliefs.³¹

An MC USA study found that people younger than forty may be willing to give but feel that their ability to give is low.³² However, early influence matters:

...both age groups are most likely to give when this habit is established. One of the challenges may be to encourage and develop this habit at an early age. It apparently is a habit that informs behaviour for life.³³

These findings underscore the tremendous importance of early experience in generosity.³⁴

²⁸ 88% of respondents who had this experience donated later in life, compared to 70% of those who did not have this experience. David Lasby, *Philanthropic Spirit in Canada: Motivation and Barriers* (Toronto: Canadian Centre for Philanthropy, 2004), p. 12.

²⁹ 92% vs 75% future giving rates from those in a religious group and 88% vs 72% for those in a youth group. Youth group is not defined. Lasby, *Philanthropic Spirit*, p. 12.

³⁰ Lasby, *Philanthropic Spirit*, p. 12.

³¹ Lasby, *Philanthropic Spirit*, p. 12.

³² MC USA, p. 19.

³³ MC USA, p. 25.

³⁴ I will not be pursuing this particular issue of developing generosity in children further, but I recommend Jeff Steckley of Mennonite Church Eastern Canada as a valuable resource person in this area.

Deciding which charities to support

The question “How do you decide which charities to support?” connects closely to the question about one’s favourite charity, and in many cases, to early memories of giving. The following answer is typical: “This is a good question. I wish I knew! I try not adding new charities unless there are very compelling reasons. I tend to give to charities I am associated with, through my conference, church, or business associates.” The responses highlight three factors in selecting a charity: familiarity/involvement, accountability/trust, and value alignment.

Familiarity and Involvement

In this question, people generally talk about charities beyond the local church, which they automatically support, whereas a decision to support other charities requires more discernment. One couple writes that they give to “institutions we are involved in &/or understand. Mostly Mennonite institutions.” Involvement guides decision making for many donors, as does familiarity through either personal connections or television.

Personal involvement in an organization factors significantly in decision-making.

People may give small amounts to well-known charities that they are less involved with. One donor explains: “If I hadn’t had a personal involvement I think I might give modest amounts.”

The MC USA study puts it succinctly: “Those who are more involved give more.”³⁵

Anecdotally, many of these donors volunteer and serve on boards for various organizations including their local church. Such involvement is vital for encouraging giving. The MC USA study provides this advice for encouraging giving in younger generations:

According to this idea, the vision must give persons an opportunity for hands-on experiences in actual human ministry that is consistent with core values, peer endorsed, and relational. The researcher sees this as similar to what has historically connected Mennonites to Mennonite Central Committee.³⁶

³⁵ MC USA, p. 17.

³⁶ MC USA, p. 36.

Familiarity with an organization influences giving. One donor specifies “not media profile but personal profile” of an organization as a factor in deciding where to give. Several donors declare a high degree of familiarity and hence trust in MCC. A known organization is easier to support: “I think every Mennonite grows up hearing a lot about MCC.” However, familiarity can be a pitfall: many donors are very familiar and support the work of charities that advertise on television. Focus groups donors can compare one charity against another based on details recounted from television shows, where they do not see any programs about MCC. There is more (visible) competition for one’s charitable giving than in earlier times.

Accountability/Trust

Accountability and trust figure significantly in decision-making and are closely linked to involvement and familiarity. I surmise that increasing involvement leads to a higher degree of familiarity and trust: the more one knows about the organization, the more one knows that the money is being well-spent. The person trusts the accountability structures or perhaps even has some influence in how the decisions are made. They also know the need. For instance, one donor had been part of a Christian Peacemaker Teams delegation and is excited about supporting their work. He also supports MCC: “I feel that I know and can trust these organizations to use my financial gifts responsibly.”

Christian schools enjoy a high degree of familiarity; donors are frequently involved as volunteers, staff, alumni, or board members. The schools are (often) local and accountable, which also builds trust. Familiarity leads to trust and perhaps accountability to the school. One donor describes obligation as a motive: “I have benefited from two of our Mennonite educational institutions, and I want to give back.”

Another donor highlights the need to support organizations which have an accountability structure; consequently, he chooses to donate to Anabaptist groups. His mission experience in India taught him to be wary of “independents” (one person charities or independent mission workers), as he has seen that one person with a glossy brochure can command a lot of money and spend it mainly on personal expenses. Another donor with financial experience will sometimes investigate a charity’s annual charitable tax return filed online with the Canada Revenue Agency. He also recognizes that “the accountability that goes with having a board to look after things is important.” This concern with accountability also emerged in discussing tax receipts.

The MC USA donor survey reports that: “...accountability of those who receive financial support is the primary expectation of contributors to MC USA and its ministries. Trust is an essential requirement. Financial accountability is imperative.”³⁷ Thus, this small sample seems representative of a general concern for accountability/trust amongst Mennonite donors.

Value alignment

People give to organizations that matter to them. Not surprisingly, people are most involved with charities which align with their values and beliefs. However, it would be stretching the connection too much to suggest that involvement and giving increase proportionally. Values can be both individual and communal, and some donors prefer to give to organizations which closely aligned with their own religious beliefs.

Value alignment raises the question of individual vs. communal discernment. One donor describes how the communal process of deciding which causes to support in the church budget “helped to set [my own] priorities.” He largely chooses to support charities which are “in harmony with the mission of the church.” However, many other donors make

³⁷ MC USA, p. 43.

more individually based choices, as evidenced in the diverse list of favourite charities. Mission work presents a good example. Some donors support mission workers directly, other donors support mission organizations and others give to missions only inadvertently through their church's giving to denominational agencies.

One donor's comments make it clear that value alignment is a primary factor in choosing which charities to support: "We try to support organizations and individuals that have a good reputation in not using a high percentage on overhead, *share our way of understanding the message of the gospel*, have specific goals in use of finances [italics mine]." Many donors regard the organization's "statement of faith" as a criterion in deciding which charities to support. These donors are often deciding between various Christian organizations: how does one decide which groups share compatible values? This decision frequently reduces to familiarity: the charity is associated with the home church, located in the community, or has established some other donor connection through personal contact or television. There is a mix of communal and individual discernment occurring as values are tested for alignment with those of the donor.

Mennonite donors apply criteria of familiarity/involvement, accountability/trust, and value alignment to make decisions about which charities to support. Canadian donors – religious or non-religious - and the Mennonite donors from this research appear not to differ significantly in terms of motivation. The 2000 CSGVP compares the motivations of religious and non-religious donors. The top four motivations are: compassion, belief in cause, personally affected by the cause and owe something to community.³⁸ Other than religious beliefs as a motivation (fifth most commonly cited for religious donors), there are no compelling differences between religious and non-religious donors.³⁹ The ranking might be

³⁸ David Lasby, David McIver, *Where Canadians Donate: Donating by Type of Organizations* (Toronto: Canadian Centre for Philanthropy, 2004), Figure 16, p. 17.

³⁹ Lasby and McIver, *Where Canadians Donate*, p. 17.

different, but compassion, belief, personal connections and obligation to community are harmonious with the motivations cited in this small sample of Mennonite donors.

Connecting giving and Christian faith

I asked two questions in this category: “Is giving money connected to being a Christian? How would you explain this to a Sunday School class of ten year olds?” Christianity and giving go together, but it is difficult for many donors to articulate the connection: “You should give because you should give.” For many donors, the habit and discipline of giving formed part of their upbringing. However, some people had clearly thought about their motives for giving. As explained earlier, the results are likely disproportionately thoughtful. I do not expect that the typical Mennonite donor has reflected on how giving connects to his or her Christian faith as much as some of these respondents had.⁴⁰ I begin with the Sunday School question, an attempt to get people to articulate their beliefs in simple terms.

How would you explain this to a Sunday School class of ten year olds?

Not all answers were directed at ten year olds, although two donors point out that their own children understood generosity by this age, and had an idea how much their parents gave.⁴¹ These answers can be grouped into systematic and biblical theology.

Some donors focus on thinking of others, not just oneself. The children need to learn to follow the example of other generous people as opposed to spending everything on oneself. One person emphasizes the joyfulness of sharing. He outlines his Sunday school lesson as follows: “[O]ne angle I’d try is ‘selfishness/greed’ vs. ‘others/sharing.’ Ask them which character traits they think would bring more joy in life.” He continues, “the concept of

⁴⁰ See discussion of non-response bias.

⁴¹ This prompted me to ask my own ten year old if he knew about tithing. He spent nine years in a church where receiving the offering was not part of worship. In our current church, the children leave for Sunday School before the offering is taken. He had no idea about tithing, nor was he aware of how much money we gave. Direct debit giving and cheque writing happen almost invisibly. He was aware of our giving only in the tangible terms of material goods and volunteer efforts.

joyous sharing with a friend - has a lot of potential to introduce the idea that giving is a hilarious way to enjoy each other and life.”

One donor, clearly responding to a legalistic teaching he has heard in the past, states that he would make it very clear to the ten year olds that giving money is not a “ticket to heaven” but love for others in response to God's love for us. In other words, giving results from faith but is not a substitute for faith. The emphasis is on loving others as a response to God's love. “I would tend to use Jesus' model of giving everything he had, as an example. It's not about the money, but rather our whole life, how we use our gifts, talents, time and money.” Almost everyone surveyed would agree on following Jesus' example, but more people frame their responses with reference to God than with reference to Jesus. The Holy Spirit was not mentioned at all. The focus of this study is not Trinitarian theology, but this emphasis is worth noticing.

Only two biblical passages are explicitly cited. The most frequently quoted passage is the New Testament story of the widow's mite, which is a fascinating choice. It shows a total commitment and a sacrificial generosity, following the model of Jesus. One person adds that one can not give away all of one's income nowadays, but that it is still a good story. In addition to modeling generosity, this pericope also shows that Jesus was watching who put how much into the temple offering. This aspect of the story will be taken up later in the discussion of donor accountability (p. 40).

The second passage is the biblical teaching of tithing: “One tenth of one's income doesn't belong to us, it belongs to God.” Notice that in this example, the implicit corollary is that the other ninety percent of one's income belongs to oneself.

Is giving money connected to being a Christian?

This question was narrowly focused on money. Many people point out that stewardship concerns time, property, possessions and estate planning as well. Donors have a very

holistic view of stewardship: the narrow financial focus of this research was imposed by the researcher. The connection between money and Christianity generates a wide range of answers. I group them into three types of responses: empathy and obligation, answers which stood out for their singularity, and faith in action

Empathy and Obligation

The biblical teaching on tithing is the foundation of the duty model for many donors. It is easy to connect tithing and duty, but the connection between tithing and empathy is less obvious. However, the “early memories of giving” responses suggest empathy might influence how one fulfills the obligation to give.

For some donors, an experience of poverty is the connection between duty and empathy as motivation for giving. People who have been poor report that this makes it easier to give: “I feel good if I can do something for somebody else.” With some exceptions, this is generally expressed as an emotional rather than a theological rationale. Some donors discuss how hard it is to teach their grandchildren about the obligation to share with others, because they “never grew up with empty hands.” In Deuteronomy 10:19, Moses reminds the people to “show your love for the alien, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt.”⁴² No one gives this example, but I sense that these older people share Moses’ concern that as the experience of suffering became more distant, current comforts are taken for granted and the next generations might not remember to be generous in the same way.

The idea that Christians carry an obligation to help their community is implicit in many comments. Donors feel an obligation towards their community and giving is one way of building community: as a church, locally and internationally. Involvement also leads to an increased recognition of the need and figures significantly in the discussion of how donors choose which charities to support.

⁴² All citations from NASB unless otherwise noted.

Singular Answers

Despite the fact that Mennonites are known for a commitment to simple living, only one person explicitly connects simple living and generosity: “[There is] no point in living a simple lifestyle if all you do is put the money in the bank.” This donor had lived overseas and sees that in North America, consumption decreases our ability to give.

The same donor feels that giving was about joy, not amount. He expresses sensitivity towards those who are unable to give as much when the cost of living is a challenge, particularly for younger people. He observes that people “don’t always give for the right reason ... [from] duty rather than out of joy.” Some people describe the satisfaction of giving, or being pleased that they are in a position to be generous, but the word “joy” was an outlier.⁴³ Being a joyful giver does not fit well with the Mennonite viewpoint of being a secret giver, a paradox to which we shall return in the donor accountability section (p.40).

Donors do not typically describe giving as a joyful, counter-cultural expression of Christian faith. This radical model of giving stands in vivid contrast to the duty model. Another comment that stands out states: “To me, giving is a radical and counter-cultural act that challenges all of the [societal] assumptions of the value of self-sufficiency...” This perspective fits in with giving as a connection to community, a radical proposition in contrast to the dominant culture of individuality.

Faith in action: Giving as *Gelassenheit*⁴⁴

Several respondents provide solid theological reflection on how their giving forms part of their Christian faith. In every case, giving constitutes part of the relationship between the person and God, a tangible sign of faith in action. Attitudes go beyond simple gratitude: I have highlighted the frequent references to God’s ownership, obedience, dependence and

⁴³ “Outlier” is a statistical term for points which fall outside the trend line on a graph.

⁴⁴ *Gelassenheit* refers to individual yieldedness and obedience to God.

submission. Could giving be connected to *Gelassenheit*? The following reflections are from donors of different generations [italics mine]:

“Giving is connected to a proper sense of “who owns ‘my’ stuff.” I may know that *God owns it all*, but giving is my way of making sure that He knows that I know. Giving is one way to make sure my faith isn’t mere head knowledge.”

Giving money away helps us to understand that all that we have belongs to God. I believe that giving money is a critical part of this process of *giving everything over to God* because it is so tangible... When it comes to money I either wrote the cheque or I did not – it is pretty hard to convince myself that I did if I didn’t.

“...we also give simply as an *act of submission* and thankfulness to God. It is an act which acknowledges God's many gifts to us, and our *total dependence on God*.”

Giving money to God is part of living in *obedience to God*, in this way it is like anything else God asks us to do...It is easy to say we trust God but actions are a little harder, giving to God says, "God, I trust you with my money (the gifts you have given me)."

This understanding of giving goes beyond the duty/tithing model: one is only as yielded as one’s chequebook. Giving is integral to faith.

Do tax receipts matter?

Although there is some ambivalence, the short answer to the “Do tax receipts matter” question is “Yes!” This does not imply that people donate simply to obtain a tax receipt. Like most Canadian donors, other motivations are more influential.⁴⁵ The following responses are typical:

“I don’t know whether it should or not, but the fact is, it does.”

“Tax receipts allow me to give more than I otherwise would (and how!). But they do more. A lot more.”

“My wife and I like to support local kids attending college and of course there is no tax receipt.”

Tax receipts for charitable donations can be used as tax credit against income taxes owing, and less tax owing means more funds available for giving. Because of the sliding tax rate, a

⁴⁵ Only cited as a motivation for 14% of religious donors, 12% of non-religious donors in Lasby and McIver, *Where Canadians Donate*, p. 17.

tax receipt has more value for higher income individuals. However, some donors are giving beyond the level that would impact their tax return.⁴⁶ The efficiency aspect is only one factor in giving and receipting. The tax receipt question pertains to a web of relationships between donor and the government, an individual charity and government, and donor and an individual charity. I also examine unreceipted giving.

Donor and government

“If I get a refund, I can spend the money infinitely better than any government ever can or ever will ... I can do without that refund I suppose, but we are better stewards of that money than Ottawa.”

This quotation illustrates a profound distrust of government, which wastes people’s money. Some donors seem quite pleased that they are eliminating or reducing their income tax: they see themselves as able to distribute the money more wisely than the government can. At the same time, there is support for social programs such as healthcare and gratitude for the safety and security of Canada.

A tax credit becomes an opportunity to redirect one’s money that the government would otherwise misspend and/or an opportunity to redirect the government’s money in directions that matter to the individual. The differing views of ownership are fascinating. In the context of taxation, money does not belong to God. It is always owned by either the individual or the government.

An Individual Charity and Government

Donors view unregistered charities with suspicion: “Why don’t they have a charitable number? Isn’t this a legitimate thing?” An organization which can issue tax receipts is subject to more government accountability than those organizations which do not issue receipts.

Two respondents had worked closely with the finances of a charity and recognize the value

⁴⁶I did not ask about how much people gave, but some people chose to tell me what percentage of their income they donate. This was very humbling.

of the regulations in supporting good management practices. However, a tax receipt is not sufficient indication of the integrity of the organization: there are also other measures for determining a charity's trustworthiness, as discussed in "Accountability/Trust" section (p.23).

Unreceipted giving in response to need

I have highlighted these comments to illuminate a theme of helping in situations of need. Clearly, there is a desire to assist certain people or projects regardless of whether a tax receipt can be issued:

"If someone is in *need* in my church I won't let the lack of a tax receipt stop me from helping them out."

"In many situations I do give money even though I don't get a receipt. If the *need* is there I like to help meet that *need*."

"if there is a project that *needs* to happen and it cannot be done with tax receipted money ... then I would be willing to give money to such a project as well"

"However, I believe that it's a good idea to look for opportunities to give where receipts are not available, especially when *helping* close friends and relatives."

Empathy and obligation outweigh any concerns about tax receipts. In the main, donors are talking about giving to local causes or individuals. The donors cited are regular donors who *also* give in response to specific needs. However, donors who give *only* in response to need face a pitfall:

Persons who give a lower percentage of income to charity say that they are motivated to give "in response to a specific need." It appears that these people give to specific concerns when they are presented, but are less likely to give regularly and in higher percentages.⁴⁷

Are Mennonite donors prone to being needs-driven and thus less disciplined givers? Some donors chose to support a smaller number of charities regularly and directly, rather than on an appeal by appeal basis. We will return to this question when interviewing fundraisers (p. 47).

⁴⁷ MC USA, p. 18.

Professional Fundraisers: For and Against

I asked donors: “If you could talk to a professional fundraiser, what would you tell them? How would you like to be asked?” Some comments arose from focus group discussions looking at samples of fundraising materials and techniques. It is relevant to recognize that many of these donors are “major donors” who give large amounts of money and who are thus much more likely to be personally contacted by a professional fundraiser in the efficiency model of contemporary fundraising. The major division occurs between people who accept the idea of professional fundraisers and those who do not.

Fundraisers acceptable

In response to the question “How would you like to be asked?” one respondent answers simply “show me the goods.” This is layperson’s language expressing a teleological concern: what will happen as a result of my gift? One person who has extensive involvement with charitable finances shares that he is more concerned about results than low administration costs. To encourage this donor’s giving, fundraisers should demonstrate what the charity is accomplishing in its work. Personal contact and fundraising letters are means for fundraisers to connect with donors and share the work of their organization.

First, donors value personal contact, which becomes an opportunity for the organization to present its vision. One donor advises: “Send a representative from your organization to my church, and tell me what you do. Get me excited. Tell me about your *vision* ... I want to give where there are passionate people working hard to fulfill an important *vision* [italics mine].” Enthusiasm is contagious. People appreciate when various organizations “care enough to take the time to come,” whether speaking in church or to a ladies’ group. One woman adds “come with a good choir!” It helps to see the recipients of one’s donation, it makes the vision clearer.

