Theology and Fundraising: How does Current Canadian Mennonite Praxis Compare to the Apostle Paul's Collection for Jerusalem?

Lori Guenther Reesor

Why ask the question raised in the title? I have been a fundraiser and a pastor, and my experiences have convinced me that thinking theologically about fundraising is important for the future of Mennonite institutions.[1] Theological studies are often supported by fundraising, and I believe theology can and should contribute to the study of that activity.[2] The short, un-nuanced answer to the question posed in the title is: Mennonites are generous people who value efficiency and respond to familiar causes based on need. When the apostle Paul collects money, he strives to promote unity and equality among fractious believers and relies on grace to motivate donors. He facilitates giving among believers who disagree with each other about culture and theology, and he devotes considerable effort to explaining that giving is part of the gospel of Jesus Christ. While much has changed in two thousand years of church history, I believe Paul's collection for Jerusalem is still highly pertinent today.

Donors are the living texts of Mennonite praxis. I began my research with donor interviews because I am a practical theologian and want my biblical exegesis to address the current issues of believers. I also talked to four Mennonite fundraisers who confirmed many of the trends from the donor interviews and gave a fundraiser's perspective on Mennonite giving. I present much abbreviated interview results here as the necessary background to the exegesis that follows.[3] Through focus groups and referrals from Mennonite Foundation Canada, I asked twenty-five donors the same questions:

1. What is your favorite 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?

Questions 1, 3, 5, and 6 helped to explore motivations for giving. Questions 2 and 4 were very much related in donors' answers. I heard amazing stories of generosity from people who had begged for bread as children and grown up to become donors. Early modeling of giving in families and/or through Sunday School was unanimously offered as an answer for question 2. Question 5 showed that tax receipts matter, both as a means to increase giving and evidence that the charity is accountable to the government. The results raise a number of issues about church structures, accountability, and individual versus communal giving.

Here I must interject a note about Canadian and American Mennonites. This study interviews only Canadians, although my original thesis also references the Mennonite Church USA giving survey conducted in 2005. In a conversation, Marty Lehman from Mennonite Church USA noted that a concern for saving money for retirement and possible healthcare needs may be affecting giving patterns.[4] However, I believe the findings below are applicable to North American Mennonites generally.

Talking to Mennonite donors reveals individual giving spread in many directions – Mennonite,[5] Christian, and secular – and resulting from various motivations. One representative anecdote comes from a donor who cites MCC as a favorite charity, though she talked most about a child sponsored through a charity that advertises on television. Many donors list their home church as their favorite 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. Giving decisions that used to be made by the church are now made by individuals.

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 a spiritual practice: that one is only as "yielded" as one's checkbook. This "yieldedness" recalls the Anabaptist practice of *Gelassenheit.*[6] Many donors felt professional fundraisers were acceptable, but some felt fundraisers neglected the spiritual aspects of giving. For their part, fundraisers view both giving and fundraising as ministry activities.

It is with this background that I examine the biblical texts which are normative for the Mennonite church. The apostle Paul's collection from among his Gentile churches for the poor in Jerusalem provides the best documented example of fundraising within the primitive church. A large delegation of representatives from the contributing churches delivers the money to Jerusalem. It is a joyfully inefficient model intended to promote unity among believers. I focus my exegesis on issues raised by donors and fundraisers which largely concern how and why donors give. A remarkable number of concerns are common to the contributors to Paul's collection two thousand years ago around the Mediterranean, and Canadian Mennonite donors today. Accountability and motivations for giving are two significant examples.

I begin with a brief outline of some methodological concerns. The primary texts describing the collection are Rom. 15:25-32, 1 Cor. 16:1-4, and 2 Cor. 8 and 9.[7] Like most scholars, I think there were tensions between Paul and the church at Corinth between the writing of 1 Corinthians and 2 Corinthians 1-9.[8] I introduce the collection as a voluntary expression of ecumenical unity, and then proceed to examine why and how Paul collected money for Jerusalem.

Collection as Voluntary Expression of Ecumenical Unity

The collection project involves multiple Gentile churches voluntarily contributing funds towards the saints in Jerusalem, with representatives from supporting churches forming a delegation to deliver the funds. The origin, purposes, and outcomes of the collection all demonstrate Paul's concern for unity, despite the cultural divide between Gentile and Jewish believers.