Donors' desire for a focus on the vision or mission of the charity, rather than on needs of the charity, also emerged as a finding of the MC USA study.⁴⁸ The vision and passion of the fundraiser matter. One donor expresses it eloquently: "I would like to be approached by people whose life demonstrates that they are generous people and then sell their vision to me." Donors can be suspicious of a "hard sell," and a life of generosity speaks volumes.

Second, I compiled two very similar responses, saying that a personal visit is best, but a letter could work if the donor is already familiar with the program. In that case, a letter is merely a continuation of a conversation in progress. Other letters, particularly from organizations the donor is not familiar with, are not so well received. One donor urges:

Don't send me a letter begging for money. As I said earlier, I tend to give to organizations that I already know and trust. If I don't know you, then I need to get to know you.

I was already familiar with the litany of complaints about mass fundraising mailings and telemarketing campaigns. I will not dwell on this discontent except to document the frequent tension between donors wanting to know how an organization works (a task often performed by administrators) and donors' concern that funds not be spend on administration.

As with personal contact, some donors in the focus groups are suspicious of a "hard sell": "If it's too urgent looking, then forget it, then they're pushing too hard." I wonder if perhaps different cognitive processes are at work when watching television and reading, because among this same group I did not detect the same level of distrust of fundraising programs on television.

Discomfort with Professional Fundraisers

Some donors are uncomfortable with the whole idea of professional fundraisers. There are Mennonite donors who have given serious reflection to their theology of giving, and who wonder if fundraising is too important to be left to the professionals. They are concerned

⁴⁸ MC USA, p. 46.

about fundraisers leading donors into temptation and neglecting the spiritual aspects of giving.

Temptations

One donor outlines two temptations common to fundraising: appeal to self-interest and undiscerning unilateralism.

It seems these days that people need to get a round of golf or a "free" meal ...before they are willing to give. I think this is a waste of valuable resources. It also teaches us that the person with the best presentation or the most visible (immediate) need should get money. Churches and para-church ministries need long term sustainable funding. I believe that Christians should be giving primarily to their church and the ministries their church is supporting, this would solve a lot of the problems I just mentioned.

An appeal to self-interest is an appeal to our "baser motives," as another donor describes them. Christians can be tempted to give to whichever organization has the "best deal" in terms of reward, recognition or receipting. The notion of efficiency ("the best deal") carries positive connotations in our consumer culture, and I suspect that frugal Mennonites are particularly vulnerable in this regards.

The second temptation is undiscerning unilateralism; it is easier for donors to focus on the present moment and give to the best presentation or most urgent visible need, rather considering longer term solutions.⁴⁹ In this case, the donor believes the collective discernment of the church is the remedy to the individual temptation towards undiscerning unilateralism.

Spiritual Neglect

One donor comments: "I don't like the concept of professional fund raising. I believe giving is more about the act of giving and how it affects me than it is about the resources that end up in the charity's hands." The donor also wonders if a professional fundraiser could really help

⁴⁹ While this donor portrays giving to the most urgently portrayed need as a temptation, in fundraising this "temptation" is simply a truism: "if it bleeds, it leads" is as accurate for fundraising as it is for the TV news.

to develop passion in the donor: he feels it would take “the staff, board, beneficiaries, and members of the organization to be able to do that.” The spiritual component of how giving affects the donor is often, if not routinely, neglected by fundraisers and, dare I say, the church. Can a professional fundraiser help the donor’s heart to grow bigger, to paraphrase Jeavons and Burch Basinger?⁵⁰ I quite agree with the donor who thinks the entire organization would need to be involved in cultivating passion.

Ecclesiological problems

The issue of individual versus church giving to various causes was a frequent concern.

Discussions about how and why Christians give to the church and how the church disburses that money quickly become ecclesiological.⁵¹ I heard several related questions expressed:

- Individually versus congregationally directed giving: Should a Christian give money primarily through his or her local church? If so, why do some donors resist doing this?
- Communal Discernment: Should Mennonites follow an Anabaptist model of group decision making?
- Donor Accountability: Donors are concerned about the accountability of organizations which receiving their money. Can the church hold donors accountable to the discipline of stewardship?

Individually versus Congregationally Directed Giving

Some donors trust their church and make the bulk of their donations to the church and organizations that the church supports. Others donors have “trouble trusting the church” to spend money appropriately and while they give to the church, they also give their money more directly to self-selected causes. While the church is the favourite charity for many donors, it is only one charity among many in every case. Donors cite two rationales for why

⁵⁰ Jeavons and Basinger, *Growing Giver’s Hearts: Treating Fundraising as Ministry*.

⁵¹ If theology is how one views the world in light of God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit, then ecclesiology is a subset of theology which concerns how theology influences relationships with other believers.

they choose to direct some of their giving outside the church: giving outside the church is more satisfying and enjoyable, and the church spends too much money on itself.

The church might be one's favourite charity, but it does not generate much excitement:

In most years my home Church receives more of my donations than any other charity. In a sense I would say that my home Church is my "favourite charity". However, *it is often more "fun" to give to other charities* [italics mine].⁵²

The donor explains that it is rather uninspiring to give to a big budget, where one's giving is "such a little piece" and dispersed to a wide range of programs. He enjoys giving to the ministries of friends who are serving with "faith missions" (missionaries, mission workers) because of increased personal connection and more stories. His comments assume that there is poor communication between church supported organizations and members of the church. The money given to faith missions also has more impact, as it is a larger percentage of the budget. Another donor voices a similar opinion:

Probably giving to one's local church is the most important, but *it's more satisfying to give to an agency such as MCC* which is doing such important work beyond my own community in places where that money is needed so much more [italics mine].

Although one donor gives directly to mission workers and the other gives to an institution, in both cases it feels better (more satisfying and fun) to give outside the church. The donors also believe that money was needed more outside the church.

Several donors echo the concern that the church spends too much internally. One donor appreciates giving to the church, where he has a voice and can be part of the decision making process. However, "church can be a bit ingrown" and that is the reason he needs to "self-direct" some giving.⁵³ Another donor writes: "I believe in giving to the church and through the church to other causes. ... I have challenged the church to set a budget in which

⁵² I used this anecdote in a radio interview. Hear Al Rempel's response: Mennonite Church Canada, "Fundraising, Stewardship, and the Church," *Church Matters* <www.mennonitechurch.ca/resourcecentre/ResourceView/5/9915>.

⁵³ He gave to groups anchored to the local church: "We give 10% to our local church and the other 10 - 20% to charities we can trust..."

at least 50% or more goes to outside causes.” However, while this donor believes that giving through the church is the ideal model, since the church does not “contribute enough to outside causes,” he also supports causes not covered in church budgets or the same causes beyond the budget.

Communal Discernment: “Isn’t that the Anabaptist way?”

The donor cited above believes that an individual giving through the church is the ideal model, even though he does not do so. Another donor in the same situation muses: “Shouldn’t we all just do all of our giving to the church, submitting to the accountability and wisdom of the community of believers as to where it should be directed? Isn’t that the Anabaptist way?” Similarly, another donor wonders if it is more biblical for the church to have control of donations, rather than the individual donor. These are difficult questions for the church.

I have suggested that the practice of giving relates to *Gelassenheit* – individual yieldedness and obedience to God. *Gelassenheit* also involves individual yieldedness to the community of believers.⁵⁴ However, there are obstacles to yielding to communal discernment about using money. I imagine that churches would (and do) experience considerable tension as church members try to wield influence, rather than yield influence.

Bypassing the church has proven to be a preferred giving option for many members. Some donors feel that they have insufficient voice within the church as to how money is spent. The donor who questions the loss of Anabaptist roots adds: “If my giving is to be directed more and more to the church, you can count on me becoming more vocal about my ideas of what financial stewardship means in the context of a church.” If members directed

⁵⁴ C. Arnold Snyder, *Following in the Footsteps of Christ: The Anabaptist Tradition* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2004), p. 78.

more of their giving through the church, would churches have sufficient social capital resources to resolve the resulting conflicts?

One donor provides a positive example of group directed giving - her local church ladies' group: "We really think about where we want to put that money." The group feels it is important to support women going into the pastorate, for instance. I have been a recipient of the Women of MCEC bursary for women studying theology. The money was a tangible affirmation from a group of fellow believers.

Case Study: One Church's Struggle with Communal Discernment⁵⁵

The following example demonstrates one church's move away from communal discernment in benevolent giving. I heard two such stories from different places. One donor recounts that in his church's history there have been two ways of treating guest speakers who visit on behalf of a charitable organization. Currently, if that speaker affects a personal response, then people may make a donation to the church designated towards that group. This stands in contrast to past practice when guests received an honorarium but there was no designated giving. The people in charge of monies made the decisions about which organizations to support. In the donor's words, it was a more cognitive model of giving and "less emotional." Members of this particular church gave the bulk of their charitable giving through the church. MCC and even secular medical organizations were all part of the church budget.

The process of discernment was "always a tug of war." Some members thought people should donate to MCC directly, for instance. Eventually, church budgeted benevolences decreased and individuals directed their giving as desired. It would be interesting to know if this affected individual giving: Did people increase their personal giving

⁵⁵ I used this anecdote in a radio interview. Mennonite Church Canada, "Fundraising, Stewardship, and the Church," *Church Matters* <www.mennonitechurch.ca/resourcecentre/ResourceView/5/9915>.

commensurate with the reduction in giving to the church? Certainly there would be less public pressure to meet the budgeted amount for charitable giving.

If churches disburse less money to parachurch organizations, then these groups need to fundraise amongst individuals. As an interesting commentary on this case study, a former church treasurer sees it as imperative to support church related projects directly, even if they are included in the church budget, so that institutions are not “100% reliant on conferences.” I infer from his comments that he regards individual donors as a more stable source of support than churches or church conferences.

Donor Accountability

Donors want organizations to practice good stewardship in terms of accounting, financial reporting, governance and efficient administration. Transparency is admired. However, with some exceptions, donors tend not to want to apply those standards to themselves. Here is the crux of the problem: if generosity is integral to the Christian faith, then generosity should be encouraged; however, the church cannot provide that encouragement within the culture of secrecy that enshrouds the topic of money. Mennonites lack a good model for being accountable to one another. Giving and financial matters are intensely personal. Some donors see the need for a small confidential circle to discuss finances and giving.

One donor added some notes to his questionnaire. He feels that Mennonites have built “a theology of secrecy around giving” which prevents accountability, based upon “the left hand not knowing what the right hand was doing.” He cites the story of the widow’s mite and notes that Jesus was announcing in the temple how much people were giving. He laments that:

Every spiritual gift is celebrated in the church except the gift of giving. If one can preach, sing, act, host, or encourage we celebrate their gift and tell them to do it more! But if your gift is giving, it must not be known by anyone. Givers need encouragement as well it seems to me.

Will Braun, writing in the *Canadian Mennonite*, says that he is:

alarmed to see that the Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary (AMBS) annual report uses 18 of its 24 pages to list donors, with an asterisk for each donor who gave more than \$1,000 to the seminary. I thought we Mennonites didn't let our left hand know what our right hand was doing! And the story of the widow seems to warn against asterisks. What happened to the idea of passing up earthly recognition in favour of a later reward?⁵⁶

Note that both writers are citing Jesus and the widow's mite, where Jesus is watching people make their offerings in the temple. The first donor is searching for more accountability in the spiritual discipline of giving, not looking for an asterisk beside his name. However, I wonder if the "recognition backlash" - inadvertently or deliberately - prevents discussion of how to acknowledge and encourage generosity.

Summary of Issues Raised by Donor Interviews

The donor interviews opened up a number of issues, some of which will be further developed and some of which are left as testimonies for further reflection. To summarize, I would like to highlight some significant outliers and examine tensions in the areas of motivations for giving, individual versus communal discernment and accountability. Lastly, I hypothesize about why Mennonite giving is dispersed so widely.

There are three outliers which merit attention. First, joyful giving contrasts with the duty model where "you give because you should give." Another idea that stood out was an emphasis on simple living to further charitable giving. And thirdly, some donors want to break the taboo around talking about money in church in order to encourage generosity and foster accountability.

Donors cite a wide range of motives for giving. The biblical models invoked range from following Jesus' sacrificial example to tithing. Donors express a strong commitment to building church and community and like to be able to compassionately respond to need,

⁵⁶ Will Braun, "A complicated wealth," *Canadian Mennonite*, 14 May 2007, Vol. 11, No. 10, p. 10.

especially local need. However, donors also want to hear about vision of an organization and not only the needs.

How donors give is changing. Giving to the church constitutes a central practice, but there is a move from communal discernment giving models of earlier times to self-directed giving by individuals. Some donor reflections suggest that giving money becomes a sign of yieldedness to God. Certain donors wonder if yielding to the communal discernment of the church would be a better model for giving. At the same time, churches seem less able to make communal decisions about giving and parachurch organizations increasingly seek out individual donors.

Donors express a strong desire for charities to be accountable in finance and administration. They also want personal contact and involvement with the organization, goals which conflict with a concern for low administration costs. Donors seek out organizations which had accountability structures of boards, yet often make their own giving decisions unilaterally.

Mennonite donors contribute to many different types of charities and there may be very little “common cause” among different strata of Canadian Mennonites.⁵⁷ Respondents prefer to support charities with which they were familiar. This emphasis on familiarity creates two pitfalls in Mennonite giving. Firstly, the facile familiarity of television results in paradoxes such as the donor who trusts MCC and whose favourite charity is Foster Parents Plan, as seen on TV. The second pitfall of familiarity arises from rigid value alignment, and results in very localized giving because donors only support organizations which share the same theology. Mennonites group themselves into many theological divisions and there are many

⁵⁷ Many donors in this study also completed a list of charities they have supported in the past year. That information supports this conclusion. I chose not to work further with this information because it revealed too much about the identity of the donors.

charities which advertise on television: consequently, both pitfalls of familiarity disperse
Mennonite giving in numerous directions.

Fundraiser Interviews

An honest discussion of fundraising and theology includes the topics of money, power, ecclesiology, and church structures and can thus put people who work in Mennonite institutions in the awkward situation of publicly critiquing their employer or constituency. Therefore, some ideas are not attributed to their sources and not all sources can be cited here. I have footnoted frequently in order to distinguish fundraisers' comments from my own interpretations.

I spoke with Ed Epp from Mennonite Economic Development Associates (MEDA),⁵⁸ Henry Hildebrand from MCC Ontario,⁵⁹ Darren Pries-Klassen from the Mennonite Foundation Canada⁶⁰ and Al Rempel from Mennonite Church Canada.⁶¹ The reader will notice a frequent pairing of MCC with MEDA. This emphasis is my own. Like studying twins separated at birth, it is interesting to see what develops from the same genetic material in different settings. I have grouped comments into four categories: practice of giving among Canadian Mennonites, motives for giving and the theology of fundraising, accountability and ecclesiology.

Mennonite giving

In the absence of hard quantitative data on Mennonite giving trends, I asked fundraisers to speak from their own experience. My small sample of Mennonite donors suggests that giving is increasingly donor-directed and dispersed to a wide variety of causes.⁶² Fundraisers

⁵⁸ Ed Epp, phone conversation with author, 9 August 2007.

⁵⁹ Henry Hildebrand, phone conversation with author, 15 August 2007.

⁶⁰ Darren Pries-Klassen, phone conversation with author, 14 August 2007.

⁶¹ Al Rempel, phone conversation with author, 16 August 2007.

⁶² Steven M. Nolt writes that "giving is a remarkably free enterprise. While it is impossible to determine with any precision, it is clear that Mennonite individuals and congregations give to a wide range of non-Mennonite causes, religious and non-religious." "The 'New Giving' and Mennonite Identity since 1945" (paper presented at State of the Art of North American Mennonite History, University of Winnipeg, 2 October 2004). Later published as Steve Nolt, "Mennonite identity and the writing on the 'new giving' since 1945," *Journal of Mennonite Studies* 23 (2005): 59-76.

generally, but not unanimously, concur and see that Mennonite organizations are losing supporters to other non-Mennonite charities which communicate better.

Pries-Klassen of Mennonite Foundation Canada works as a consultant with a variety of Mennonite donors, and has noticed that people give to a variety of causes as Mennonite circles get bigger and people give outside church, conference, MCC and Mennonite schools. He believes that Mennonite conferences and agencies are losing ground to non-Mennonite agencies. For instance, Mennonites increasingly support family members doing missions or voluntary service work with non-Mennonite organizations⁶³ and also support health related charities, which is seen as similar to ministry. MCC is not the only one doing great work – people could give to other charities.⁶⁴

Fundraisers were not surprised when I gave the example of a donor who trusts MCC and sponsors a child with Foster Parents Plan (see Donor Summary p.41 above). Pries-Klassen notes that TV becomes a form of relationship. Compared to charities which advertise on TV, Mennonite charities do not know how to ask for money very well and ask for too little when they do ask.⁶⁵ MCC and Mennonite conferences need to market themselves more and ask those who are fundraising successfully.⁶⁶ He admits that Mennonites are “not good at getting the message out” despite doing great work.⁶⁷ Rempel similarly observes that some non-Mennonite organizations tell their stories better. The church needs to learn from them while recognizing that “best practices in fundraising [are] not always best for the church to be involved in.”⁶⁸

⁶³ This trend is also documented in Steve Nolt’s “New Giving” paper, 2 October 2004.

⁶⁴ Pries-Klassen, August 2007.

⁶⁵ Eg. MCC AIDS fundraiser for \$35 a head when many in the audience could give ten times that.

⁶⁶ Pries-Klassen, August 2007.

⁶⁷ Pries-Klassen, August 2007.

⁶⁸ Rempel, August 2007.

There is definitely an opinion that MCC has not held its own compared to other charities for the past decade or so.⁶⁹ Hildebrand is aware of donor attrition and confirms that his experience shows donors support a variety of causes. He believes that people are “not supporting us [MCC Global Family] because they don’t know about us.” There are Mennonite churches who support Samaritan’s Purse Operation Christmas Child shoe box campaign because it is easier to understand than MCC programs.⁷⁰ Pries-Klassen also observes that it is hard to articulate what MCC does, since it does so many things. So, it seems that despite a reservoir of goodwill, trust in MCC does not necessarily equate to knowledge or financial support of MCC.

In contrast to the other fundraisers, Rempel paints a generally optimistic picture of Mennonite giving. He is encouraged by membership numbers: MC Canada is comprised of faithful and generous people. Giving to Mennonite World Conference, MCC, church colleges and other affiliated organizations demonstrate the generosity of MC constituents in a larger sense. He sees ample evidence of “how much folks are providing to achieve God’s mission in the world.”

Motives for Giving and Theology of Fundraising

There are no significant discrepancies between *actual* motivations for giving as reported by donors and fundraisers. Fundraisers report that involvement, familiarity, value alignment and a desire for results guide donor’s giving. However, compiling the evidence from fundraisers suggests that Mennonite donors increasingly give in response to need, which may indicate less regular donations and a lack of trust in institutions.

In terms of *ideal* motivations for giving, fundraisers agree with a minority of donors who see giving not as a duty but as a joyful celebration of God’s abundance.

⁶⁹ Hildebrand, August 2007. At the same time as MCC’s market share shrinks, there are large donors who would like to see a larger program rather than small projects.

⁷⁰ Hildebrand, August 2007.

Actual motivations

Designated giving to a specific project or appeal often implies reduced trust in the organization.⁷¹ Epp from MEDA observes that donors to MEDA tend to designate their giving in smaller amounts, whereas MEDA members make larger, undesignated gifts to “where most needed” which reflects their trust in the organization. Designated giving suggests a response to a specific need rather than support for the vision of the organization.

In the earlier discussion of tax receipts (p.32), I noted that donors who only give in response to specific needs tend to give less and wondered if Mennonite donors were prone to responding to particular appeals rather being regular and disciplined donors. Hildebrand observes that donors feel an obligation to help for disasters, and there are donors who give solely for relief. However, it is harder to raise funds for the vast majority of MCC’s work which is development and peace programs. Donors do not have the same sense of obligation to respond to what is perceived as “man-made” disasters, as opposed to natural disasters. It is easier to raise funds for urgent shorter-term relief situations than for long-term development.

The phenomenon of “project fatigue” also suggests that donors’ motivations for giving are increasingly needs-based. Rempel reports that MC Canada has heard of weary donors who encounter “yet another solicitation for a project,” especially rich donors who are frequently asked. On the other hand, this phenomenon may simply illustrate that fundraisers’ motivations for asking are increasingly based on specific needs. In either case, the phenomenon shows that fewer donors trust charities enough to make an undesignated gift to “where most needed.”

⁷¹ Pries-Klassen, August 2007.

Ideal motivations

Not surprisingly, fundraisers agree that fundraising is ministry and not the means to an end. Hildebrand asserts that “giving is a ministry.” Fundraisers prefer to see donors give towards a vision, rather than out of obligation. In contrast to some donors’ perceptions about fundraisers, they emphasize the spiritual aspects of giving and see value in mutual accountability as a motivation for giving.

Hildebrand does not like to see donors writing a cheque out of obligation and prefers if people are connected. He sends personal thank you letters and makes phone calls so people will know “why their money will make a difference.” Rempel recommends the more exciting narrative budget model where congregants describe the mission opportunities of their congregation and give to an “opportunity not an obligation.”⁷² A change in language and mindset enables churches to “participate in what God is doing in our midst.”⁷³ Rempel welcomes more celebration of God’s goodness and reflection on what God’s people are called to next. He believes that motivations for giving are shifting: there is a sense of shared values, and congregations want to be a part of the shared mission of the church.

Pries-Klassen maintains that the idea of giving out of gratitude is not well developed. A congregation might say “we have no stewardship issues – we meet our budget” when stewardship is much more than a sense of obligation to the local church. He suggests giving out of gratitude and an understanding that God will continue to provide. This is not a prosperity gospel, but a matter of trust. Pries-Klassen bases his theology of fundraising on the recognition that resources such as time and money are gifts from God. One should give out of one’s best resources.⁷⁴ Rempel remarks that the scarcity model (declining resources available to meet increasing need) is detrimental to structure, while the abundance model is

⁷² For more on narrative budgets, hear Al Rempel: Mennonite Church Canada, “Fundraising, Stewardship, and the Church,” *Church Matters* www.mennonitechurch.ca/resourcecentre/ResourceView/5/9915.

⁷³ Rempel, August 2007.

⁷⁴ Pries-Klassen cited the story of Cain and Abel.

transformative and invigorating. He echoes the connection between stewardship and spirituality: stewardship is how we take care of what God has given us. Since money is one of the many tools entrusted to people, it is acceptable to ask for money, just as institutions ask for time and expertise.

Fundraiser interviews provide two examples of mutual accountability as a motivation for giving: MCC and MC Canada. MCC does not publicize individual donors or list donor names: donors agree that they are not buying recognition and are happy to be anonymous.⁷⁵ However, Hildebrand organizes an annual MCC focus group breakfast for a group of “big donors and business types” to get together. The purpose is to help encourage others to give and to affirm and publicize who gives.⁷⁶ Such recognition furthers familiarity and mutual accountability. In MC Canada, some congregations ask Rempel to measure their relative giving performance with respect to a comparable congregation,⁷⁷ which indicates some churches are seeking encouragement to model their giving on the example of others.

Accountability

Accountability was a frequently mentioned donor concern and the topic was also top of mind for fundraisers. Some definition of terms is necessary: accountability is a painfully polyvalent term.⁷⁸ Donors desire accountability – both in terms of finance and influence. Is the institution using money well and is it responsive to its constituency? I begin with the fiscal aspects of accountability and then turn to power and influence accountability, which I term “directional accountability.”

⁷⁵ MCC does publicize volunteers, which suggests that gifts of time are treated differently.

⁷⁶ Hildebrand, August 2007.

⁷⁷ This will be a useful piece of information when it comes to looking at the church in Corinth.

⁷⁸ Epp assured me that there are not two but at least ten definitions of accountability!

Fiscal accountability

Epp from MEDA explains that transparency costs money: if an organization wants donors to be informed then they need to spend money on it. Hildebrand notes that MCC is faced with a conundrum: people, especially older generations, expect low administration and fundraising costs,⁷⁹ but at the same time these donors also support charities which have higher overheads.⁸⁰

Accountability has a price. People are “expecting greater accountability” from MCC in terms of knowing how their money is being used.⁸¹ MCC’s donor communications through churches get filtered; so, there is a need to communicate directly with donors,⁸² which is more expensive. Rempel from Mennonite Church Canada emphasizes the importance of sharing the story of ministry with constituents: this cannot be underfunded.

Pries-Klassen, talking about MEDA, asserts that giving is an investment in the lives of other people. Trips where people see microfinance are important because once there is a connection, “you’ve got them [the donors] hooked.”⁸³ Hildebrand had just returned from a trip to Africa and was a passionate spokesperson for the good work that MCC does. Two donors had also made the trip. However, there are costs involved and hosting visitors “takes away from what international people have been seconded to do.”⁸⁴ Again, MEDA and MCC approach fiscal accountability somewhat differently. MEDA is more willing for donors to travel to projects, which builds relationship, whereas MCC is more concerned with efficiency.

⁷⁹ Hildebrand gave the example of a case where the printer donated the difference between black and white pictures and colour pictures in a mailing. This generated some phone calls, although people accepted this once explained.

⁸⁰ To complicate matters further, there are no clear standards on how charities calculate which expenses are overhead and which are program. Cf. Michael H. Hall, *Charitable Fundraising in Canada: Results from a national survey of fundraising practices of Canadian charities* (Toronto: Canadian Centre for Philanthropy, 1996). It is the author’s experience that MCC allocates fewer expenses to the program side than comparable charities.

⁸¹ Hildebrand, August 2007.

⁸² Hildebrand, August 2007.

⁸³ A delegation model will be very pertinent to a study of Paul’s collection for Jerusalem.

⁸⁴ Hildebrand, August 2007.

Directional Accountability

Giving or withholding money can be an act of power. If donors feel the organization is not directionally accountable, they can stop giving. Tensions around giving will affect the structure of the church. Giving is a relational act which often reflects the level of trust between donor and people within the receiving institution.

When donors ask, “are *they* using *our* money wisely,” the trusting relationship between donor and institution is being called into question. Steve Nolt writes:

But if the new [1990s] stewardship education ... consistently cast giving in terms of giving back to God what is in fact God’s to begin with, Mennonites doing the giving continued to consider the act a means of creating or severing relationships with other humans.⁸⁵

Nolt nicely contrasts two different theological viewpoints, one which suggests giving concerns the relationship between God and the donor, and another which views giving as a relationship between people.⁸⁶ The evidence from donors and fundraisers alike suggests that accountability, both fiscal and directional, affects giving. And giving is a means of strengthening or breaking relationships.

For instance, consider the relationship between MEDA and the church. MEDA would like to be seen as an accountable and trustworthy business organization. Epp reports that MEDA has been criticized by the church for not being accountable when MEDA feels it is very accountable in terms of openness and fiscal responsibility.⁸⁷ Epp relates that MEDA members are often called on for money when a church budget shortfall occurs but criticized for suggestions on how to run the church.⁸⁸ MEDA members want their local churches to be fiscally accountable; the church wants MEDA to be directionally accountable. Tensions around giving accompany tensions around influence.

⁸⁵ Steve Nolt, “New Giving,” 2 October 2004.

⁸⁶ Mennonite giving to non-Mennonite causes thus carries implications beyond the fiscal ones.

⁸⁷ Epp, August 2007.

⁸⁸ Epp, August 2007.

In light of Nolt's understanding of Mennonite giving, it is not surprising that MC Canada is working at strengthening the links with its constituency.⁸⁹ Rempel explains that the constituency needs to understand that the greater church is a reflection of their values. If this is discordant, then difficulties ensue.⁹⁰ I interpret this to mean that as long as there is a good level of trust, funds will follow.

Ecclesiology

Ecclesiology looms large in the theology and practice of giving. I use the word "church" as the donors⁹¹ did: "church" collectively is local churches working together, whether this be an area church/conference or a looser connection, such as congregations which support MCC. While MEDA and MCC are not strictly speaking "the church" according to that definition, they presume a certain ecclesiological relationship with the church.

MEDA and MCC: A Comparative Ecclesiology

Epp of MEDA states provocatively that: "The church is like Walmart – they do everything. MEDA is more focused."⁹² MEDA does not consider itself part of the church and has more agility because it is small and independent. MCC is part of the church so they cannot decline tasks which are not their focus.⁹³ MEDA can say no and stay focused on business solutions. Epp notes that "you can't do that in church" where so many different emphases are promoted.

MEDA is an "alternative faith place for ethics/theology of business;" however, MEDA is not incompatible with the church.⁹⁴ MEDA conferences are well attended and address business issues such as dealing with suppliers who do not pay, for example, which the

⁸⁹ Rempel, August 2007.

⁹⁰ Rempel, August 2007.

⁹¹ Fundraisers did not present a uniform definition of "church," donors are more consistent.

⁹² Epp, August 2007.

⁹³ Epp, August 2007.

⁹⁴ Epp, August 2007.

church does not address very well.⁹⁵ Members feel comfortable with MEDA. Business people in churches feel that there is a bias against them: profit is bad and business is negative.⁹⁶ Hildebrand and Pries-Klassen agree that businesspeople feel separated from the church.⁹⁷ This has implications for the theology of fundraising: if there is a sense within the Mennonite church that making money is bad, then it could easily follow that asking for money is also bad.⁹⁸

MEDA has no desire to join the church or be accountable to the church.⁹⁹ MEDA's theological roots are Mennonite and an Anabaptist theology is prevalent in their board. They want to engage the church more but at the same time business people value agency and the manoeuvrability that comes without the slow process of accountability.¹⁰⁰ MEDA has a reputation for being excited, entrepreneurial and decisive.¹⁰¹ MEDA does not want to be in Mennonite church budgets: "We're not asking for that – then we should be accountable to church institutions."¹⁰² The membership owns MEDA¹⁰³ and they value the direct connection which is not mediated by another institution.

At the same time, MEDA members belong to Mennonite churches.¹⁰⁴ This gives MEDA a unique structure: it forms a distinct subset of the church without formal connections to the church. Individual direct giving is the model and the membership makes the decisions. In this sense, giving to MEDA is like giving to one's local church: MEDA is a group of individuals, not a group of representatives.

⁹⁵ Epp, August 2007.

⁹⁶ Pastors are seen as unable to help with business problems or members are reluctant to ask after hearing a sermon on the evils of profit

⁹⁷ Rempel, Pries-Klassen.

⁹⁸ For instance, Mennonites similarly decline to use money raised by government lotteries.

⁹⁹ Epp, August 2007.

¹⁰⁰ Epp, August 2007.

¹⁰¹ Pries-Klassen, August 2007.

¹⁰² Epp, August 2007. MEDA is a budget line in two United Church of Canada congregations.

¹⁰³ People can donate to MEDA without becoming members, although everyone has the option to join.

¹⁰⁴ MEDA's earliest marketing message was a request for a "tithe of your tithe." That slogan is no longer used, but illustrates a primary focus on giving to the church which continues in the giving practice of members.

In contrast to MEDA, MCC would like to be in every church budget and accountable to the church.¹⁰⁵ However, the trend is towards greater individual direct donations. Churches are giving less to MCC in their budget because they say individual donors are supporting MCC.¹⁰⁶ As MCC communicates directly with donors in the pursuit of accountability and for many other reasons, I think the trend towards individual giving can only accelerate.

MCC is structured around volunteer boards provincially, regionally, nationally and binationally. It is based on a communal giving model of contributions by churches. Many people take ownership of MCC.¹⁰⁷ It is not so much a boat with many captains as a small fleet of independent operators, each with its own crew. The structure of MCC encumbers decision making.¹⁰⁸

Mennonite Church Canada

I will add a third institution to the comparison: MC Canada. Rempel notes that MC Canada is a collective of churches and affirms that churches are central characters in God's plan for the world. With some stipulations, he suggests that the local church is a "good vehicle" for all giving.¹⁰⁹ However, MC Canada's funding situation rapidly becomes more complex than the ideal model of individuals giving through their local church.

MEDA knows how its funding works - direct giving from the individual. MCC expects giving through churches, but is increasingly supported by individuals. MC Canada is funded by regional churches which are supported by local churches, but also solicits from individual donors, which puts it in a delicate position with respect to the area churches which support it. In my view, all three institutions are based on a model in which Mennonites give primarily to

¹⁰⁵ Hildebrand, August 2007.

¹⁰⁶ Hildebrand, August 2007.

¹⁰⁷ Hildebrand, August 2007.

¹⁰⁸ Hildebrand, August 2007.

¹⁰⁹ Rempel is citing a conclusion of the Giving Project a multi-faceted stewardship curriculum developed by Mark L. Vincent, 1997.

Mennonite institutions.¹¹⁰ MCC is based on the assumption that church members give primarily through their local church and is reluctant to spend too much money fundraising. While MC Canada has a similar funding model to MCC, I sense less reluctance to put resources into communication and fundraising.

Summary of Issues Raised by Fundraiser Interviews

The picture of Mennonite giving based on talking to fundraisers is mixed: Rempel is very positive about MC Canada constituency giving while the others see money flowing to non-Mennonite charities. Interestingly, none of the fundraisers I spoke with subscribed to the scarcity model,¹¹¹ which posits that there are decreased resources available for giving. There is an agreement that money is flowing, although the direction it is headed depends on one's position.

There is greater consensus on *why* Mennonites are giving than on *where* they are giving. Actual motives for giving matched those reported by donors: familiarity, involvement, trust, and value alignment. Donors are increasingly needs-driven, rather than contributing regularly to a trusted cause. In terms of ideal motivations, fundraisers agree that giving and fundraising are both ministries. Stewardship and spirituality go together. Giving flows out of gratitude for God's abundance, trust in God's provision and a sense of participation in what God is doing in the world.

There was agreement that Mennonite organizations need to work more at communication and relationships.¹¹² Donors concur: "[I]f you want me to give money then I need to know who you are." Communication is part of accountability but is easier to justify devoting resources to it when both fundraising and giving are seen as ministry activities.

¹¹⁰ MEDA could probably continue on with support from outside the Mennonite church, similar to Project Ploughshares.

¹¹¹ Here lies a pitfall in comparing donor attitudes between Canadian and American Mennonites. Marty Lehman (phone conversation, June 2007) noted that a concern for saving money for healthcare and retirement were affecting giving patterns. A different political climate may make the scarcity model more plausible in the USA.

¹¹² Also voiced by Marty Lehman, conversation, 19 June 2007.

Tensions around both fiscal and directional accountability affect giving. Giving is ultimately relational and based on trust. There is a variety of ecclesial structures and ecclesiological relationships among just the few Mennonite organizations cited here.

Analysis of Issues raised by Mennonite praxis

A myriad of concerns were discussed in the course of donor and fundraiser interviews. The biblical exegesis cannot address all the questions, but some analysis of the main issues raised will help to sharpen the exegetical questions brought to the Pauline texts in the next chapter. Mennonite donors' desire to be God's faithful disciples in the world permeates the discussion. People feel a responsibility to use the resources God has entrusted them to further God's kingdom. There is no doubt that giving is important. Opinions only begin to diverge in *how* and *why* to give. As the summary chart at the end of this section illustrates, four topics predominate: motives for giving, the theology of fundraising, accountability and ecclesiology.

I shall begin with the "why" aspect of giving. Donors voice a variety of motives for giving: early experience, duty, empathy and obligation. A minority voice views giving as a joyful celebration of God's abundance. Giving in response to need was an underlying motive for many, which suggests that some donors may be making designated gifts in response to specific appeals rather than giving regularly in a more disciplined fashion.

There is a teleological aspect to giving. Donors talk about "vision", about giving as a connection to some meaningful outcome. They choose to support organizations with similar values where they have a sense of involvement. Fundraisers (and some donors) were able to articulate the importance of relationship in giving as a spiritual practice.

Some donors also establish a strong connection between spirituality and stewardship. I find the strongest expression of this connection emerged as a sense of *Gelassenheit*, giving as evidence of yieldedness to God. This was also expressed by donors who cite Jesus' sacrificial giving, as well as the story of the widow's mite. Some donors mistrust professional fundraisers because they often neglect the spiritual aspects of giving. I suspect that some

donors sense that efficiency - extracting the maximum amount of money from the minimum amount of people – does not leave much room for cultivating the spirituality of giving.

Two different paradigms of the relationship between donor, institution and recipient emerge. One is dualistic, based on an “us/them” mentality: spending money on donors or within the institution is wasteful, while spending money on recipients is ministry. Money should be spent on those who need it most. The second paradigm is more integrative: it views cultivating both donors and recipients as ministry. Giving is a spiritual act that can transform all those involved. The dualistic paradigm of donors and recipients leads to a paradox of fiscal accountability: donors want to know their money is being spent wisely and not wasted on administration, but it costs money to communicate effectively with donors. A discrepancy appears in how fundraisers and some donors approach the issue, as fundraisers recognize the importance of communication to facilitate connections between donors, recipients and institution. While it may seem conflicted, many donors do find the use of fundraisers acceptable as they are often the main point of contact for information about a charity’s work. Fundraisers subscribe to the integrative paradigm and acknowledge that Mennonites have room to improve in connecting with their constituency.

The fiscal and directional accountability problems recounted in the course of interviews with donors and fundraisers alike indicate to me an institutional unsteadiness. There are multiple and confusing models of how individuals and churches fund Mennonite institutions.

Mennonites are increasingly seeking something akin to “cheap grace,” which I will label “lower cost community” – community without the high cost of mutual accountability. In the lower cost community model, the tedious process of communal discernment is reduced as much as possible; undiscerning unilateralism is easier. Donors are free to support or not to support whichever charities they like. Mennonite institutions receive less money from

churches and increasingly solicit from individual donors. Donors are accountable only to themselves and the lines of directional accountability become blurred. There are also donors who are looking for a “costly community” where they can discuss finances in a small circle and be encouraged in generosity, where people direct much of their giving to the church and where the church has a vision for beyond itself.

In summary, Mennonite praxis shows generous people struggling with how and why one should give. Thus emerges the basis for the comparison with Paul’s collection for Jerusalem. It is fortunate indeed that these issues of accountability and church structure are familiar ground for Paul: he is not writing to perfect churches, but to churches struggling with how to be faithful disciples in a world where there are many other options.