Galatians 2:1-10 relates the origin of the project. Paul and Barnabas are in Jerusalem meeting with James, Peter, and John. These "pillars" recognize the grace that had been given to Paul and they shake hands as partners in ministry. However, they do have theological differences: the Jerusalem churches saw Torah observance as integral to a belief in Jesus but the Gentile churches did not. Still, Paul responds eagerly to a request for the latter to remember the poor in Jerusalem. Some scholars view the collection imposed by Jerusalem as a condition for Gentiles' acceptance in the church,[9] and see a more hierarchical authority structure implicit in the collection.[10] However, I interpret the evidence as indicating that Jewish Jesus-followers and Gentile Jesus-followers had a peer-to-peer relationship.[11] If the collection is a mandatory levy, then it becomes something akin to taxation, deceitfully packaged by Paul as a voluntary donation.[12] However, Paul is a free actor and not under compulsion from Jerusalem.[13]

When the Gentile delegation arrived in Jerusalem carrying the collection for the Jewish Jesus believers, it must have presented a striking vision of the future of the church, united in Christ.[14] Paul's "ministry to the saints" (2 Cor. 9:1) intends more than material relief (Rom. 15:27, 2 Cor. 9:12) for the Jerusalem believers.[15] The collection both demonstrates and facilitates the ecumenical unity of the early church (2 Cor. 9:13-14).[16] Paul devotes much energy to the collection: it becomes a very ambitious and theologically significant undertaking.[17] N.T. Wright argues that Paul "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."[18]

Did the collection achieve its purpose? I see a modest ecumenical success,[19] because church history shows that the Gentile church did not succumb to Marcionism[20] and sever its Jewish roots.[21] Despite disastrous results when the collection arrived, the Christian movement retained a connection to the "one people of God" and the Jewish roots of its faith.[22] However, Paul's project did not promote closer ties with Gentile believers for the Torah-observant Jesus believers in Jerusalem but rather quite the opposite.[23]

Promoting Unity and Inclusiveness in Corinth

The collection promoted solidarity, not just with the Jerusalem church but within Paul's congregations. We must not romanticize the early church: Paul chooses to promote unity among believers where it is fragile. 1 Corinthians 11 and 12 urge unity in the body of Christ and address ecclesiological problems at Corinth,[24] some based in differences of social status among believers.[25] Paul's vision for unity in Christ is expressed through the arrangements of the collection. The delegate selection structures in these Gentile congregations promote both unity and inclusiveness.

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."[26] Paul explains that the money is neither administered nor collected by him[27] but is the responsibility of Titus (2 Cor. 8:16-17, 23), who had likely been chosen by the contributing congregations.[28] Paul wants everyone possible to be included in collection. He rejects the patronage model and encourages all believers to participate.[29] The process of choosing a representative also reinforces his inclusive model.

While the patronage model of asking only the rich would be more pragmatic,[30] Paul presents a less efficient but more inclusive model. John K. Chow notes that by asking people to save up, Paul includes both rich and poor. He wants everyone to participate if they can, rather than honoring a few "rich leaders" as benefactors.[31] He would rather decline funds[32] and risk resentment from prospective patrons[33] than accept money and become someone's client.[34] Such benefaction would have distorted the model of the entire church participating and choosing delegates. Hans Dieter Betz writes that χειροτονείν (2 Cor. 8:19), usually translated as "appointing," describes "the process of electing envoys by the raising of hands in the assembly."[35] This delegate selection might be Paul setting an example for the strong in the church – another encouragement towards inclusivity,[36] suggests Chow. Everyone in the congregation, weak and strong, must participate in making a decision.[37]

Paul uses the collection as a tool to foster social unity within the Corinthian church, a church subject to threats from within and without. The pooled individual resources from rich and poor are both an expression of unity and a means toward it. The joint project within the Corinthian church also increases the members' connection to the roots of the Jesus movement.[38] It is a sign of prayerful solidarity with fellow believers in Jerusalem,[39] the source of the gospel. Money received from a congregation, rather than from individuals, becomes an expression of "fellowship in Christ," an act of worship.[40] Paul's ecumenical vision for the collection highlights that the "interdependence of the body of Christ is not limited to relationships within individual congregations."[41]

An Alternative to Extortion: Paul's Suggestions on How to Give

Accountability is a crucial concern, as opponents were suggesting that Paul was enriching himself from funds he had collected.[42] He makes it clear (2 Cor. 8:20-21) that he and his fellow workers are taking precautions to avoid being discredited in administering the generous gift. They promote fiscal accountability in collecting and donating the funds. The Corinthians are encouraged to give joyfully, voluntarily, regularly, and proportionally, and to have the funds ready upon Paul's arrival rather than to give to an emotional appeal when Paul comes.

Joyful and Voluntary Response

Paul does not demand participation but encourages a voluntary and joyful response; he is not commanding but giving an opinion (2 Cor. 8:8-10). Betz asserts that "a collection of this sort depends by nature on the voluntary cooperation of the contributors."[43] No one is obligated to contribute, although Paul vigorously encourages participation. The voluntary aspect helps him defend against accusations of enriching himself.