Summary Chart of Mennonite praxis

| | |
|----------------------------------|--|
| Motives for Giving | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Duty/tithing, obligation, empathy • Involvement, relationship, community • In response to need, often designated to specific project • Example of Christ • Joyful celebration of God's abundance • Spiritual practice of <i>Gelassenheit</i> |
| Familiarity as Motive for Giving | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hypothesis that two pitfalls of familiarity (value alignment and TV) lead to wide dispersal of Mennonite giving to many causes and contribute to lack of common causes (from Donor Summary p.41) |
| Fiscal Accountability | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong concern for fiscal and administrative accountability • Paradox of fiscal accountability – transparency costs money |
| Directional Accountability | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Donors value influence and respect accountability of governance structures • Paradox of directional accountability – donors are only accountable to themselves in their giving |
| Ecclesial structures | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multiple funding models and accountability structures • Designated giving expresses lack of trust in institution • Increasing emphasis on individual discernment as opposed to communal discernment – “low cost” community • “Costly community” – donors seeking mutual accountability • Need for improved communication between Mennonite institutions and constituency |
| Theology of Fundraising | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Donors seek involvement and connection to meaningful outcome • “Us/them” paradigm for donors and recipients contrasts with integrative model |
| Use of Professional Fundraisers | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fundraisers appeal to “baser motives,” neglect spiritual component • Fundraising is acceptable • Fundraising is ministry |
| Noteworthy | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Simple living to facilitate giving • Willingness to break taboos about discussing money |

Exegesis: Paul's Collection for Jerusalem

The number of concerns common to the contributors to Paul's collection two thousand years ago around the Mediterranean, and Canadian Mennonite donors today is remarkable. This exegesis of the biblical texts is guided by the questions resulting from the donor and fundraiser interviews. First, I introduce the collection, looking at its purpose and influences, which show Paul's strong focus on unity, and then proceed to examine why and how Paul collected money for Jerusalem. The areas of exegetical interest are: church relationships and structures around giving, accountability, motives for giving, and the delegation.

Introduction to the collection

Galatians 2:1-10 relates the origin of the collection. Paul and Barnabas are in Jerusalem meeting with James, Peter and John. These "pillars" recognize the grace that had been given to Paul and endorse his ministry to the Gentiles (Galatians 2:9). Paul is adamant that the Jerusalem council had not imposed any conditions on his ministry (Galatians 2:3,6): circumcision had not been required and "the truth of the gospel" had not been altered (Galatians 2:5). They shake hands as partners in ministry. This is not to diminish the theological differences between the Jerusalem churches that saw Torah observance as integral to a belief in Jesus, and the Gentile churches that did not. There is one request for the Gentile churches to remember the poor in Jerusalem. Paul describes his eagerness to do this very thing (Galatians 2:10).

The collection project involves collecting funds from multiple Gentile churches for the saints in Jerusalem. A delegation composed of representatives from the contributing Gentile churches carries the money to Jerusalem. This becomes a very ambitious and theologically significant undertaking.¹¹³ Paul devotes much energy to this project. Wright argues that Paul

¹¹³ A very accessible treatment of the collection appears in Bassler, *God and Mammon*, p. 89-115.

“must have seen it as a major element in his practical strategy for creating and sustaining the one family of God redefined around the Messiah and in the Spirit.”¹¹⁴

The primary texts describing the collection are Romans 15:25-32, 1 Corinthians 16:1-4, and 2 Corinthians 8 and 9. Paul also alludes to the collection in Romans 15:16. I will acknowledge some key assumptions made regarding the primary texts, because the chronology of Paul’s letters and journeys is contentious.¹¹⁵ Firstly, I privilege Paul’s account of his collection activity over Acts, using Acts as a secondary source read in light of the Pauline texts.¹¹⁶ Different biblical texts mention different churches¹¹⁷ taking part in the collection but this is not significant for my purposes. The Corinthian letters constitute a major source, especially 2 Corinthians 8 and 9. The redaction history of Corinthians occasions much debate.¹¹⁸ Like most scholars, I think there were some tensions between Paul and the church at Corinth between the writing of 1 Corinthians and 2 Corinthians 1-9.¹¹⁹ I treat 2 Corinthians 8 and 9 as only one letter, although that is not essential to my arguments.¹²⁰

Purpose and possible models of Paul’s collection

Paul’s collection intends more than material relief for believers in Jerusalem. It both demonstrates and facilitates the ecumenical unity of the early church. Comparing Paul’s

¹¹⁴ N.T. Wright, *Paul in Fresh Perspective*, p. 167.

¹¹⁵ Johannes Munck, *Paul and the Salvation of Mankind*, trans. Frank Clarke (London: SCM Press, 1959), p. 292. For an overview of methodology since Baur Cf. David G. Horrell and Edward Adams, “The Scholarly Quest for Paul’s Church at Corinth: A Critical Survey,” in *Christianity in Corinth: The Quest for the Pauline Church*, ed. David G. Horrell and Edward Adams (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2004) pp. 1-43.

¹¹⁶ Contra David J. Downs, “Paul’s Collection and the Book of Acts revisited,” *New Testament Studies* 52 (2006): 52-4. Downs argues that Acts, when read on its own terms, does not refer to Paul’s Collection for Jerusalem in any way. Galatians 2:10 refers to Paul’s and Barnabas’ collection of Acts 11:27-30, not Paul’s Collection for Jerusalem.

¹¹⁷ A. J. M Wedderburn, “Paul’s Collection: Chronology and History,” *New Testament Studies* 48 (2002): 103. Munck, *Salvation of Mankind*, p. 293.

¹¹⁸ For a fuller discussion of partition theories see Hans Dieter Betz, *2 Corinthians 8 and 9* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985), p. 3-36.

¹¹⁹ Bassler, *God and Mammon*, p. 98-99. Bassler, and many others, see 2 Cor 10-13 as a separate and earlier letter.

¹²⁰ Contra Betz, *2 Corinthians 8 and 9*, p.141, with Ben Witherington III, *Conflict and Community in Corinth: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on 1 & 2 Corinthians* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1995), p. 425; Keener, *1-2 Corinthians*, p.146-151. See Victor Paul Furnish, *II Corinthians* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1984), p. 431-33 for a detailed comparison.

collection to the temple tax¹²¹ and patronage models illustrates that Paul constructed the collection to suit his ecumenical and benevolent purposes.

Ecumenical Purpose of Collection

Nickle, in one of the pioneering modern works on the collection, cites three reasons for it: realization of Christian charity, expression of Christian unity, and the anticipation of Christian eschatology.¹²² While scholars such as Dunn argue that relief for the poor is the primary motive,¹²³ I agree with the many scholars who highlight unity (2 Cor 9:13-14) as the principal purpose.¹²⁴ Hurtado, for example, maintains that the collection was an “act of ecumenism” and that Paul’s references to “the poor” denote their piety more than their poverty.¹²⁵ I find a combination of charitable (Rom 15:27, 2 Cor 9:12) and theological purposes the most satisfactory explanation for this “ministry to the saints” (2 Cor 9:1).¹²⁶

Paul’s collection was more ecumenical than eschatological.¹²⁷ There is a danger in using Romans 11 as a hermeneutical lens for the collection. Contra Georgi, I find it exegetically too bold to claim that Paul planned by his collection to provoke all Jews to Christ,¹²⁸ although Paul realized the potential for controversy (Rom 15:30-31). Paul’s

¹²¹ The idea for the temple tax comparison originated with Keith Nickle, *The Collection: A Study in Paul’s Strategy* (London: SCM Press, 1966), p. 75.

¹²² Nickle, *Collection*, p. 100.

¹²³ James D. G. Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1998), p. 706. Jerome Murphy-O’Connor, *Paul: A Critical Life* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), p. 144. But Cf. James D. G. Dunn, *Unity and Diversity in the New Testament: An Inquiry into the Character of Earliest Christianity Second Edition* (London: SCM Press, 1990), p. 257 which suggest Paul’s reason was an expression of unity, although Dunn sees the collection as an obligation in light of Galatians 2:10.

¹²⁴ Cf. N.T. Wright, *Paul in Fresh Perspective* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2005) p. 167; Nils Alstrup Dahl, *Studies in Paul: Theology for the Early Christian Mission*, 2d ed. (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 1977) p. 31; Munck, *Salvation of Mankind*, p. 290.

¹²⁵ Hurtado lecture, 18 July 2007.

¹²⁶ Bassler, *God and Mammon*, p. 92-3; Betz, *2 Corinthians 8 and 9*, p.118; C.K. Barrett, *A Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 2d ed. (London: Adam & Charles Black, 1971) p. 386; Günther Bornkamm, *Paul*, trans. D. M.G. Salker (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995) p. 82.

¹²⁷ For a more nuanced treatment of Paul’s eschatology, see Bengt Holmberg, *Paul and Power: The Structure of Authority in the Primitive Church as Reflected in the Pauline Epistles* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1978), p. 38.

¹²⁸ Georgi, *Remembering the Poor*, p. 118. Dunn, *Theology of Paul*, p. 709 acknowledges that “it is possible that the collection was part of Paul’s strategy to make Israel jealous ([Rom]11.14) by demonstrating the success of the Gentile mission” but notes a lack of clear evidence in passages dealing explicitly with the collection. Esler suggests Paul’s gift was

citations of Isaiah in Romans 15 do allude to his belief that the collection was part of God's plan of salvation, but I find it equally likely that unity of believers is part of that plan. Even the presumed eschatological aspects have an ecumenical goal of unifying believers. Thus, for this study I will largely bracket out any eschatological aspects¹²⁹ and concentrate more on the ecumenical ones.

Did the collection achieve its purpose? All answers are hypothetical: I am inclined to see a modest ecumenical success because church history shows that the Gentile church did not succumb to Marcionism and sever its Jewish roots.¹³⁰ Thus, the collection had a positive effect on the Gentile church. One can peruse the literature and find further answers. Nickle asserts that the collection promoted reconciliation between churches,¹³¹ whereas Holmberg interprets Acts' silence on the matter to mean "being something of a missionary and diplomatic catastrophe, it was best to pass over it [the collection] in merciful silence."¹³²

Meeks writes that despite disastrous results when the collection arrived in Jerusalem,

these results should not obscure the fact that the Pauline communities did join together in an extraordinary labor to demonstrate their sense that they... had been grafted into the one people of God. Long after the Jerusalem community ceased to exist, that concept would continue, in divers ways, to affect the self-understanding of the Christian movement.¹³³

a challenge to push Jerusalem leaders into honouring the Jerusalem agreement that they had breached; see Philip Francis Esler, *Conflict and Identity in Romans: The Social Setting of Paul's Letter* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2003), p. 130.

¹²⁹ Bassler, *God and Mammon*, p. 113-4. Here I agree with Barrett who thinks that Nickle and Georgi may push the eschatological aspects too hard. See C. K. Barrett, *A Commentary on the Second Epistle to the Corinthians* (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1973), p. 28; Ernest Best, *Second Corinthians* (Louisville: KY, John Knox Press: 1987), p.76. Holmberg, *Paul and Power*, p.43f, also does not see the Collection as a "salvation-historical provocation," but he sees the Collection as obligated by Jerusalem and not initiated by Paul.

¹³⁰ Larry W. Hurtado, *Lord Jesus Christ: Devotion to Jesus in Earliest Christianity* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 2003), p. 485. See also Georgi, *Remembering the Poor*, p. 19.

¹³¹ Nickle, *Collection*, p. 72-3.

¹³² Holmberg, *Paul and Power*, p. 43. So too Wayne A. Meeks, *The First Urban Christians: The Social World of the Apostle Paul* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983), p. 110; Bornkamm, *Paul*, p.101 says we cannot know the fate of collection but Paul's trip "turned out disastrously." For rejection of collection see also Dunn, *Unity and Diversity in the New Testament*, p. 257; Wedderburn, "Paul's Collection", 110.

¹³³ Meeks, *First Urban Christians*, p. 110.

However, as Meeks intimates, Paul's project did not promote closer ties with Gentile believers for the Torah observant Jesus believers in Jerusalem, but quite the opposite.¹³⁴ Still, the Christian movement retained a connection to the "one people of God" and the Jewish roots of its faith.

Differences between Temple Tax and Paul's Collection for Jerusalem

In pre-70 BCE Judaism,¹³⁵ the temple tax would have been a significant connection to cultic practice in Jerusalem for Diaspora Jews. Matthew 17:24-27¹³⁶ indicates that Jewish Jesus believers paid the temple tax. Paul would certainly have been familiar with the temple tax and what he retains and discards from that model serves to illustrate the ecumenical purposes of the collection.

Paul preserves features from the temple tax which enhance connections between believers in one place with believers in another: the participatory aspects, the regular giving and the semiotic focus on Jerusalem. Each community appointed delegates to accompany the temple tax money, not just for security but in order to represent the community in Jerusalem.¹³⁷ Paul takes advantage of the temple tax precedent for a legal way to transport money to Jerusalem and employs a similar large delegation model.¹³⁸ Practically speaking, money is regularly set aside for both the temple tax¹³⁹ and Paul's collection (1 Cor 16:2). Participation in the project is thus strong and ongoing, not sporadic. Semiotically speaking, there is a shared and ongoing focus on Jerusalem. The temple tax carried tremendous cultic significance: donors were participating in the religious life of Jerusalem via their

¹³⁴ Dunn, *Unity and Diversity*, p. 257. Of course, Paul's collection was only one factor among many in the loss of this group of Jesus believers.

¹³⁵ The tax continued after the destruction of the temple, but for different purposes.

¹³⁶ Nickle, *Collection*, p. 86.

¹³⁷ Nickel, *Collection*, p. 88.

¹³⁸ Nickle, *Collection*, p. 83, 88.

¹³⁹ Nickle, *Collection*, p. 80, 89.

contribution.¹⁴⁰ So too for the collection: Hurtado states that Paul acts out of recognition of “Jerusalem’s role in salvation history.”¹⁴¹

However, Paul rejects aspects of the temple tax model which are exclusive or punitive, and not in keeping with unifying believers. He changes the fixed amount¹⁴² to become proportional to income (1 Cor 16:2); in this way rich and poor alike can participate equally. He makes the Jerusalem offering a one-time voluntary collection (2 Cor 9:7) instead of an annual legislated levy.¹⁴³ He opens up the collection to all believers, regardless of gender or cultural background, which made the collection more inclusive.¹⁴⁴ These aspects of giving: proportional, voluntary, and inclusive will all be further developed.

Comparison to Patronage Model

In a ground-breaking project, Paul adapts the temple tax model to further his ecumenical purposes and rejects the patronage model which was influential in the Roman Empire. I am informed by John K. Chow’s study *Patronage and Power: A Study of Social Networks in Corinth* which illuminates the contrast between Paul’s approach and the patronage structures which pervaded society.

The patronage model explains why Paul rejected offers of support from the Corinthian church¹⁴⁵ but still solicited for the collection. Chow writes:

That a teacher or a missionary worker should have accepted financial support from the rich and powerful might even have been the norm accepted by the Corinthians, especially the richer ones. If that was the case, Paul appears to have distanced himself from it.¹⁴⁶

¹⁴⁰ Nickle, *Collection*, p. 89.

¹⁴¹ Hurtado lecture, 18 July 2007. Cf. Georgi, *Remembering the Poor*, p. 52. Holmberg, *Paul and Power*, p. 51

¹⁴² Half-shekel. Nickle, *Collection*, p. 92.

¹⁴³ Nickle, *Collection*, p. 79, 91-92; Georgi, *Remembering the Poor*, p. 40.

¹⁴⁴ Nickle, *Collection*, p. 92-3.

¹⁴⁵ But Cf. Meeks, *First Urban Christians*, p. 66: 1 Cor 16:6 and 2 Cor 1:16 help received with travel expenses.

¹⁴⁶ John K. Chow, *Patronage and Power: A Study of Social Networks in Corinth* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1992), p. 109. But see also Witherington, *Conflict and Community in Corinth*, p. 413, 419.

Carter notes that “Paul’s refusal to accept patronage may have caused resentment because it deprived [potential patrons] of an opportunity to enhance their standing in the congregation.”¹⁴⁷ This conflict is alluded to in 2 Corinthians 11:7-11, which Shillington titles “Money lovingly declined.”¹⁴⁸ Paul would rather decline funds than accept money and become someone’s client.¹⁴⁹

In the same spirit of equality and balance, Wan writes that Paul deliberately underplays the poverty in Jerusalem in 2 Corinthians because of his “desire to decouple the Corinthians’ contribution from their patronal expectation that the Jerusalem church could become obligated to them as a result of the gift.”¹⁵⁰ In Paul’s theology, giving does not result in a hierarchy of giver and recipient. Horsley in particular emphasizes the horizontal relationships within and between churches in contrast to the imperial, tributary system which promoted vertical relationships.¹⁵¹ Nor does the collection for Jerusalem follow a typical Hellenistic pattern.¹⁵² The main idea to be stressed is that Paul is encouraging the Corinthians “to rethink social relationships in the light of Christ.”¹⁵³ This rethinking results in a rejection of the patronage model in both Paul’s relationship with the Corinthian church, and in how Paul presents the collection for Jerusalem.

Paul’s ecclesiology

Given the collection’s ecumenical goals, ecclesiology becomes fundamental to understanding it.¹⁵⁴ The collection promoted solidarity, not just with the Jerusalem church,

¹⁴⁷ Timothy L. Carter, “‘Big Men’ in Corinth”, *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 66 (June 1997): 64.

¹⁴⁸ V. George Shillington, *2 Corinthians* (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1998), p. 259.

¹⁴⁹ Witherington, *Conflict and Community in Corinth*, p. 419. See also Richard A. Horsley, *1 Corinthians* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1998), p. 148.

¹⁵⁰ Sze-kar Wan, “Collection for the Saints as Anticolonial Act,” in *Paul and Politics: Ekklesia, Israel, Imperium, Interpretation – Essays in honor of Krister Stendahl*, ed. Richard Horsley (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press, 2000), p. 210-211.

¹⁵¹ Horsley, *1 Corinthians*, p. 224. So too Wan, *Paul and Politics*, p. 215.

¹⁵² Bruce J. Malina and John J. Pilch, *Social-Science Commentary on the Letters of Paul* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2006), p. 172.

¹⁵³ Witherington, *Conflict and Community in Corinth*, p. 418.

¹⁵⁴ Holmberg, *Paul and Power*, p. 37.

but amongst Paul's congregations. Paul's vision strives for unity, yet preserves autonomy. I want to discuss how this vision is expressed through the arrangements of the collection. I examine two sets of church relationships:

- Relationship between Jerusalem and the Gentile churches
- Relationship within Corinth (and secondarily, Philippi).

Relationship between Jerusalem and the Gentile churches

James, Peter and John asked Paul and Barnabas to remember the poor in Jerusalem, which Paul writes is "the very thing I also was eager to do (Gal 2:10)." It is fair to say that both sides might have seen the collection somewhat differently.¹⁵⁵ Some scholars see the collection imposed by Jerusalem as a condition for Gentiles' acceptance in the church,¹⁵⁶ and see a more hierarchical authority structure implicit in the collection.¹⁵⁷ However, if the collection is a mandatory levy, then it becomes something akin to taxation, deceitfully packaged by Paul as a voluntary donation.¹⁵⁸ It is hard to imagine Paul scheming to please his superiors.

Paul is a free actor and not under compulsion from Jerusalem.¹⁵⁹ I interpret the evidence as indicating that Jewish Jesus followers and Gentile Jesus followers had a peer to peer relationship¹⁶⁰ and that the council of Jerusalem agreement had already been made when Paul chose to provide a collection for Jerusalem. The collection is giving between equals, sealed with a handshake (Gal 2:9). The way Paul uses the terms "remember", "poor"

¹⁵⁵ Meeks, *First Urban Christians*, p. 110.

¹⁵⁶ L. Cerfaux, *La Théologie de l'Eglise Suivant Saint-Paul* (Paris: Les Editions du Cerf, 1965), p. 115.

¹⁵⁷ Nickle, *Collection*, p. 60; Cerfaux, *La Théologie*, p. 115, 221; Holmberg, *Paul and Power*, p. 41.

¹⁵⁸ Munck, *Salvation of Mankind*, p. 288.

¹⁵⁹ Hurtado, "The Jerusalem Collection," 57. Also Georgi, *Remembering the Poor*, p. 53: "no implication that the Jerusalem congregation held hierarchical privilege – at least not to Paul's understanding;" Betz, *2 Corinthians 8 and 9*, p. 124 on submission to the gospel of Christ but not submission to Jerusalem. Munck, *Salvation of Mankind*, p. 289; Georgi, *Remembering the Poor*, p. 42; Hans Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians*, trans. James W. Leitch (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975), p. 296.

¹⁶⁰ Bornkamm, *Paul*, p. 38. Contra Murphy-O'Connor, *A Critical Life*, p. 145: "Jerusalem had made a fundamental concession to Antioch and intended to profit from it."

(Gal 2:10) and “Jerusalem” in his discussion of the collection all indicate an honorific, rather than a judicial decision-making, status for Jerusalem.¹⁶¹

Georgi argues that “remembering” is an ongoing act of solidarity,¹⁶² an inner attitude expressed through recognition, gratefulness, intercession by prayers, and finally, financial aid as well.¹⁶³ The Gentiles will recognize and support the poor in Jerusalem as fellow believers.¹⁶⁴

While Galatians 2:10 talks of “remembering the poor”, Paul does not use the word “poor” frequently.¹⁶⁵ He often refers to the Jerusalem believers as “saints” – a term he also uses to refer to people among his own congregations.¹⁶⁶ Romans 15:26 uses both terms and refers to the “poor among the saints in Jerusalem.” Witherington notes that the Greek word for saints is used in the LXX and OT to refer to devout Jews but that Paul does not use this term only to refer to the Jerusalem church.¹⁶⁷ Using the same term for believers in Jerusalem and in Gentile congregations¹⁶⁸ suggests that Paul does not see a substantive difference of status.

Paul acknowledges both the Jerusalem’s church central role in the church and the interdependence of the body of Christ.¹⁶⁹ Jerusalem plays a “unique salvation-historical

¹⁶¹ For an argument that non-judicial does not mean voluntary see Holmberg, *Paul and Power*, p. 41.

¹⁶² Georgi, *Remembering the Poor*, p. 40 notes that the verb remembering in Gal. 2:10 is present tense subjunctive referring to continued action.

¹⁶³ Georgi, *Remembering the Poor*, p. 41-42.

¹⁶⁴ Munck, *Salvation of Mankind*, p. 302 says giving is an encouragement to harassed Christian church in Jerusalem.

¹⁶⁵ The verb πτωχεύω in 2 Cor 8:9 is only used once in the New Testament to describe Christ and has the same root πτωχός used for the poor in Galatians 2:10. "Dictionary and Word Search for πτωχευō (*Strong's 4433*)" in Blue Letter Bible website (Rancho Santa Margarita, CA, September 2007), <<http://www.blueletterbible.org>>.

¹⁶⁶ Jerusalem believers as saints: Romans 15:25, 15:31, 1 Cor 16:1, 2 Cor 8:4, 2 Cor 9:12. Gentile believers as saints: Romans 1:7, Romans 16:2,15; 1 Cor. 1:12, 2 Cor 1:1. "Dictionary and Word Search for *hagios* (*Strong's 40*)" in Blue Letter Bible website. Cf. Furnish, *II Corinthians*, p. 401-402 for Paul’s usage of “saints” and Meeks, *The First Urban Christians*, p. 85.

¹⁶⁷ Ben Witherington III, *Paul’s Letter to the Romans: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids MI: William B. Eerdmans, 2004), p. 365. Contra Conzelmann, *I Corinthians*, p. 295 who says “the saints” is a standard designation for the original church (2 Cor 8:4; 9:1,12).

¹⁶⁸ Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A commentary on the Greek Text* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 2000), p. 1321.

¹⁶⁹ Dunn, *Theology of Paul*, p. 708-9.

role.”¹⁷⁰ Jesus’ death and resurrection there provide both the historical and theological connection to Jerusalem.¹⁷¹ Thus, as Holmberg observes with respect to Romans 15:27, Jerusalem is understood as “the source of the Word of God, the Gospel, whose servant Paul is.”¹⁷²

Thus, “remembering the poor” in Jerusalem acknowledges the ongoing theological importance of Jerusalem. It is a sign of prayerful solidarity with fellow believers in Jerusalem,¹⁷³ the source of the gospel. The voluntary collection recognizes the salvation-historical role of Jerusalem, but does not cede the authority to mandate a collection to that role.¹⁷⁴ Our examination of the relationship with Jerusalem has shown that it was important to Paul for Gentiles to be connected to the origins of the church.

Ecclesial structure at Corinth & Philippi

When the Gentile delegation arrived in Jerusalem carrying the collection for the Jewish believers, it must have presented a striking vision of the future of the church, united in Christ.¹⁷⁵ We move now from the larger movement to the more particular. I want to look more specifically at how the structure of the collection expresses a unity in Christ in the Gentile congregations at Corinth and Philippi. The collection values unity and inclusiveness while retaining considerable autonomy for each congregation.

For the social setting of the Corinthian church, I am informed by Gerd Theissen’s work *The Social Setting of Pauline Christianity*. There must have been those in Corinth with sufficient wealth to travel, such as “Chloe’s people” in 1 Corinthians 1:11. Theissen notes that “Paul, for example, simply assumes that the Corinthian community could manage to

¹⁷⁰ Holmberg, *Paul and Power*, p. 40.

¹⁷¹ Georgi, *Remembering the Poor*, p. 52.

¹⁷² Holmberg, *Paul and Power*, p. 51.

¹⁷³ Munck, *Salvation of Mankind*, p. 203.

¹⁷⁴ Bornkamm, *Paul*, p. 92.

¹⁷⁵ Witherington, *Conflict and Community in Corinth*, p. 426.

bring its own collection to Jerusalem (1 Cor 16:3).¹⁷⁶ However, not everyone was equally prosperous.¹⁷⁷ The mere existence of 1 Corinthians 11 and 12, urging unity in the body of Christ, makes a very strong argument for ecclesiological problems at Corinth,¹⁷⁸ some of them based in differences of social status amongst believers.¹⁷⁹

Autonomy

There are three features of the collection that acknowledge the Corinthians' autonomy: voluntary participation, delegation selection and letters of commendation. Although the evidence is not overwhelming, 1 Corinthians 16:1 suggests that Paul is answering a question initiated by the Corinthians about the collection, rather than suggesting the collection to them himself. 2 Corinthians 8:10 also seems to indicate that the Corinthians volunteered to participate in this collection,¹⁸⁰ although the tone of 2 Corinthians 8 and 9 implies they needed some encouragement to complete it.

In translation preferred by a minority of scholars, the church at Corinth, rather than Paul, writes letters of commendation to the church at Jerusalem for its chosen representative(s) (1 Cor 16:3).¹⁸¹ While the patronage and imperial letters of commendation have slightly different purposes, in both cases someone with authority writes a letter to commend his or her representative to the recipient(s) of the letter.¹⁸² Paul recognizes that the Corinthians possess sufficient authority and autonomy to choose their own representative and to write commendation letters to the church in Jerusalem. Even in the more common

¹⁷⁶ Gerd Theissen, *The Social Setting of Pauline Christianity* trans. John H. Schütz (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1982), p. 91-2. Paul later changes his plans regarding how the collection is to be managed. For chronologies, see Barrett, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, p. 25; Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 2005), p. 556.

¹⁷⁷ Dahl, *Studies in Paul*, p. 27.

¹⁷⁸ Chow, *Patronage and Power*, p. 176.

¹⁷⁹ Cf. Dahl, *Studies in Paul*, p. 28 for a discussion of the problem occurring at the Lord's Supper, where the rich eat first and there is not enough left for the poor who come later.

¹⁸⁰ Murphy-O'Connor, *A Critical Life*, p. 307 suggests they heard of the collection by accident, presumably from Chloe's people (1 Cor.1:11.)

¹⁸¹ Contra Barrett, *First Epistle to the Corinthians*, p. 387; Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, p. 1324. Both acknowledge this translation is possible but think it more likely that Paul wrote the letters.

¹⁸² Keener, *1-2 Corinthians*, p. 166.

translation, if Paul wrote the letters, he did so for delegates chosen by the Corinthians. Paul respects the Corinthians' autonomy and is willing to endorse whomever they choose.

Inclusiveness

Paul demonstrates a concern that everyone possible be included in collection. He rejects the patronage model and encourages all believers to participate. The process of choosing a representative reinforces Paul's inclusive model.

While the patronage model of only asking the rich would be more pragmatic,¹⁸³ Paul presents a less efficient and more inclusive model. Chow notes that in 1 Corinthians 16:1-4, by asking people to save up Paul gives the impression that his audience is not very well off.¹⁸⁴ Chow surmises that Paul speaks in this way because:

... Paul saw the church as community with equal rights and honour and would want to build up the church as such. So, instead of asking one or two rich leaders to demonstrate their readiness for benefaction and thereby to reap a harvest of honour, Paul insisted on having everyone, even the poorer members if they could, contribute to the project.¹⁸⁵

We know from the earlier controversy about Paul's rejection of support that there were Corinthians prepared to become Paul's patrons. However, such benefaction would have distorted the model of the entire church choosing delegates and writing letters of commendation for them.

Chow also speaks to the process of the church choosing its own representatives. He notes that the motive is probably to avoid suspicion or slander.¹⁸⁶ However, the process also becomes "another occasion for the church to learn to live as a community through the choosing of a representative."¹⁸⁷ Betz writes that the verb *χειροτονεῖν*, usually translated as "appointing," used in 2 Corinthians 8:19 "describes the process of electing envoys by the

¹⁸³ A focus on major donors is often how present day fundraising operates.

¹⁸⁴ Chow, *Patronage and Power*, p. 185.

¹⁸⁵ Chow, *Patronage and Power*, p. 186. So too Witherington, *Conflict and Community in Corinth*, p. 315.

¹⁸⁶ Chow, *Patronage and Power*, p. 186.

¹⁸⁷ Chow, *Patronage and Power*, p. 186.

raising of hands in the assembly.”¹⁸⁸ Chow goes on to suggest that this delegate selection might be Paul setting an example for the strong in the church,¹⁸⁹ which would be another encouragement towards inclusivity.¹⁹⁰ Everyone in the congregation, weak and strong, must participate in making a decision.¹⁹¹

Unity

Paul uses the collection as a tool to promote unity within the Corinthian church, a church subject to threats from both within and without. The collection fosters social unity in Corinth and the example of the gift from the Philippians identifies the type of unity Paul envisions.

The pooled individual resources which form the collection are not just an expression of unity, but a means toward this end as well. This unity results from the joint project within the Corinthian church and from an increased connection to the roots of the Jesus movement, as noted earlier in the discussion of the relationship to the Jerusalem church.¹⁹² The inclusiveness of the collection points towards unity because rich and poor are united in a common cause.¹⁹³ Georgi notes that the church in Corinth threatened to dissolve into “mystery cliques and esoteric circles” and that Paul realized that the “collection could be instrumental in giving expression to the joint will toward unity.”¹⁹⁴ Dahl talks about social unity amongst rich and poor in Pauline churches:

The poor and the rich have the same Lord, who give both groups a share in his bounty and who joins them in the same church: this is the strikingly new element in Paul’s thought. The congregation becomes the decisive social reality for the Christian way of life, and communal life by necessity involves the use of possessions.¹⁹⁵

¹⁸⁸ Betz, *2 Corinthians 8 and 9*, p. 74.

¹⁸⁹ Chow, *Patronage and Power*, p. 186.

¹⁹⁰ Chow, *Patronage and Power*, p. 187 connects this example to Paul’s instructions regarding the Lord’s Supper where Paul challenges the strong for their lack of care for others. Contra Betz, *2 Corinthians 8 and 9*, p. 75 who wonders whether election was really Paul’s preferred method for delegate selection.

¹⁹¹ Witherington, *Conflict and Community in Corinth*, p. 315.

¹⁹² Georgi, *Remembering the Poor*, p. 52-3.

¹⁹³ Witherington, *Conflict and Community in Corinth*, p. 315.

¹⁹⁴ Georgi, *Remembering the Poor*, p. 52-3.

¹⁹⁵ Dahl, *Studies in Paul*, p. 26.

The collection offers tangible proof of love which binds Christians together,¹⁹⁶ not just locally but ecumenically as well.

The gift Paul received from the Philippians (Philippians 4:18) illustrates the type of congregational unity which Paul advocates. Paul is endorsing a model which presumes that the rich share with the poor, but not one in which everyone surrenders his or her possessions to a common fund.¹⁹⁷ Murphy-O'Connor explains that Paul could accept the Philippians' gift when he had declined benefaction from individuals in Corinth because "[t]he Philippian gift represented a community effort." Even if some donors may have made the bulk of the contributions, everyone had participated: "[t]he individuality of each contribution was assumed into a whole, which symbolized the unity of the community."¹⁹⁸ Money received from a congregation, rather than from individuals, becomes an expression of "fellowship in Christ," an act of worship.¹⁹⁹ The gift becomes a demonstration of support for Paul from the entire Philippian community. The circumstances are different, but I think that Paul intends for the collection to promote a similar expression of unified fellowship in Christ.

Fiscal accountability

Accountability was a crucial concern, as Paul's opponents had been suggesting that he was enriching himself from funds he had collected.²⁰⁰ Paul makes it clear in 2 Corinthians 8:20-21 that he and his fellow workers are taking precautions so that they may not be discredited in the administration of the generous gift. They are concerned with doing what is right not only in the eyes of God, but in the eyes of human observers. They promote fiscal accountability in

¹⁹⁶ Dahl, *Studies in Paul*, p. 31.

¹⁹⁷ Dahl, *Studies in Paul*, p. 30.

¹⁹⁸ Murphy-O'Connor, *A Critical Life*, p. 306.

¹⁹⁹ Dahl, *Studies in Paul*, p. 35.

²⁰⁰ Munck, *Salvation of Mankind*, p. 173. Bassler, *God and Mammon*, p. 98-99 presents a very credible outline of the Corinthians initial support for the collection in 1 Corinthians, then the disruption caused by rival apostles who accused Paul of embezzlement, Paul's subsequent letter (2 Cor 10-13) and letter of reconciliation in 2 Cor 1-9. Betz, *2 Corinthians 8 and 9*, p. 76-77 takes a somewhat more specific view of why the envoys were added, he surmises that the crisis referred to in 2 Cor 8:20 was "a charge of fraud made by this man against the apostle."

collecting funds and also in donating the money. The contributions were voluntary, regular and proportional. In addition, the funds were collected by administrators appointed by the churches.

Voluntary

We have already established that the collection was not a mandatory levy legislated by Jerusalem. In the same way, Paul does not demand participation from amongst his churches but encourages a voluntary and joyful response.

Paul's own attitudes towards receiving support illustrate his attitudes on voluntary giving:

...Paul's congregations must understand that his renunciation of support represents a purely personal decision, a free will undertaking which exceeds his obligations. The financial sacrifices others make Paul wants them to make voluntarily, with joy, not because of compulsion. He makes it clear that the same rule applies to him.²⁰¹

Paul is not commanding (2 Cor 8:8), but giving an opinion (2 Cor 8:10). Betz describes 2 Corinthians 8:1-15 as deliberative rhetoric and asserts that "Paul was offering advice to the Corinthians, nothing more. Furthermore, a collection of this sort depends by nature on the voluntary cooperation of the contributors, and this can only be the result of their personal insights and decisions."²⁰² No one is obligated to contribute, although Paul does vigorously encourage participation. The voluntary aspect helps Paul to defend himself against accusations that he is using his position to enrich himself.

In 2 Corinthians 9:7, Paul reminds the Corinthians that "God loves a cheerful giver," citing Proverbs 22:8a from the Septuagint.²⁰³ Joy cannot be forced. Paul cannot be accused

²⁰¹ Dahl, *Studies in Paul*, p. 34.

²⁰² Betz, *2 Corinthians 8 and 9*, p. 59. So too Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, p. 576; Keener, *1-2 Corinthians*, p. 205; Witherington, *Conflict and Community in Corinth*, p. 427.

²⁰³ Furnish, *II Corinthians*, p. 441.

of extorting money from his congregations. The collection is not membership dues,²⁰⁴ nor a mandatory levy but money freely given (2 Cor 9:5). The focus on a gift willingly given helps to explain the “not affected by covetousness” in 2 Corinthians 9:5. Barrett translates this phrase as “and not as something wrung from you.”²⁰⁵ Furnish notes that if the gift is ready in advance (1 Cor 16:2) then the Macedonian envoys who will arrive with Paul will see the Corinthian gift as a gift of love, like their own was. But if Paul has to beg for the money, it could seem like extortion from reluctant donors.²⁰⁶ Paul urges the Corinthians to seize the opportunity to give out of joy and not out of compulsion.

Regular

In order for the Corinthians to have money ready in advance, disciplined giving was in order. 1 Corinthians 16:2 is a key verse in the study of the collection: “On the first day of every week each one of you is to put aside and save, as he may prosper, so that no collections be made when I come.” The “as he may prosper” warrants a section of its own (p.77); this section of the paper looks at the aspect of weekly, disciplined giving. It is clear that regular giving is encouraged. The collection project is not an *ad hoc* appeal to be conducted upon Paul’s arrival – Paul specifically precludes that possibility.²⁰⁷ His instructions here serve two purposes in terms of accountability: firstly, they serve to avoid any accusations or possibility of fraud, and secondly, they suggest a measure of donor accountability.

Barrett translates this verse as “Let each one of you set aside *for himself* [italics mine]” in contrast to “contribute to a church collection” in order to avoid misappropriation or the possibility of accusations thereof.²⁰⁸ The “first day of every week” component looms large. Is

²⁰⁴ Keener, *1-2 Corinthians*, p. 136.

²⁰⁵ Barrett, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, p. 235. For a detailed discussion, see Margaret E. Thrall, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: Volume II Commentary on II Corinthians VIII-XIII* (London: T & T Clark, 2000), p. 571-3.