In 2 Cor. 9:7, Paul reminds the Corinthians that "God loves a cheerful giver." ("Joyous" is another translation of *hilaros*, "cheerful."[44]) Joy cannot be forced. The Macedonians' giving comes from an "abundance of joy" despite their poverty (2 Cor. 8:2, 5). The collection is not membership dues[45] or a mandatory levy, but money freely given (2 Cor. 9:5).[46] The focus on a gift willingly given helps to explain the "not affected by covetousness" in the verse just cited. C.K. Barrett translates this phrase as "not as something wrung from you."[47] If the gift is ready in advance (1 Cor. 16:2), Victor Paul Furnish notes that then the Macedonian envoys arriving with Paul will see the Corinthian gift as a gift of love, like their own. But if Paul has to beg for the money, it could seem like extortion from reluctant donors.[48] He urges the Corinthians to seize the opportunity to give out of joy, not compulsion. If "joy is a saving gift from God," then joy is seldom far from Paul's reasoning.[49]

Regular Giving

For the Corinthians to have money ready in advance, disciplined giving is in order. Participation in the project is strong and ongoing because money is regularly set aside for Paul's collection.[50] 1 Corinthians 16:2 is key: "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" is discussed below.) The collection project is ruled out as an *ad hoc* appeal to be conducted upon Paul's arrival.[51] His instructions about regular weekly giving bolster accountability: they serve to avoid any accusations or possibility of fraud, and to suggest a measure of donor accountability. Barrett translates the 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.[52] I presume that worship served as a reminder; believers kept the money at home[53] in preparation for Paul's arrival,[54] since the collection was not part of worship at that time.[55] 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 sizable gift, as many commentators have noted.[56] But Paul desires more than an impressive gift; he wants to strengthen the Corinthian church. Giving is not simply a spontaneous response to need or to an emotional appeal upon his arrival but a regular component of Jesus-follower praxis. Given the type of budget shortfall, year-end appeals to which donors today are routinely subject, Paul's emphasis on disciplined, voluntary, and joyful giving is still relevant.

Proportional Giving

Paul changes the fixed giving amount[57] of the temple tax model to become proportional to income (1 Cor. 16:2). In this way rich and poor can participate equally. Proportional giving is within everyone's means, but Paul's language needs deciphering if we are to appreciate the full inclusivity of his thinking. The word translated as "prosper" is a rare term.[58] Most commentators recognize proportionality in the phrase: Charles Talbert suggests "as he may prosper," [59] while Craig Keener has "if one should prosper."[60]

This is not a legalistic agreement whereby everyone gives the same percentage of income[61] but giving "to the extent that God provides more than what one needs to live on."[62] Paul clarifies this in 2 Cor. 8:12-14: "For this is not for the ease of others and for your affliction, but by way of equality." His goal is not that the Corinthians become impoverished[63] but that they give according to what they have, which presumably for most is an abundance.[64] The teaching of proportionality emphasizes that the willingness to give matters more than the size of the gift.[65]

Present-day fundraising often stresses regular giving of pre-set amounts through pre-authorized bank withdrawals. Paul is suggesting something much more radical. Perhaps a parallel is individual donors specifying a minimum bank balance for necessities and giving the surplus away every week. Some people might not be able to give at all in some weeks, while others might give sizable amounts. The exact methods for collecting monies from individual donors are not known. However, it seems reasonable to assume that the people collecting could gauge whether the gift resulted from proportional, regular giving.

Directional Accountability: Desired Outcomes of the Collection

Most donors I interviewed were concerned about directional accountability: how donations will be spent and what influence donors will have on that spending. In Paul's project, directional accountability is largely entrusted to God. Paul assures the Corinthians that the Jerusalem church is not becoming rich at their expense (2 Cor. 8:13), but little is recorded about how the funds would actually be used. Believers may already have been familiar with how benevolences operated in the community of faith. The desired outcomes Paul outlines to his donor churches are prayer and praise to God, and increased recognition of his ministry (Rom. 15:31).

In 2 Cor. 9:12-15 Paul makes it clear that this ministry is "not only fully supplying the needs of the saints, but is also overflowing through many thanksgivings to God." The final outcome is praise to God; the physical giving of money is an intermediate step. "Both the givers and the receivers honour God."[66] Giving demonstrates both generosity and faith,[67] as many Mennonite donors have also observed. Paul tells the Corinthians that the recipients will praise God on their behalf. Closely related to praise is prayer: those aided will respond with intercessory prayer.[68]

Paul trusts that the collection furthers God's purposes, and on that basis, he embarks on a risky undertaking: "if grace propelled the collection, it was faith and trust that sustained it."[69]

Motivations for Giving and Theology of Asking

A rich primary text[70] for motivations for giving is 2 Cor. 8-9. Below I will compare three areas as a means of illuminating motivations, both Pauline and present: giving as grace; beyond duty and need (expanding the boundaries of sharing); and the example of Jesus.

Giving as Grace

Paul emphasizes that God's grace enables giving and that the grace of giving builds community. Grace permeates Paul's eloquent theological discussion of the collection[71]: he uses the term *charis* ten times in 2 Cor. 8 and 9.[72] *Charis* can indicate "grace," "gracious work," or "gift"; James Dunn suggests it sometimes conveys a sense of "engracement" – lived grace as a response to received grace.[73]

Giving is utterly dependent upon grace. Paul realizes that without the grace of God, the collection project could not happen and that unfettered grace could make it as successful in Corinth as it had been in Macedonia.[74] He explains how God's grace operates: "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" (2 Cor. 9:8). One present-day donor affirms Paul's confidence and reflects on decades of generosity: "The amazing thing is that whatever I have given, I have never ever missed it."

The grace of giving strengthens the community of believers. "Grace, we might say, had only been truly experienced when it produced gracious people."[75] The very communal nature of the collection and delegation serve to promote grace as a gift to the community. Grace flows from God to humans, through humans as gracious action, and back to God as thanks.[76]

Paul's sheer boldness in comparing one church's giving to another's (2 Cor. 8:1-5; 9:2) contrasts with contemporary reticence. For example, Al Rempel of MC Canada says such comparisons are done confidentially and only upon request.[77] However, Paul can compare one church to another because he is confident that God's grace will move the Corinthians just as it empowered the Macedonian churches.[78]

Beyond Duty and Need

The motivations that Paul does *not* primarily appeal to – but that emerged from my donor interviews – are obligation/duty and need/empathy. The way he discusses his collection serves to expand the boundaries of sharing among believers. Both material and spiritual blessings are shared, blurring any distinctions between donor and recipient. Believers with whom one disagrees are also included in the sharing, something that contrasts with the many Canadian Mennonites who cited familiarity as a motivation for giving. Paul's thinking moves far beyond an obligation to help the less fortunate.

We have already examined the voluntary nature of giving. Giving is not a duty, although Paul stresses it is important to finish what one starts (2 Cor. 8:11; 9:5). Jouette Bassler explains that because of the grace of giving, "external compulsion was unacceptable" and unnecessary.[79] Paul's use of the term *leitourgia* (2 Cor. 9:12) incorporates the ideas of giving as voluntary public service and as an act of worship and thanksgiving.[80] The word's connotations of priestly ministry[81] reinforce the spiritual and the material connection.

Nor is the collection strictly in response to need: the situation is more complex and interdependent than need and response. Empathy is not a motivation for giving: Paul does not desire pity but equality (2 Cor. 8:13-15). He does not offer a "tear-jerking sketch" of conditions in Jerusalem.[82] When he mentions "their present need," he also talks about their resulting abundance as a supply for the Corinthians' own need, which puts the focus on equality. In the same spirit of equality, Paul deliberately underplays the poverty in Jerusalem so that the Corinthians will not expect the Jerusalem church will become obligated towards them.[83] Those with an abundance share with those who have less and "can expect reciprocation if the roles are reversed."[84] Paul does reverse the roles: in Rom. 15:27 he describes the Gentiles as being spiritually indebted to Jerusalem. Bassler talks about "the exchange of material blessings" in response to the "prior exchange of spiritual blessings."[85] Believers who share God's grace and God's Spirit also share in relative prosperity,[86] with neither a distinction between sharing spiritual and material blessings nor a hierarchy of donor and recipient.

Paul uses the term *koinonia* (partnership, sharing, communion) in 2 Cor. 8:4 and 9:13, and in Rom. 15:26.[87] *Koinonia* reaches "across the ocean" to the church in Jerusalem with whom Paul and the Gentile churches had theological differences regarding Torah observance.[88] *Koinonia* extends not just to people one loves but to those one may not even like.[89]

Example of Jesus

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

Fred Craddock argues for a less economic and more theological interpretation of the poverty of Christ: believers do not become rich[90] and the condition of poverty is not to be exalted.[91] Christ's poverty consists of his incarnation, his complete identification with the human situation.[92] Paul is making a case against the separation of the material and the spiritual, a real temptation for the pneumatically minded Corinthian believers. In Rom. 12:13, he lists "contributing to the needs of the saints" as a spiritual gift. Betz notes that the collection "presented the perfect opportunity to respond appropriately to the example of Christ."[93] All believers have been enriched by the grace of Christ,[94] and all believers, rich or poor, can contribute to the project in response to Christ's gift.