²⁰⁶ Furnish, *II Corinthians*, p. 439.

²⁰⁷ Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, p. 1324.

²⁰⁸ Barrett, *First Epistle to the Corinthians*, p. 387.

this contribution part of worship?²⁰⁹ I presume that worship served as a reminder but that believers kept the money at home²¹⁰ in preparation for Paul's arrival.²¹¹ Scholars are divided²¹² on whether early Jesus-followers worshipped on the Sabbath or Sunday (the first day).²¹³ Even a scholar who believes worshippers met on Sunday says that the collection was not part of worship at that time.²¹⁴ There were no banks: who would have kept the money? The most fiscally prudent plan was for believers to regularly put aside money at home.

A weekly contribution would also add up to a more sizeable gift, as many commentators have noted.²¹⁵ But Paul desires more than an impressive gift; he genuinely desires to strengthen the Corinthian church. Giving is not simply a spontaneous response to need or to an emotional appeal upon Paul's arrival, but a regular component of Jesus follower praxis. Paul promotes a disciplined approach to giving.

Proportional

Proportional giving is within everyone's means, but Paul's language needs some deciphering to appreciate the full inclusivity of his thinking. The Greek word translated as "prosper" is a rare term which occurs elsewhere in the New Testament only in Romans 1:10 and 3 John 2.²¹⁶ Most commentators recognize the proportionality in the phrase: Witherington suggests

²⁰⁹ Keener examines all the possibilities in *1-2 Corinthians*, p. 136. Cf. Horsley *1 Corinthians*, p. 221 who thinks it was collected during the Lord's Supper.

²¹⁰ Witherington, *Conflict and Community in Corinth*, p. 315.

²¹¹ Barrett, *First Epistle to the Corinthians*, p. 387.

²¹² For a detailed treatment see Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, p. 1321-1323.

²¹³ These scholars argue for Sunday: D. E. Aune, "Early Christian Worship" in *The Anchor Bible Dictionary* ed. David Noel Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1996, c1992). Hereafter *ABD*; Barrett, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, p. 287; Charles H. Talbert, *Reading Corinthians: A Literary and Theological Commentary – Revised Edition* (Macon, GA: Smyth and Helwys, 2002), p. 131; Witherington, *Conflict and Community in Corinth*, p. 315; Conzelmann *1 Corinthians*, p. 296.

²¹⁴ D.E. Aune, "Early Christian Worship," *ABD*.

²¹⁵ Witherington, *Conflict and Community in Corinth*, p. 315.

²¹⁶ W. Michaelis, "εὐοδόω," *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament Volume 5*, edited by Gerhard Friedrich, trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: MI, William B. Eerdmans, 1993), p. 112. Hereafter *TDNT*.

“as God has prospered you”²¹⁷ and Keener translates it as “if one should prosper.”²¹⁸ The *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* states that in 1 Corinthians 16:2 the sense of “as you may prosper” is “as much as possible” and that the idea of success is linked to saving, which each is to accomplish with genuine weekly sacrifice.²¹⁹ Thiselton translates the verse as “Every Sunday each of you should put aside at home an accumulation of savings in accordance with how you may fare.”²²⁰ All members of the church are invited to give sacrificially.

This is not a legalistic agreement where everyone gives the same percentage of income²²¹ but giving “to the extent that God provides more than what one needs to live on.”²²² Paul clarifies this in 2 Corinthians 8:12-14: “For this is not for the ease of others and for your affliction, but by way of equality.” Paul’s goal is not for the Corinthians to become impoverished,²²³ but only that the Corinthians give according to what they have (v.12), which presumably for most is an abundance²²⁴ (v.14). It is the readiness to give that matters (v.12). Betz notes that the teaching of proportionality emphasizes that a willingness to give matters more than the size of the gift.²²⁵

In present day fundraising, there has been an emphasis among many charities on regular giving of preset amounts through pre-authorized bank withdrawals. What Paul is suggesting to Corinth is something much more radical. Perhaps a parallel might be individual donors specifying a minimum bank balance for necessities and giving the surplus

²¹⁷ Witherington, *Conflict and Community in Corinth*, p. 315. The Greek term likely originates in the LXX. “In some 40 instance God is directly or indirectly the one to whom true success is ascribed.” W. Michaelis, “εὐοδόω,” *TDNT Volume 5*, p. 112.

²¹⁸ Keener, *1-2 Corinthians*, p. 136. Cf. Meeks *The First Urban Christians*, p. 65 who suggests that the phrase “as he may prosper” is in fact quite general, and we should avoid reading very much into it.

²¹⁹ W. Michaelis, “εὐοδόω,” *TDNT Volume 5*, p. 113-114.

²²⁰ Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, p. 1316, 1319.

²²¹ Harris, *Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, p. 587 argues that this would have been an excellent opportunity for Paul to promote tithing, but that Paul chooses to argue for proportional giving instead.

²²² Keener, *1-2 Corinthians*, p. 139.

²²³ Keener, *1-2 Corinthians*, p. 205.

²²⁴ Harris, *Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, p. 590.

²²⁵ Betz, *2 Corinthians 8 and 9*, p. 66.

away every week. Some people might not be able to give at all some weeks and others might give sizeable amounts.

Administrators and delegates

Paul emphasizes fiscal accountability in the arrangements he makes to administer the funds. Churches appointed delegates to oversee the collection (2 Cor 8:19, 1 Cor 16:3) to demonstrate its integrity (2 Cor 8:20-21), “just as cities chose envoys of virtuous reputation to carry gifts for the temple.”²²⁶ Paul takes pains to explain that the money is not administered nor collected by him,²²⁷ but that this is the responsibility of Titus (2 Cor 8:20), who had likely been chosen by the contributing congregations.²²⁸ Titus has been to Corinth previously (2 Cor 7:6-7; 13-15). Paul sends people known and trusted by the congregations.²²⁹

There is also fiscal accountability with respect to donors. They are encouraged to give regularly and proportionally. The exact methods for collecting the monies from individual donors are not known. However, it seems reasonable to assume that the people collecting the money might be able to gauge whether the gift resulted from proportional, regular giving.

Directional Accountability

Directional accountability concerns how donations will be used and what influence donors will have on that spending. In Paul’s collection for Jerusalem, directional accountability is largely left in God’s hands. Little is said about the actual physical outcomes of the relief effort. The kinds of desired outcomes Paul outlines to his donor churches are: prayer and praise to God, and increased recognition of his ministry.

²²⁶ Keener cites Philo Special Laws 1.78 in *1-2 Corinthians*, p. 209.

²²⁷ Witherington, *Conflict and Community in Corinth*, p. 414.

²²⁸ Witherington, *Conflict and Community in Corinth*, p. 422. Cf. Nickle, *Collection*, p. 84 on protecting against allegations of pilfering temple tax.

²²⁹ For fuller treatment of Titus’ relationship with the Corinthian church see Harris, *Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, p. 571.

Very little is recorded about how the funds were actually to be used. Paul assures the Corinthians that the Jerusalem church is not becoming rich at their expense (2 Cor 8:13), but there seems to be little interest in how the Jerusalem community of believers would actually disperse the money. It could be that believers were already familiar with how benevolences operated in the community of faith and that nothing further needed to be said on the matter. Aside from the travel expenses presumably incurred by the delegation, the only documented expenses are the purification ceremonies described in Acts 21:24.²³⁰ As a show of good faith, Paul pays for temporary Nazirite vows for himself and four other men when he arrives in Jerusalem with the collection. This would have represented a sizeable sum of money and shows that at least some of the collection was acceptable to the Jerusalem church for cultic purposes.²³¹

More is written about the desired outcomes of the collection, especially in 2 Corinthians 9:8-15. The principal outcomes Paul describes are thanksgiving and glory to God (2 Cor 9:11, 12, 13). Paul makes clear that this ministry is “not only fully supplying the needs of the saints, but is also overflowing through many thanksgivings to God (2 Cor 9:12).” The final outcome is praise to God – the physical giving of money is an intermediate step. Keener writes that:

Paul has already established that God is the ultimate benefactor who supplies even for those who give (9:8-11); thus when human benefactors dependent on him spread gifts in his name, *both the givers and the receivers honour God* their ultimate benefactor [italics mine].²³²

Using the image of seed for sowing as an analogy for giving, Paul assures the Corinthians that they will reap a “harvest of righteousness” (v. 10) and “be enriched in everything for all liberality” (2 Cor 9:11). God enables their giving, a theme which will repeat in the motivations for giving section (p.82).

²³⁰ Georgi, *Remembering the Poor*, p. 125.

²³¹ Murphy-O'Connor, *A Critical Life*, p. 350.

²³² Keener, *1-2 Corinthians*, p. 214.

Furnish gives two reasons why recipients will praise God on the Corinthians' behalf (2 Cor 9:11-15). The first is the generosity of those sharing resources and the second is the Corinthians' faith, "the *obedience* shown in their *confession of the gospel of Christ*."²³³ Furnish notes something that many Mennonite donors also noted, that "participation [is] a concrete manifestation of that faith."²³⁴ Closely related to praise is prayer: those aided will respond with intercessory prayer²³⁵ (2 Cor 9:14). In fact, Paul tells the Corinthians that the Jerusalem church will "yearn for you" (2 Cor 9:14), using the same verb Paul ordinarily uses to describe his own desire to see his converts' faces.²³⁶

It is important to recognize the obvious: the Jerusalem church cannot praise God for the Corinthian church, nor pray for them, without first acknowledging that the Corinthian church exists. "By contributing to the collection, the Gentiles acknowledge their debt to the Jewish Christians, but by accepting the collection the Jerusalem saints tacitly acknowledge the validity of the Gentile mission."²³⁷ Is Paul seeking recognition for his missionary efforts? 2 Corinthians only hints at this matter. Romans 15:31 shows that Paul is indeed concerned that his "service for Jerusalem may prove acceptable to the saints." The status of the gift and the status of the giver are closely tied.

However, Paul expresses no doubts about how God will receive the collection: "Paul trusted that the collection would further God's purposes. On the basis of that trust he asked for money and undertook the dangerous voyage to Jerusalem. If grace propelled the collection, it was faith and trust that sustained it."²³⁸ The directional accountability is entrusted to God.

²³³ Furnish, *II Corinthians*, p. 451.

²³⁴ Furnish, *II Corinthians*, p. 451.

²³⁵ Furnish, *II Corinthians*, p. 452.

²³⁶ Ralph P. Martin, *Word Biblical Commentary Volume 40: 2 Corinthians* (Waco: Word Books, 1986), p. 294.

²³⁷ Bassler, *God and Mammon*, p. 94. Cf. Witherington, *Conflict and Community in Corinth*, p. 424-425.

²³⁸ Bassler, *God and Mammon*, p. 113.

Motivations for Giving and Theology of Asking

What sort of motivations for giving does Paul appeal to? 2 Corinthians 8-9 is a rich primary text.²³⁹ I have chosen five areas of examination, based on applicability to the questions raised during donor and fundraiser interviews. My goal is to compare and contrast as a means of illuminating motivations both Pauline and present. The categories are:

- giving as grace
- comparison to selected Canadian Mennonite donor motivations
- example of Jesus
- expanding the boundaries of sharing: *koinonia*, *diakonia* and *leitourgia*
- comparison to Macedonians

We shall begin with the concept of “giving as grace” for which this passage is rightly famous.

Giving as grace

Paul emphasizes that God’s grace enables giving, that the Corinthians’ gift becomes God’s gift and that the grace of giving builds community. Grace permeates the “rich theological language”²⁴⁰ Paul employs in discussing the collection: he uses the term *charis* ten times in 2 Corinthians 8 and 9.²⁴¹ *Charis* can indicate “grace”, “gracious work”, or “gift”; Dunn also suggests that it sometimes conveys a sense of “enrichment” – lived grace as a response to received grace.²⁴² Paul does not refer directly to gifts of money in this passage, but uses the word “grace” instead.²⁴³

Giving is utterly dependent upon grace. Paul realized that without the grace of God, the collection project could not happen, “but that if that grace operated unhindered among

²³⁹ Dahl, *Studies in Paul*, p. 37-38 provides an excellent summary of how Paul talks about the Collection in “Words and Phrases referring to the Collection.” Also Harris, *Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, p. 554-5.

²⁴⁰ Bassler, *God and Mammon*, p. 101.

²⁴¹ Dunn, *Theology of Paul*, 707-708. See Harris, *Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, p. 559-560 for summary of how χάρις is used in 2 Cor 8-9. Also Dunn, *Theology of Paul*, p. 319-323 for how Paul uses the term in his writing.

²⁴² Dunn, *Theology of Paul*, 707-708.

²⁴³ McCant, *2 Corinthians*, p. 76. Also Keener, *1-2 Corinthians*, p. 202.

the Corinthians, as it had among the Macedonians, the project would prove successful.”²⁴⁴

One very explicit mention of how God’s grace operates appears in 2 Corinthians 9:8:

And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that always having all sufficiency in everything, you may have an abundance for every good deed.

The best commentary I have heard on this verse came from the donor interviews. One man reflects on decades of generosity thusly: “The amazing thing is that whatever I have given, I have never ever missed it.”

Giving is an act of grace modelled on God’s gift of grace. The collection follows the example of the gracious gifts of Jesus (2 Cor 8:9) and the Father (2 Cor 9:8,15).²⁴⁵ In 2 Corinthians 9:9, Paul cites God’s gifts to the poor to illustrate that the “Corinthians have a chance to be like God by giving lavishly to those who are in need.”²⁴⁶ The Corinthians’ gift “becomes God’s gift” and results in thanksgiving to God.²⁴⁷

The grace of giving strengthens the community of believers. “Grace, we might say, had only been truly experienced when it produced gracious people.”²⁴⁸ The very communal nature of the collection and delegation serve to promote grace as a gift to the community: “A visible sign of an invisible grace.”²⁴⁹ Grace flows from God to human, through humans as gracious action and back to God as thanks.²⁵⁰ However, the circle of grace does not end there: Dunn sees grace/*charis* developing into fuller expression as *charisma* - a “gift to the community.”²⁵¹ In this way, the grace of God is expressed not just in individual salvation, but also in the building of the community.²⁵²

²⁴⁴ Harris, *Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, p. 560. So too McCant, *2 Corinthians*, p. 79.

²⁴⁵ Keener, *1-2 Corinthians*, p. 202.

²⁴⁶ Witherington, *Conflict and Community in Corinth*, p. 427.

²⁴⁷ McCant, *2 Corinthians*, p. 99-100.

²⁴⁸ Dunn, *Theology of Paul*, p. 707.

²⁴⁹ Dahl, *Studies in Paul*, p. 31.

²⁵⁰ Dunn, *Theology of Paul*, p. 708.

²⁵¹ Dunn, *Theology of Paul*, p. 323.

²⁵² Dunn, *Theology of Paul*, p. 323.

Comparison to selected Canadian Mennonite donor motivations

Some motivations which emerged from donor interviews are not primary motivations used by Paul. This is to be expected, given the different *Sitz im Leben* of the two groups. The three motivations Paul does not primarily appeal to, but which donors cite, are: obligation/duty, need and empathy. Joy is a motive which some donors mention, and which Paul emphasizes.

We have already examined the voluntary nature of giving. Giving is not a duty, although Paul does emphasize that it is important to finish what one starts (2 Cor 8:11; 9:5).

Bassler eloquently expresses the difference between grace and compulsion:

Because of this identification with grace, external compulsion was unacceptable. Nor should it be necessary, for if Paul's churches had truly experience God's grace they would, like the Macedonians, voluntarily- and eagerly- respond. Grace, then, had its own dynamic that would carry the collection along.²⁵³

Nor was the collection strictly in response to need: the situation is more complex and interdependent than need and response. Best points out that Paul does not paint a "tear-jerking sketch" of conditions in Jerusalem.²⁵⁴ In fact, Furnish, notes that Paul does not once mention Jerusalem in 2 Corinthians 8-9.²⁵⁵ When Paul does mention "their present need", he also talks about their resulting abundance as a supply for the Corinthians' need (2 Cor 8:14), which puts the focus on equality rather than on need. McCant wonders "[i]f helping the poor was the ultimate goal, it is strange that Paul only hints of 'needs' in this context."²⁵⁶ In Romans 15:27, Paul describes the Gentiles as being spiritually indebted to Jerusalem, a role reversal compared to material relief. Bassler talks about "the exchange of material blessings" in response to the "prior exchange of spiritual blessings."²⁵⁷

²⁵³ Bassler, *God and Mammon*, p. 111.

²⁵⁴ Ernest Best, *Paul and His Converts: The Sprunt Lectures 1985* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1988), p. 98.

²⁵⁵ Furnish, *II Corinthians*, p. 402.

²⁵⁶ Jerry W. McCant, *2 Corinthians* (London: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), p. 77.

²⁵⁷ Bassler, *God and Mammon*, p. 94.

Since this is not a simple need and response situation, it is not surprising that empathy is not a motivation either. Paul does not desire pity but equality (2 Cor 8:13-15). "In Paul's application of 'equality,' the person with more than what is needed to live on shares with those who have less, and can expect reciprocation if the roles are reversed."²⁵⁸ Paul provides the example of the Israelites in the desert (2 Cor 8:15, referring to Ex 16:18) where it is God who provides for their needs through everyone having enough - none too much or too little.

A few Mennonite donors report that joy is a motive for their giving and this finds common expression in Paul's thinking. The Macedonians' giving comes from an "abundance of joy (2 Cor 8:2)" and their generosity in spite of their poverty even surprises Paul (2 Cor 8:2,5). "God loves a cheerful giver" is frequently excerpted from 2 Corinthians 9:7 and "joyous" would be another translation of *hilaros*.²⁵⁹ The previous section on directional accountability discussed praise and thanksgiving as outcomes from the collection, while the above exploration of grace looked at giving as a gracious response to received grace. If "joy is a saving gift from God," then joy is seldom far from Paul's reasoning.²⁶⁰

Example of Jesus

2 Corinthians 8:9 merits special attention, because the sacrificial example of Jesus was explicitly cited in the donor interviews. Paul views the collection project as a response to Jesus' incarnation. However, Paul is not advising the Corinthians to become materially poor like Christ, but to respond as those who have been enriched by Christ's gracious giving.

I agree with Fred Craddock who argues against an economic interpretation of the poverty of Christ: believers do not become rich²⁶¹ and the condition of poverty is not to be

²⁵⁸ Keener, *1-2 Corinthians*, p. 206. For another discussion of equality in antiquity, see Betz, *2 Corinthians 8 and 9*, p. 67.

²⁵⁹ "Dictionary and Word Search for *hilaros* (Strong's 2431)" in Blue Letter Bible website.

²⁶⁰ For a more detailed discussion of Paul's concept of joy, see Georgi, *Remembering the Poor*, p. 71.

²⁶¹ Fred B. Craddock, "The Poverty of Christ: An Investigation of II Cor. 8:9," *Interpretation* 22 (April 1968): 164, 168. So too Betz, *2 Corinthians 8 and 9*, p. 62: "concepts of wealth and poverty found in 2 Cor 8:9 are metaphorical."

exalted.²⁶² He instead argues for a more theological interpretation: Christ's poverty consists of his incarnation, his complete identification with the human situation.²⁶³ Paul is making a case against the separation of the material and the spiritual, a real temptation for the pneumatically minded Corinthian believers: "Money for the relief of the poor is as 'spiritual' as prayer, or tongues... The offering for the saints in Judea was for Paul a definite implication of the Incarnation."²⁶⁴ In Romans 12:13, Paul lists "contributing to the needs of the saints" as a spiritual gift. Betz notes that "the Jerusalem collection presented the perfect opportunity to respond appropriately to the example of Christ."²⁶⁵ Furnish states that the admonition implicit in this statement is not "'Do what Christ did,'" but is rather, "Do what is appropriate to your status as those who have been enriched by the grace of Christ."²⁶⁶ All believers have been so enriched, and all believers, rich or poor, can respond to the collection project in response to Christ's gift.

Expanding the boundaries of sharing: *koinonia*, *diakonia* and *leitourgia*

Paul uses a polyvalent vocabulary in his appeal for the collection. The way Paul uses the terms *koinonia*, *diakonia* and *leitourgia*²⁶⁷ to discuss his collection serves to expand the boundaries of sharing among believers. Material and spiritual blessings are both shared, and believers with whom one disagrees are also included in the sharing.

Paul uses the term *koinonia* (partnership, sharing, communion) in 2 Corinthians 8:4 and 9:13, as well as in Romans 15:26.²⁶⁸ "The shared 'participation' in grace/Spirit (it is implied) should come to expression in the 'sharing' of relative prosperity in 'shared'

²⁶² Craddock, "Poverty," 164 writes "such exalting of the condition of poverty as a most blessed state, as though a man's life consisted in the abundance of things he did not possess, has had a long and widespread acceptance in the church."

²⁶³ Craddock, "Poverty," 166. Contra Dunn, *Theology of Paul*, p. 292 who notes "[t]hat Paul intended an allusion to the preexistent Christ's self-abasement in incarnation must be judged unlikely."

²⁶⁴ Craddock, "Poverty," 169.

²⁶⁵ Betz, *2 Corinthians 8 and 9*, p. 61.

²⁶⁶ Furnish, *II Corinthians*, p. 418.

²⁶⁷ For further detailed of how Paul connects theological terms, see Bassler, *God and Mammon*, p. 101-107.

²⁶⁸ Dahl, *Studies in Paul*, p. 37.

ministry.”²⁶⁹ Similar to the incarnational argument, there is no distinction between sharing spiritual and material blessings. Paul’s use of the term *leitourgia* (2 Cor 9:12) incorporates the ideas of giving as voluntary public service as well as an act of worship and thanksgiving to God.²⁷⁰ The word has connotations of priestly ministry²⁷¹ and again reinforces the connection between the spiritual and the material.

Sharing (*koinonia*) and service (*diakonia*) “reach across the ocean” to the church in Jerusalem with whom Paul and the Gentile churches had some theological differences regarding Torah observance.²⁷² Sharing and service are motivated by God and expressed towards people. Paul simply assumes that believers will serve other believers and he “emphasizes the practical character of *koinonia*.”²⁷³ What makes this sharing and service so unusual is that they are extended not just towards people one loves, but to people one may not even like.²⁷⁴ While the collection demonstrates the Corinthians’ love for Paul as well (2 Cor 8:24),²⁷⁵ the boundaries of fellowship and service stretch to the extremes. Paul’s ecumenical vision for the collection highlights that the “interdependence of the body of Christ is not limited to relationships within individual congregations.”²⁷⁶

Comparison to Macedonians

I chose to examine the Paul’s comparison of the Corinthians to the Macedonians because most commentators are dismissively critical of Paul’s psychological tactics.²⁷⁷ I am attracted to the sheer boldness of Paul’s comparing one church’s giving to another’s, especially in contrast to contemporary reticence. For example, Rempel from MC Canada mentions this is

²⁶⁹ Dunn, *Theology of Paul*, p. 709.

²⁷⁰ Witherington, *Conflict and Community in Corinth*, p. 428.

²⁷¹ Dahl, *Studies in Paul*, p.37.

²⁷² Dunn, *Theology of Paul*, p. 709.

²⁷³ Dunn, *Theology of Paul*, p. 709.

²⁷⁴ Cf. Matthew 5:46-48.

²⁷⁵ Bassler, *God and Mammon*, p. 100.

²⁷⁶ Dunn, *Theology of Paul*, p. 709.

²⁷⁷ Paul “resorts to a threat of shaming the Corinthians.” Witherington, *Conflict and Community in Corinth*, p. 412.

done confidentially and only upon request. However, it could be that Paul is able to compare one church to another because he is confident that God's grace will move the Corinthians in the same way grace empowered the Macedonian churches.²⁷⁸

Paul enthusiastically promotes the Macedonians as a model for the Corinthians to emulate.²⁷⁹ In 2 Corinthians 8:5, the "Macedonians gave themselves to the Lord." This self-giving is an interesting parallel to giving as *Gelassenheit*, but is it fair to use the example of the Macedonians to shame the Corinthians into giving? Paul has been boasting about the Corinthians (2 Cor 8:24) and is "sending the advance delegates" so that "his boast will not embarrass him when the Macedonians come (9:2-3)."²⁸⁰ Lynn Miller sees something beyond "rhetorical strategy"²⁸¹ in Paul's words. He writes:

I have found that if I feel guilt or shame at not being generous, when I'm finally able I thank God for that emotional wake-up call. Then I ask myself what those feelings are saying to me. The Apostle Paul uses the motivation of both guilt and shame in his fundraising appeal to the Corinthians. Later he goes on to say that the real reason to give is that it both proves their faith and creates thanksgiving.²⁸²

Perhaps Paul is providing such an "emotional wake-up call" for the Corinthians in order that they are able to be jolted out of self-centeredness and make room for God's grace to operate.

Delegation as gift

A delegation of representatives from contributing churches accompanies the collection. This delegation is deliberately large in order to ensure the collection is administered correctly, to communicate with churches and to fulfil Paul's ecumenical purposes. I want to look at the practical details and purposes of the delegation because the journey is as important as the destination. In fact, Paul declares in Romans that the delegation itself is a gift.

²⁷⁸ Furnish, *II Corinthians*, p. 452.

²⁷⁹ Martin, *2 Corinthians*, p. 255. See Harris, *Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, p. 622 for further details on Macedonian and Corinthian relations.

²⁸⁰ Keener, *1-2 Corinthians*, p. 211.

²⁸¹ Keener, *1-2 Corinthians*, p. 203.

²⁸² Bedru Hussein and Lynn Miller, *Stewardship for All?* (Intercourse, PA: Good Books, 2006), p. 37.

Purpose of Large Delegation

It must have taken a great deal of effort to arrange for the various churches to travel together to Jerusalem. Georgi argues, rather provocatively, for a delegation large enough to influence the course of the ship on which they were passengers.²⁸³ Scholars have offered economic and eschatological reasons for the considerable size of the delegation, but an expression of unity is the most likely reason.

It is agreed that the delegation was unexpectedly large. Murphy-O'Connor suggests that each member of the party would have carried some money on their person, plus would have "a number of gold coins sewn into his or her garments in such a way that they would not chink."²⁸⁴ Many scholars assume there must have been a sizeable sum of money to justify such a large entourage,²⁸⁵ and even then the delegation still seems excessive to some. Holmberg observes that Paul's churches "are personally represented by a (unnecessarily) large delegation of Gentile Christians."²⁸⁶ Munck acknowledges that one purpose of the "uncommonly large" delegation of at least ten men was to provide contact and to maintain propriety but still wonders why the delegation was so sizeable.²⁸⁷ Assuming a large sum of amount of money raised is one argument, but Munck's comments about contact and the discussions about Paul's ecumenical goals, desire for unity and the offering of the Gentiles all point to the delegation as a sign of unity among believers.

Some argue that Paul wanted to optimize the eschatological impact on the Jerusalem church by presenting a large delegation of Gentile converts,²⁸⁸ but I do not see evidence for this. In terms of relief, the church in Antioch had previously made a contribution for famine

²⁸³ Georgi, *Remembering the Poor*, p. 123.

²⁸⁴ Murphy-O'Connor, *A Critical Life*, p. 346.

²⁸⁵ Munck, *Salvation of Mankind*, p. 303; Georgi, *Remembering the Poor*, p. 124; Murphy-O'Connor, *A Critical Life*, p. 346.

²⁸⁶ Holmberg, *Paul and Power*, p. 38

²⁸⁷ Munck, *Salvation of Mankind*, p. 303.

²⁸⁸ Munck, *Salvation of Mankind*, p. 303.

relief in Jerusalem (Acts 11:30);²⁸⁹ so, there was a precedent for contributions from individual churches. A series of delegations arriving in Jerusalem would be more pragmatic for delivering funds. 1 Corinthians 16:3 also suggests that may have been Paul's original plan. Delivering the collection *together* was a very tangible, and I would argue a deliberate, sign of the unity of the various churches.

Preachers or Accountants? Implied context for delegation

The delivery process merits attention. The fiscal accountability roles of the delegates are vital, but their responsibilities are broader than strictly fiscal. The envoys have a directional accountability role as well, not in the sense of supervising how Jerusalem dispersed the funds, but in participating in the outcomes of praise and thanksgiving and reporting back to the churches. The delegates are participants, and their home congregations participate by proxy.²⁹⁰ Georgi proposes an additional role for the delegation: explaining the collection en route.

2 Corinthians 8:18 becomes a key verse: "With him we are sending the brother who is famous among all the churches for his preaching of the gospel (ESV)." Georgi maintains that the delegate here is sent along to accompany Paul to Jerusalem not only to monitor the integrity of the collection, but to explain the reasons for it.²⁹¹ He had been chosen because he was a well-known preacher, a reputation which had spread among the congregations.²⁹²

Georgi continues:

[H]e was to explain to those who might want to know about the considerable and steadily growing amount of money Paul was carrying on this collection tour and to fend off any hint of irregularities or other criticism directed against the apostle.²⁹³

²⁸⁹ Nickle, *Collection*, p. 28.

²⁹⁰ Georgi, *Remembering the Poor*, p. 74.

²⁹¹ Georgi, *Remembering the Poor*, p. 73-74.

²⁹² Georgi, *Remembering the Poor*, p. 73-74.

²⁹³ Georgi, *Remembering the Poor*, p. 73-74. Contra Malina and Pilch, *Social-Science Commentary*, p. 174 who suggest the man will serve "as some sort of accountant."

In addition, Georgi maintains that this travelling companion could be called on to testify that “the congregations had agreed to [the collection] for reasons of the gospel and that the economic aspect of the affair was only secondary.”²⁹⁴ The collection is inspired by the gospel, and explaining the collection and preaching the gospel are compatible activities.

It must be noted that being famous “for his preaching of the gospel (ESV, RSV)” is a less common translation of 2 Corinthians 8:18, but one which better captures the proclaiming connotations of *euaggelion*. The Theological Dictionary of the New Testament notes that the substantive usage “describes the act of proclamation: 2 C. 8:18, praise at the preaching of the Gospel.”²⁹⁵ Many translators have taken a more general translation: “service to the gospel (NIV),” “the things of the gospel (NASB),” “his work for the gospel (Furnish)”²⁹⁶ but translating *en tō euaggeliō*²⁹⁷ as “a preacher of the good news” (NLT) or “proclaiming the good news (NRSV, Keener)”²⁹⁸ is consistent with how Paul uses the word²⁹⁹ to describe himself (2 Cor 2:12, Rom 1:9), and himself and his companions (2 Cor 10:14).

The differences in translation illustrate the context one envisions for the collection. “Preaching of the gospel” presumes a different context for the delegation in which the delivery of the collection is part of the gospel and a tangible proclamation of the good news. If the real ministry takes place only when the collection arrives at Jerusalem, then the brother is an overseer, a trustworthy accountant. In that case, preaching might seem out of place and the emphasis is on his trustworthiness,³⁰⁰ as shown by his service to the gospel.

²⁹⁴ Georgi, *Remembering the Poor*, p. 74.

²⁹⁵ Gerhard Friedrich, “ευαγγέλιον,” *TDNT Volume 2*, p. 729.

²⁹⁶ Furnish, *II Corinthians*, p. 422.

²⁹⁷ “Dictionary and Word Search for *euaggelion* (Strong's 2098)” in Blue Letter Bible website.

²⁹⁸ Keener, *1-2 Corinthians*, p. 208.

²⁹⁹ With Thrall, *II Corinthians VIII-XIII*, p. 548. Contra Harris, *Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, p. 601 who cites Romans 1:9, Phil 4:3 and 1 Thess 4:2. I do not find his argument convincing. Furnish, *II Corinthians*, p. 422 acknowledges “preaching” as a possibility but interprets the word more generally in this instance.

³⁰⁰ Trust is certainly an important component of Paul’s recommendation cf. 2 Cor 8:22.

The identity of this and the other delegates remains a mystery.³⁰¹ However, for our purposes, it is the high status of the delegates that matters. Georgi notices the differences in the description of Titus and the two brothers in verse 23. Titus is described as Paul's comrade and partner and "as for our brethren, they are the messengers of the churches, a glory to Christ (2 Cor 8:23)." "By ascribing to these two envoys a dignity higher even than the apostle's fellow worker, Titus, Paul clearly points to the immense importance he assigns the congregations."³⁰²

Furnish describes Paul's accreditation of the envoys as personal, ecclesial and Christological.³⁰³

The delegation is not merely a vehicle for the collection, but part of the project of promoting relationships within the body of Christ. Believers from one city would likely develop new friendships and connections with other believers on their journey. Georgi notes how the nature of the delegation, and the collection, develop partnerships within the "entire ecumenical community of Christ."³⁰⁴ The delegates are integral to the collection project.³⁰⁵

It may seem difficult to envision proclaiming the gospel en route: a large delegation carrying a sizeable sum of money, stopping to add still more money and delegates, sounds like a hazardous undertaking already. However, such an adventure is consistent with Paul's simultaneously obedient and risk taking nature. Writing in the context of Romans 15:31, Harris notes that 2 Corinthians 9 is written as if the Corinthians had already given their gift,

³⁰¹ Harris, *Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, p. 602 astutely notes that "the very diversity of the suggestions indicates that certainty is impossible." Murphy-O'Connor, *A Critical Life*, p. 315 plausibly suggests that the unnamed envoy was a Corinthian: "when the Corinthians recognized him, and heard Paul's eulogy, they would have been both flattered and relieved."

³⁰² Georgi, *Remembering the Poor*, p. 75. Contra Betz, *2 Corinthians 8 and 9*, p. 73, 82 who remarks on the "vagueness" of the expression. He regards Paul's omission of their names as an attempt to lower their status. Cf. Witherington, *Conflict and Community in Corinth*, p. 209 for why not naming the delegates does not diminish their authority; Martin, *2 Corinthians*, p. 280 suggests "high esteem."

³⁰³ Harris, *Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, p. 595-6.

³⁰⁴ Georgi, *Remembering the Poor*, p. 75.

³⁰⁵ Contra Meeks, *The First Urban Christians*, p. 133 and Shillington, *2 Corinthians*, p. 183 who see a lesser role for the messengers.

when that has yet to occur: “Paul is trusting in God’s ability...to produce the positive outcome he envisages.”³⁰⁶

Offering of the Gentiles

The structure of the delegation helps to fulfil Paul’s ecumenical vision, not just at Jerusalem, but on the journey. In 2 Corinthians 8:5, because of “God’s grace working in them,”³⁰⁷ Paul says that the Macedonians gave themselves to the Lord, and to Paul’s ministry. I propose that the Gentiles themselves become a gift.

Many of the outcomes Paul envisions for the collection are God-oriented: God will be glorified and praised as a result of faith demonstrated by the collection. Paul praises the Macedonians for their sacrificial giving (2 Cor 8:2-5). Paul is encouraging the Corinthians in a similar discipline of generosity and concern for believers beyond their own community. The accountability measures he suggests foster accountability to God and to each other.

Thus, the collection is a tangible expression that believers have given themselves to God, an expression of giving as *Gelassenheit*. Paul makes this explicit in Romans 15:16 where he explains that God has given him grace in order “to be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles, ministering as a priest the gospel of God, so that my *offering of the Gentiles* may become acceptable, sanctified by the Holy Spirit [*italics mine*].”

The Gentiles themselves are the gift. Here I hold to the traditional interpretation of the “offering of the Gentiles” as a genitive of apposition and not a subjective genitive.³⁰⁸ It could be that Paul is also referring to the gift made by the Gentiles,³⁰⁹ although I prefer to think that it is the Gentiles and not the money which the Spirit sanctifies. Fee writes that “Paul’s offering turns out to be the Gentiles themselves, evidenced to be so because they have been

³⁰⁶ Harris, *Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, p. 658.

³⁰⁷ Furnish, *II Corinthians*, p. 413.

³⁰⁸ Contra David J. Downs, “‘The Offering of the Gentiles’ in Romans 15:16,” *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 29.2 (2006): 173; John E. Toews, *Romans* (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 2004), p. 352. With Karl Barth, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 6th ed. trans. Edwyn C. Hoskins (London, Oxford University Press, 1968), p. 530; Hurtado lecture, 18 July 2007.

³⁰⁹ Wan, *Paul and Politics*, p. 206.

‘sanctified by the Holy Spirit.’”³¹⁰ Thus, we have the delegation participating by both carrying an offering and being an offering. Fee continues:

Thus, the primary way by which believers are identified in the new age that Christ and the Spirit have ushered in is by the Spirit, himself holy, who by his presence makes his people also ‘holy.’ For Paul this is the ultimate ‘offering’ that he can present to God.³¹¹

While 2 Corinthians 8 and 9 do not explicitly mention the Spirit, in Romans 15:16 Paul states the connection more clearly. It is the Holy Spirit who makes the Gentiles acceptable, connecting all believers to Christ, both Jew and Gentile. While the gift of money is intended to help establish the fellowship of believers, ultimately it is the Holy Spirit who enables the connection to Christ.

The delegation does not seem unnecessarily large when seen as a sign of the outpouring of God’s Spirit. There is more opportunity for fellowship amongst believers, and the impact on local churches when the delegates return home is magnified. Paul has received God’s grace and responds with an offering of the Gentiles.