In Praise of Inefficiency: A Large Delegation Proclaims the Gospel

A deliberately large delegation of representatives from contributing churches accompanies the collection in order to fulfil Paul's ecumenical purposes.[95] It includes a preacher, because the process of delivering the collection is ministry rather than a means to an end. In fact, Paul declares in Romans that the delegation itself is a gift. Delivering the collection *together* was a tangible, deliberate sign of the unity of the various churches. The delegation was unexpectedly large,[96] likely at least ten men. Some scholars suggest that a large sum of money[97] or optimal eschatological impact[98] account for this size, but an expression of unity is the most likely reason.

A series of delegations arriving in Jerusalem would be a practical way for delivering funds, and that may have been Paul's initial plan (1 Cor. 16:3). The large delegation promotes relationships within the "entire ecumenical community of Christ."[99] Believers would likely develop new friendships and connections with other believers, and the impact on local churches when delegates return home would be magnified. The delegation both promotes and expresses unity.

In addition to the delegates' roles in promoting ecumenical unity, maintaining fiscal accountability, and participating in the outcomes of praise and thanksgiving, Dieter Georgi proposes an additional role, namely explaining the collection en route. "With him we are sending the brother who is famous among all the churches for his preaching of the gospel," says Paul (2 Cor. 8:18, ESV). This well-known preacher could defend the project's fiscal integrity and 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." [100] Explaining the collection and preaching the gospel are compatible activities. I highlight this point because many Canadian Mennonites are reluctant to see charities devote resources to such donor-oriented activities as preaching and explanation.

The delegate's fame "for his preaching of the gospel" (ESV, RSV) is a less common translation of 2 Cor. 8:18, but it captures better the proclaiming connotations of *euaggelion*. The substantive usage "describes the act of proclamation: [...] praise at the preaching of the Gospel."[101] The phrase signifies that the delivery of the collection is a tangible proclamation of the gospel. The delegates are integral to the project.[102]

Ministry does not start when the money arrives in Jerusalem. Believers offer themselves to God through their giving (2 Cor. 8:5), which some Mennonite donors also mention. Paul makes this offering explicit in Rom. 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]." [103] The Gentiles themselves become a gift. Thus, the delegation participates by both carrying an offering and being an offering.[104] The delegation does not seem unnecessarily large when taken as a sign of the outpouring of God's Spirit; it demonstrates grace more than efficiency.

Comparing Pauline and Mennonite Theology and Praxis

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, as the primitive church did not have denominations or parachurch institutions as such; in Paul's collection, the delegation functions as the intermediary organization. However, asking for money from church members is still present. It may help the reader to refer to the following summary chart comparing Mennonite and Pauline theology and praxis. I want to compare:

- Secrecy around giving: talking about money could transform Mennonite stewardship ("Noteworthy" items at bottom of the following chart)

- Fiscal accountability: Paul's model of communal discernment facilitates greater accountability than current Mennonite praxis ("Fiscal Accountability")

- Directional accountability: Paul's approach provides a valuable corrective to needs-based and individualized giving ("Directional Accountability")

- Motives for giving: examining unity, grace, and equality ("Motives for Giving," "Theology of Fundraising," "Use of Professional Fundraisers"). Applying Paul's motives for giving to Mennonite praxis would have widespread repercussions from congregational to international church relations.

- 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 ("Familiarity as Motive for Giving").

MENNONITE THEOLOGY AND PRAXIS and
PAUL'S COLLECTION FOR JERUSALEM

	MENNONITE THEOLOGY AND PRAXIS	PAUL'S COLLECTION FOR JERUSALEM
Motives for Giving	• Duty/tithing, obligation, empathy • Involvement, relationship, community • In response to need • Example of Christ • Joyful celebration of God's abundance	• Voluntary expression of ecumenical unity • Equality • In response to grace • Example of Christ • Joyful celebration of God's abundance
Familiarity as Motive for Giving	• Familiarity (value alignment and TV) leads to wide dispersal of Mennonite giving to many causes and contributes to lack of common causes	• Give even to those believers with whom you disagree to build *koinonia*
Fiscal Accountability	• Strong concern for fiscal and administrative accountability • Paradox of fiscal accountability – transparency costs money	• Strong concern for fiscal and administrative accountability • Regular giving expected • Delegation of representatives from contributing churches
Directional Accountability	• Donors value influence in how donations are spent • Paradox of directional accountability – donors are not accountable for giving	• How Jerusalem will spend funds not stressed • Anticipated outcomes of praise and thanksgiving to God
Ecclesial Structures	• Increasing emphasis on individual discernment as opposed to communal discernment • Minority of donors seeking mutual accountability • Need for improved communication between Mennonite institutions and constituency	• Wide participation through large delegate model • Emphasis on inclusiveness and unity • Proportional giving means everyone can contribute • Collection is part of the good news, preacher travels with delegation
Theology of Fundraising	• "Us/them" paradigm for donors and recipients contrasts with integrative model	• Integrative model for donors and recipients – all have received God's grace
Use of Professional Fundraisers	• Fundraisers appeal to "baser motives," neglect spiritual component	• Paul is not shy about asking for money or reminding the Corinthians of their previous pledges
Noteworthy	• Simple living to facilitate giving • Willingness to break taboos about discussing money	