Summary chart of Paul’s collection for Jerusalem

| | |
|----------------------------------|---|
| Motives for Giving | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Voluntary expression of ecumenical unity • Involvement, relationship • In response to grace • Example of Christ • Joyful celebration of God’s abundance |
| Familiarity as Motive for Giving | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give even to those believers with whom you disagree to build <i>koinonia</i> |
| Fiscal Accountability | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong concern for fiscal and administrative accountability • Regular giving expected • Delegation of representatives from contributing churches |
| Directional Accountability | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How Jerusalem will spend funds not stressed • Anticipated outcomes of praise and thanksgiving to God |
| Ecclesial structures | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delegation is primary accountability structure • Wide participation through large delegate model |

³¹⁰ Gordon D. Fee, *God’s Empowering Presence: the Holy Spirit in the letters of Paul* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2002) Fifth printing, p. 626

³¹¹ Fee, *God’s Empowering Presence*, p. 627.

| | |
|---------------------------------|--|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emphasis on inclusiveness, unity and autonomy • Proportional giving means everyone can contribute • Collection is part of the good news, preacher travels with delegation • Respect for Jerusalem's salvation-historical status |
| Theology of Fundraising | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Circle of grace • Integrative model for donors and recipients – all have received God's grace |
| Use of Professional Fundraisers | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paul is not shy about asking for money or reminding the Corinthians of their previous pledges |
| Noteworthy | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Simple living to facilitate giving – proportionality • Willingness to compare Corinthians' giving to Macedonians' giving |

Comparing Pauline and Mennonite theology and praxis

To conclude the study, I would like to compare the results of the exegesis of the biblical texts with the interpretation of the “texts” from Mennonite donors. The biblical texts carry normative weight for Mennonite donors and the findings from Paul’s collection for Jerusalem could inform Canadian Mennonite praxis to a larger extent than at present. Precise parallels are not possible – the primitive church did not have denominations or parachurch institutions as such. In Paul’s collection for Jerusalem, it is the delegation that functions as the intermediary organization. However, asking for money from church members is still present and the two texts speak to each other in many ways. It may help the reader to refer to the summary chart of Paul’s collection for Jerusalem (p.94) and the summary chart of Mennonite praxis (p.60). I want to compare:

- Secrecy around giving: talking about money could transform Mennonite stewardship (comparing “Noteworthy” items on charts)
- Fiscal accountability: this is a common theme in both texts. Paul’s model of communal discernment facilitates greater accountability (comparing “Fiscal Accountability” on charts)
- Directional accountability: Paul’s approach provides a valuable corrective to needs-based and individualized giving (comparing “Directional Accountability” on charts)
- Motives for giving: examining unity, grace and equality (comparing “Motives for Giving”). Applying Paul’s motives for giving to Mennonite praxis would have widespread repercussions in a variety of areas.
- Familiarity as a motive for giving: Paul’s appeal to become more inclusive of believers with whom we disagree challenges the familiarity motive commonly expressed by Mennonite donors (comparing “Familiarity as Motive for giving”).

The comparison concludes with a case study of exuberant inefficiency which emphasizes the joyful giving promoted in Paul’s model.

Money talks; people only whisper

Canadian Mennonites need to break the code of silence around money. I can vividly recall one donor who bemoaned the secrecy around giving which prohibits a joyous celebration of generosity. Mark Vincent writes that “[w]hen we make decisions about generous and grace-filled living, we who received the Holy Spirit are inspired to seek the counsel of the church.”³¹² Secret giving is incompatible with seeking counsel. Vincent addresses the left hand/right hand conundrum (Matt 6:3-4) by noting that Jesus condemned the false spirituality of those who pretended they were righteous because they gave. “Totally private giving can present the same dangers – letting us pretend we give even when we do not. Battling false spirituality is the point ... far more than telling us to give in private.”³¹³ One donor reports that a young man in his church suggested that people be more honest and provide their income and spending to each other to “help each other to make proper decisions,” but this becomes a privacy issue. Perhaps this would make a difficult starting point, but there are many ways churches could be more open about money.

Paul’s collection for Jerusalem presumes that talking about giving and asking for money are ministry activities. Giving remains an individual decision, but the collection would not have happened if Paul had not asked for money. Not only that, but when the Corinthians volunteer to participate, Paul follows up. He invests significant time and energy in encouraging the Corinthians to give by sending ministry associates and writing a letter before his own visit. Paul’s comparison of the Macedonian and Corinthian churches makes an interesting example. It is difficult to imagine someone from a Mennonite institution walking into a church and saying “I see you have not yet met your budget for giving to help other believers. Another church in the same region is going through some tough times yet they exceeded their budgeted amount by \$10,000. They were so excited to be able to help our

³¹² Mark L. Vincent, *A Christian View of Money: Celebrating God’s Generosity* (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1997), p. 90.

³¹³ Vincent, *A Christian View of Money*, p. 91.

ministry! Isn't God good?" This anecdote illustrates how strikingly forthright Paul is when talking about giving.

Talking about money also enables church members to encourage one another in living simply in order to facilitate giving. Paul's model of proportional giving enables everyone to give, regardless of circumstances. Some Canadian Mennonite donors are already living this model. The seemingly small detail of proportional giving could transform the practice of Mennonite stewardship.

Fiscal accountability

Canadian Mennonite donors and the Pauline churches share a concern for fiscal accountability. There is definitely a common concern for doing what is proper in the eyes of people and of God. However, there are two significant differences. First, there is no paradox of accountability in Paul's collection project. Second, the communal giving and delegation model of the Gentile churches makes accountability an easier and more holistic process, one which includes "narrative accountability," which simply means putting words to explain the connection between gospel, grace and generosity. (This section refers to "Fiscal Accountability" and "Ecclesial structures" on the summary charts, pages 60 and 94.)

The paradox of accountability in Canadian Mennonite giving is that financial transparency and donor communication cost money, while donors are concerned about minimizing such costs. In Paul's collection project, churches appoint delegates to supervise and participate as fiscal and narrative accountants who oversee and give an account of the gospel motivations for the collection. There are not two tiers of participants: ministry and administration, as present-day charities are sometimes structured. Hiring an auditor is not wasteful, for instance. Paul does not hesitate to send advance representatives to verify the Corinthians' giving levels. Giving, accounting, and preaching are all ministry.

This active delegate model does not fit well with a “low cost” community model where individual church members give as they see fit. In individualized giving, everyone is his or her own delegate on an individual journey and there is reduced accountability, fiscal or otherwise. More accountability is possible when church giving is based on communal discernment and someone from the congregation is able to participate in how the money is administered. The delegates will also carry the accounts of prayers and thanksgiving among the recipients back to their home churches. The delegation model is unworkable without a common cause to support.

Directional accountability

Paul knows that the collection for Jerusalem will supply a need, but the outcomes he emphasizes are unity and equality within the church, as well as prayers and thanksgiving. Paul tells stories of giving and stories of grace, although the need must have been known. Directional accountability (influencing how the money will be used) is not stressed, but entrusted to the receiving church and to God. (This section refers to the “Directional Accountability” sections on the summary charts.)

Perhaps Paul’s approach provides a valuable corrective to needs-based and results-based motivations for giving. Would it have mattered if the Jerusalem parties held a big banquet to celebrate the offering they have received from the Gentile churches, rather than prudently stockpiling grain and oil? Both hypothetical outcomes would fulfil Paul’s desired purposes: the church would be strengthened and prayers of thanksgiving rendered to God. In Paul’s delegation model, there is no paradox of directional accountability where individual donors desire institutional accountability, yet are accountable only to themselves. Donor and delegates can influence the gift of one’s self, becoming a gift to God and showing God’s grace through their generosity. They are an encouragement to the receivers, to churches along the way, and to their local congregations.

Motives for Giving

The three most applicable motives are unity, grace and equality. Paul conveys a deep concern for the unity of the church which pervades the motivation for giving he uses. I begin by considering how Paul's methods to promote unity might impact congregational and fundraising praxis for Mennonites. The next focus is on grace, examining the source and implications of a costly abundance of grace. Thirdly, equality as motivation for giving has international and national implications.

Unity

Paul has a vision and a passion for involving all members in the unity of the church. Mennonite donors are concerned about "vision," which is congruent with Paul's approach to fundraising. However, Paul's emphasis on participation in a shared goal is not congruent with the efficiency-oriented, budget-driven model of contemporary Mennonite fundraising.

Paul is more concerned with encouraging everyone to participate than he is with how much money he collects, although the two goals are related. Mennonite churches often measure donations received against budgeted amount, rather than measuring participation. Paul's desire for unity among believers leads him to promote regular and proportional giving amongst all members of the community of faith, not just the richer members. This research has found that Mennonite institutions, like most charities, increasingly solicit from individual donors - in effect bypassing the local congregation. It is more efficient to ask fewer well-off people for money than it is to cultivate many new donors who may not have the habit of giving. Cultivating individual donors means that it is possible that the majority of funding comes from a minority of church members.³¹⁴ Paul does not subscribe to the efficiency model, with its connotations of patronage. If Paul was preaching today, he would have donors and fundraisers alike squirming in the pews with his ethic that giving is for everyone.

³¹⁴ From my own fundraising experience, I would argue this is not just possible but extremely likely.

At the same time, it would be a liberating contrast to the efficiency model to be able to celebrate and encourage everyone's giving, rather than focusing on those most able to give.

Paul's vision for the unity of the church definitely fits with Rempel's concept of a narrative budget model, where congregations describe the ministry they want to engage in and then give to an opportunity rather than a budget. Some Mennonite donors feel it is not terribly exciting to give to a budget. Vision was part of their criteria for choosing which charities to support. Paul's passion for the unity of the local and ecumenical church matches the desire donors have to be part of a vision and to strengthen community. A narrative budget model could also foster communal giving, which facilitates church unity at the congregational level and beyond. There is ecumenical importance to gifts received on behalf of entire congregations and groups of congregations.

An increased focus on unity could have institutional implications. MEDA is a place for business people to talk about money and jointly decide what to do with it. Ironically, an organization with no formal ties to the institutional church has a structure resembling one big congregation. My investigations suggest that MEDA is a comfortable place to discuss finances and is not reluctant to ask for money, both admirable qualities consistent with Paul's *modus operandi*. However, MEDA's independence is both a strength and a weakness. They enjoy greater agency but at the same time, their theological moorings depend on their members belonging to the church. Is this a sufficient anchor?

Grace: Costly abundance

Paul's churches are places of costly abundance. They are completely dependent upon the gracious abundance of God, which has come at a tremendous cost through Jesus' sacrificial offering of himself. Although God enables material giving, believers can be generous not because they have become rich, but because they "have been enriched by the grace of

Christ.”³¹⁵ God’s grace is a costly abundance, because it resulted from Jesus’ sacrificial self-giving, and because responding to God’s gracious activity with an offering of money is costly.

Whereas some Mennonite donors were concerned that professional fundraisers neglect the spiritual aspect of giving, Paul stresses the spiritual aspects above all. Generosity is not about meeting budgets or responding to appeals but a fundamental question of spirituality.³¹⁶ Grace produces joy and joy overflows into generosity (2 Cor 8:2). Generosity is not compulsory and cannot be forced, but flows in response to God’s gift of Christ in the same way that love for others flows in response to God’s love. In keeping with Paul’s letter to the Corinthians, and a minority of Mennonite donors surveyed, giving is a joyous celebration of God’s grace.

Generosity costs money: Paul expects believers to honour their pledges and to give as they are able on a regular basis. He does not hesitate to celebrate the generosity of other churches and hold them up as a model for believers in another place. Like the donor who reports a “satisfaction in being a regular contributor,” giving is not only in response to emergency appeals. Giving as *Gelassenheit* expresses the connection between giving and living in response to God’s grace: one is only as yielded as one’s chequebook.

Equality

In his grace-based, as opposed to needs-based, giving model, Paul stresses an equality of believers. All have received the grace of God and share in material as well as spiritual blessings. Given the economic disparity between the global churches, equality as a motivation for giving has staggering implications for the church both globally and within Canada. Firstly, a goal of reducing economic inequality would require considerable change to patterns of Canadian Mennonite giving. Secondly, a realization that believers are not

³¹⁵ Furnish, *II Corinthians*, p. 418.

³¹⁶ Jeff Steckley, phone conversation with author, 6 June 2007.

intrinsically divided into categories of donors and receivers would change how fundraising operates. (Refer to “Theology of fundraising” on summary charts.)

Paul’s collection for Jerusalem provides a valuable model of giving to believers far away. While Canadian Mennonites do this already, I believe that mounting an undertaking like Paul’s in response to a request from a community of believers exceeds the scope of most Mennonite giving patterns. Moving towards economic equality among believers in, for example, Ontario and Zaire is a very radical vision and tithing is likely to be an inadequate vehicle. The earlier recommendations about talking about money and living simply would likely be required before even considering such a goal.

Recognition that donors and receivers are all part of the circle of God’s grace might help to counter a dualistic “us/them” mindset which views spending money on donors as overhead and not as ministry. At first glance, this may seem in opposition to the previous point about economic equality where the poor receive extra resources. However, Paul was prepared to devote considerable resources into encouraging the relatively prosperous Corinthians with the church in Jerusalem. In the wake of Hurricane Katrina, Mennonite Disaster Service has changed its thinking to realize that relatively affluent Mennonites may also need their support.³¹⁷ Perhaps a similar shift in thinking could help MCC and other institutions to invest resources in cultivating generosity amongst donors and potential donors. While increased cultivation of generosity would address MCC’s declining market share in Mennonite giving, the primary goal should be unity and equality, a recognition that donors and receivers are all part of the circle of God’s grace.

³¹⁷ Everett J. Thomas, “Mennonite Disaster Service learns about urban life, relationships,” *The Mennonite*, 16 October 2007, 15.

Beyond familiarity as a motive for giving

Paul includes believers with whom he has theological differences in the circle of grace. This is a significant difference from the donor findings where people tend to support local and familiar causes. Paul collects money for Jesus believers in Jerusalem who require circumcision and have many other laws and practices which Paul does not promote. Moreover, he promotes such a collection as a vehicle for unity among the fractious Corinthian believers. What would it mean to work together with believers with whom one sometimes disagrees in order to support organizations who do *not* “share our way of understanding the gospel?” Paul provides a challenging model for promoting unity.

I completely agree with Mennonite fundraisers who suggest improved communications among the Mennonite constituency in order to facilitate generosity and strengthen unity within Canadian Mennonites. I speculate that for some churches, a gift to Mennonite Church Canada would demonstrate giving to an organization with which they disagree on matters of theology and praxis, in solidarity with other congregations with whom they also disagree.

Denominational unity poses challenges very similar to members of a congregation agreeing on which charities to support in the church budget. Mennonites giving to Mennonite organizations presents an increasing challenge. While Mennonite congregations who support *Samaritan's Purse* or members who support *Focus on the Family* are already showing that they can support organizations which have a different understanding of the gospel than Mennonite doctrine, given donors' preference for familiarity, they likely do so because they find that theology compatible with their own.

The challenge to communal generosity in spite of diverse theological understandings also reverberates on an international scale. The abundance of grace received from God often shrinks when it is redistributed by the community of believers. Could it be that until Canadian Mennonites are able to share with those with whom we disagree theologically –

amongst ourselves - we will have a difficult time organizing ourselves to support our Mennonite brothers and sisters in places like Zimbabwe? One is tempted to concur, but this is not Paul's response. He encourages the Corinthians to give to the collection for Jerusalem to strengthen their own fellowship of believers, as well as promoting a broader unity and equality with the church. God's grace flows to everyone and in an odd equation, abundance leads to equality.

Exuberant Inefficiency: A Case Study

This following example from Steinbach Bible College captures some of the joyful spirit of Paul's collection.³¹⁸ In recent years, SBC raised seven million dollars for a building project. The first steps in the campaign were consulting pastors from affiliated conferences and obtaining pledges from faculty. This was a community undertaking, not a legacy from one or two individuals. Penner emphasized that SBC was about relationships and not about buildings.

The most memorable part of the fundraising project for Penner and the SBC community was a bike trip. In the middle of the campaign, when SBC staff was weary, Penner organized a bike trip to Leamington, which is part of the supporting constituency. Six professors cycled for six days. The motto was "2002 km in 2002". The trip only raised about \$20-\$25,000 (at most 0.35% of the total donations), but people in Steinbach still remember this. The participants were on the radio, which boosted the campaign awareness. To quote Penner, "It was crazy fun!" It was tangible. They made a funny Low German video and talked to churches along the way. This trip emphasized the school's core values of community and created camaraderie among participants.

This bike trip exemplifies exuberant inefficiency. It suggests some of the joyful inefficiency of sending a preacher along with the large delegation to Jerusalem. Are six

³¹⁸ Related by Gord Penner, phone conversation with author, 31 August 2007.

professors necessary to ride? Six professors would likely have raised more money by spending six days talking to the richest members of their supporting constituency. However, efficiency was not the point. This effort was directed towards churches. It also showed the faculty of SBC giving themselves to the project and it encouraged church members to do the same. In some very tangible ways, the delegation of cycling professors was a gift to SBC and to the constituency.

Conclusion

The interpretation of the Mennonite donor texts reveals individual giving spread in many directions – Mennonite, Christian and secular - and resulting from a variety of motivations. Many donors cite their home church as their favourite charity, but not necessarily the most fun or satisfying cause to support. Giving often results from a sense of obligation or duty, and as a compassionate response to need, but donors are also inspired by an organization's vision and sense of purpose. Familiarity influences giving, whether from television or through shared beliefs and involvements. The communal discernment of the church plays a lesser role in giving decisions than in earlier times.

Donors recognize the spiritual component of giving, with tithing and Jesus' model of sacrificial giving both cited as models. Some donor comments suggest giving as *Gelassenheit*, that one is only as yielded as one's chequebook. Many donors felt that professional fundraisers were acceptable but some felt that fundraisers neglected the spiritual aspects of giving. Fundraisers view both giving and fundraising as ministry activities.

The juxtaposition of the Mennonite donor interviews and biblical texts reveals both parallels and contrasts. The biblical texts deal with many of the same fiscal accountability issues that the Mennonite donor interviews mention, but Paul does not distinguish between accounting and ministry, as some Mennonite institutions do. His fundraising efforts for Jerusalem stress measures to avoid perceptions of fraud. Churches choose representatives to accompany the money to Jerusalem.

The delegation model ensures accountability, but also facilitates ecumenical unity. At least one preacher makes the journey, to provide an account of the collection's integrity and to emphasize the collection's origins in the gospel. The delegation is a gift, a lived response to received grace which unifies all believers, Jew and Gentile.

The biblical texts of Paul's collection demonstrate that it is acceptable to ask for money and to invest in encouraging generosity. I have emphasized that giving is so essential that it needs the collected wisdom of gathered believers. Paul encourages regular and proportional giving in response to grace, rather than needs-based giving in response to an urgent appeal, which might look like extortion. Regular giving, rather than giving in response to need, presents a challenging lesson to Canadian Mennonites.

Paul encourages joyous giving as an expression of unity and equality among believers. Canadian Mennonites need to break the taboo about talking about money in order to follow Paul's leadings towards joyous generosity. Paul extends the ambitious goal of equality even towards those with whom one might disagree. In an even greater challenge to Canadian Mennonites, he sees giving towards a common purpose as a unifying strategy for congregations such as those in Corinth where there are tensions amongst believers. Amazingly, Paul's collection for Jerusalem shows that God's grace can operate even in such difficult circumstances.

The results of comparing the living "texts" of donor and fundraiser interviews to the biblical texts of Paul's collection have been very fruitful. Theology and fundraising can interact with one another, with the discussion bringing theological insights to fundraising and many practical questions to theology. I hope this study can serve to further discussion on generosity among Canadian Mennonites. It would be fascinating to continue this research on a larger scale, with more donors better representing the diversity of Canadian Mennonites. There are certainly more biblical texts that one could bring to the discussion. For instance, the donors in this study mentioned: the left hand/right conundrum, the widow's mite, and tithing. Jesus' teachings in particular contain many applicable stories. The interaction between theology and fundraising is only beginning.

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