Money Talks; People only Whisper

Canadian Mennonites need to break the code of silence around money. Secrecy around giving prohibits a joyous celebration of generosity and is incompatible with seeking counsel. 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."[105] He 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."[106] If churches could be more open about money, then people could "help each other to make proper decisions," as one donor phrased it. Talking about money also means church members can encourage one another in living simply, in order to facilitate giving.

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. When the Corinthians volunteer to participate, he follows up. He invests significant time and energy in encouraging them to give by sending ministry associates and writing a letter before his own visit. His comparison of the Macedonian and Corinthian churches illustrates how strikingly forthright he is. However, this particular section of Scripture is not enshrined in the Mennonite canon.

I sensed frustration among some generous donors who could not talk openly about their giving. Unlike other spiritual gifts, the gift of giving is not celebrated in their congregations. Paul's model of proportional giving enables everyone to give, regardless of circumstances. Some Canadian Mennonite donors are already quietly 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 common concern for fiscal accountability. 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, more holistic process, one that includes "narrative accountability," which simply means putting words together to explain the connection between gospel, grace, and generosity.

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. Paradoxically, MCC was lauded for its efficiency by many donors who also support charities advertising on television that spend more money on communication. 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. For Paul, hiring an auditor is not wasteful. He does not hesitate to send advance representatives to verify the Corinthians' giving levels. Giving, accounting, and preaching are all ministry.

Ecclesial Structures

This active delegate model does not fit well with one in which individual church members give, or do not give, as they see fit. With individualized giving, everyone is his or her own delegate on an individual journey and there is reduced accountability for both donors and organizations. This contrasts with Paul's model, where regular giving to a common cause beyond the church is expected. Greater accountability is possible when church giving is based on communal discernment and someone from the congregation can 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, and in my view Canadian Mennonites are rapidly losing any common causes.

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. He tells stories of giving and stories of grace, although the need must have been known. In contrast to donor interview results, directional accountability (influencing how the money will be used) is not stressed but is entrusted to the receiving church and to God.

Perhaps the approach taken by Paul provides a valuable corrective to needs-based and results-based motivations for giving. Would it have mattered if the Jerusalem parties held a celebratory banquet rather than prudently stockpiling grain and oil? Both hypothetical outcomes would fulfil Paul's purposes: the church would be strengthened and prayers of thanksgiving rendered to God. In the 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

Paul conveys a deep concern for the unity of the church that pervades the motivation for giving he urges. The three most applicable motives are unity, grace, and equality.

Unity

Paul has a vision and a passion for involving all members in the unity of the church. Mennonite donors are also concerned about "vision," which is congruent with his 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 stresses that everyone regularly set aside money as they are able, rather than rely on a few major donors persuaded to balance the budget at the last minute.

Paul is more concerned with broad participation than with the amount collected, although the two goals are related. Mennonite churches often measure donations received against the budgeted amount rather than measure participation. Paul advocates regular and proportional giving among all members of the community of faith, not just the richer ones. 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 to cultivate many new donors who may not have the habit of giving. But the efficiency model means that the majority of funds may come from a minority of church members.[107] Recall that Paul rejected the more efficient patronage model. If he were preaching today, he would have donors and fundraisers squirming in the pews with his view that giving is for everyone, rich and poor alike. However, it would be a liberating contrast to the efficiency model to celebrate and encourage everyone's giving.

Paul's vision for the unity of the church definitely fits with a narrative budget model, where congregations describe the ministry they want to engage in and then give to an opportunity rather than a budget.[108] Some Mennonite donors feel it is not terribly exciting to give to a budget. Paul's ecumenical passion matches these donors' desire 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.

Grace

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."[109] 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.

While some Mennonite donors were concerned that professional fundraisers neglect the spiritual aspect of giving, Paul stresses that aspect above all. Generosity is not about meeting budgets or responding to appeals but a fundamental question of spirituality.[110] 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 honor their pledges and to give as they are able on a regular basis. He celebrates the generosity of other churches and holds them up as a model for believers in another place. Like the donor who reports "satisfaction in being a regular contributor," giving occurs not only in response to emergency appeals. Other donors express what I call "Giving as *Gelassenheit*": giving is part of living in response to God's grace. One is only as yielded as one's checkbook. Some donors also note that giving as a spiritual practice is difficult when it is taboo to discuss money. For Paul, giving as response to grace is not strictly a private matter: he can celebrate the generosity of one congregation and encourage another to follow suit. Grace leads to joy, and joy to generosity. It is an abundance of grace, not an abundance of resources, that leads to giving. With such a model, Paul would not be able to keep quiet about giving.

Equality

In his grace-based giving model, Paul stresses an equality of believers. All have received the grace of God and share in both material and spiritual blessings. Pursuing equality as a motivation for giving has staggering implications. First, a goal of reducing economic disparity would require considerable change to patterns of Canadian Mennonite giving. Second, a realization that believers are not intrinsically divided into donors and receivers would change how fundraising operates.

Paul's collection for Jerusalem provides a valuable model of giving to believers far away. Mounting such an undertaking 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. Talking about money and living simply would likely be necessary before even considering such a goal. Also, this type of grand project can only be communal, not individual. The current pattern of increasingly individualized and often localized giving would need to be reversed in order to focus on the larger community of faith.

Recognition that donors and receivers all belong to the circle of God's grace might help to counter an "us/them" mindset that views spending money on donors as overhead and not as ministry. This may seem contrary to the previous point about economic equality. However, Paul was prepared to devote considerable resources to encouraging the relatively prosperous Corinthians to support the church in Jerusalem because he valued unity and equality above efficiency.

The delegation model was inefficient in economic terms, yet it strengthened the church's "social capital." The controversy about donor trips to visit projects overseas provides a pertinent example. Is it wasteful and self-indulgent to send one's 17-year-old daughter to a service project in Nicaragua for two weeks? The country will not be transformed, but the teenager might be, especially if she returns to a community equipped to incorporate that experience into a life of discipleship and faithful giving. Paul focuses on building just such communities. Perhaps a similar shift in thinking could help MCC and other institutions to invest resources in cultivating generosity among donors and potential donors. While such efforts would likely 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.

Beyond Familiarity as a Motive for Giving

Paul includes believers with whom he differs theologically in the circle of grace. This is a significant difference from the finding that donors tend to support local and familiar causes. Paul collects money for Jesus-believers in Jerusalem who require circumcision and have other practices with which he disagrees. Moreover, he promotes such a collection as a vehicle for unity among the fractious Corinthian believers. His passion for promoting unity amidst local and ecumenical theological diversity poses a challenge to Mennonite giving.

I completely agree with Mennonite fundraisers who suggest improved communications among their constituency will 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. Denominational unity poses challenges very similar to those facing a congregation trying to agree on which charities to support in the church budget. My research suggests that this category of church benevolences is increasingly left to the discretion of individual donors, where there is less accountability. When Mennonite congregations and individuals support organizations that have a different understanding of the gospel than Mennonite doctrine upholds, they likely do so because they find that theology more familiar.[111]

The challenge to communal generosity despite diverse theological understandings also reverberates on an international scale. Until we Canadian Mennonites can share with those with whom we disagree theologically, won't we have a difficult time organizing ourselves to support our Mennonite brothers and sisters elsewhere? One is tempted to answer yes, 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 to promote a broader unity and equality within the church. God's grace flows to everyone and, in an odd equation, abundance leads to equality.

Exuberant Inefficiency: A Case Study

An example from Steinbach Bible College (SBC) in Steinbach, Manitoba captures some of the joyful spirit of Paul's collection.[112] In recent years, SBC has 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. Gord 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, Ontario, which is part of the supporting constituency. Six professors cycled for six days for a total distance of 2,002 km. (approx. 1,250 miles). The trip raised only about $20-$25,000 (at most 0.35 percent of the total donations), but people in Steinbach still remember this event five years later. Participants were on the radio, which boosted campaign awareness. To quote Penner, "It was crazy fun!" It was tangible. Participants also made a funny Low German video and talked to churches along the way. The trip strengthened 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. Was it necessary that six professors ride? They 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 showed SBC faculty giving themselves to the project, and it encouraged church members to do the same. The delegation of cycling professors was a tangible gift to SBC and to the constituency.

Conclusion

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 and facilitates ecumenical unity. At least one preacher makes the journey, to provide an account of the collection's integrity and to underscore 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 about 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 challenge to Canadian Mennonites.

Paul encourages joyous giving as an expression of unity and equality among believers. Canadian Mennonites need to break the taboo on talking about money in order to follow his leading 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 among believers. Amazingly, Paul's collection for Jerusalem shows that God's grace can operate even in such difficult circumstances. Paul's wisdom on the theology of fundraising is as applicable now as when he first penned his words.

Notes

[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.
[3] For a small sample of anecdotes from donor interviews, note a radio interview online at Mennonite Church Canada: "Fundraising, Stewardship, and the Church," *Church Matters* <www.mennonitechurch.ca/resourcecentre/ResourceView/5/9915>.
[4] Marty Lehman, telephone conversation with author, 19 June 2007.
[5] I am using "Mennonite" as a shorthand for Mennonite-Christian.
[6] *Gelassenheit* refers to individual yieldedness and obedience to God.
[7] I treat these chapters as only one letter, although that is not essential to my arguments. For contrast, see Hans Dieter Betz, *2 Corinthians 8 and 9* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985), 141, with Ben Witherington III, *Conflict and Community in Corinth: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on 1 & 2 Corinthians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 425; Craig S. Keener, *1-2 Corinthians* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2005), 146-51. See Victor Paul Furnish, *II Corinthians* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1984), 431-33 for a detailed comparison.
[8] Jouette M. Bassler, *God and Mammon: Asking for Money in the New Testament* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1991), 98-99. Bassler and many others see 2 Cor. 10-13 as a separate and earlier letter.
[9] L. Cerfaux, *La Théologie de l'Eglise Suivant Saint-Paul* (Paris: Les Editions du Cerf, 1965), 115.
[10] K.F. Nickle, *The Collection: A Study in Paul's Strategy* (London: SCM Press, 1966), 60; Cerfaux, *La Théologie,* 115, 221; Bengt Holmberg, *Paul and Power* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1978), 41.
[11] Gűnther Bornkamm, *Paul*, trans. D.M.G. Stalker (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995), 38. Contra Jerome Murphy-O'Connor, *Paul: A Critical Life* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), 145.
[12] Johannes Munck, *Paul and the Salvation of Mankind,* trans. F. Clarke (London: SCM Press, 1959), 288.
[13] Larry W. Hurtado, "The Jerusalem Collection and the Book of Galatians," *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 5 (1979): 57. Also Dieter Georgi, *Remembering the Poor: The History of Paul's Collection for Jerusalem* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1992), 42, 53; Betz, *2 Corinthians 8 and 9*, 124; Munck, *Salvation of Mankind,* 289; Bornkamm, *Paul,* 92. For an argument that non-judicial does not mean voluntary see Holmberg, *Paul and Power,* 41.
[14] Witherington, *Conflict and Community in Corinth,* 426.
[15] Bassler, *God and Mammon*, 92-93; Betz, *2 Corinthians 8 and 9*, 118; C.K. Barrett, *A Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 2nd ed. (London: Adam & Charles

Black, 1971), 386.
[16] Cf. N.T. Wright, *Paul in Fresh Perspective* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2005), 167; Nils Alstrup Dahl, *Studies in Paul: Theology for the Early Christian Mission*, 2nd ed. (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 1977), 31; Munck, *Salvation of Mankind*, 290.
[17] A very accessible treatment of the collection appears in Bassler, *God and Mammon,* 89-115.
[18] Wright, *Paul in Fresh Perspective*, 167.
[19] I am taking an approach between the extremes of successful and catastrophic outcomes for the collection. Nickle, *Collection*, 72-73, asserts that the collection promoted reconciliation between churches, whereas Holmberg, *Paul and Power*, 43, interprets Acts' "merciful" silence on the matter to mean it was "something of a missionary and diplomatic catastrophe." So too Wayne A. Meeks, *The First Urban Christians: The Social World of the Apostle Paul* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983), 110; Bornkamm, *Paul*, 101.
[20] Marcion emphasized the radical disconnect between Christianity and Judaism. He did not include the Old Testament in his canon and taught that Jesus was not the same as the God of the Hebrew Scriptures. John J. Clabeaux, "Marcion," *Anchor Bible Dictionary*, ed. David Noel Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1996).
[21] Larry W. Hurtado, *Lord Jesus Christ: Devotion to Jesus in Earliest Christianity* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), 485. See also Georgi, *Remembering the Poor*, 19.
[22] Meeks, *First Urban Christians*, 110.
[23] James D.G. Dunn, *Unity and Diversity in the New Testament* 2nd ed. (London: SCM Press, 1990), 257. Of course, Paul's collection was only one factor among many in the loss of this group of Jesus believers.
[24] John K. Chow, *Patronage and Power: A Study in Social Networks in Corinth* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1992), 176.
[25] Cf. Dahl, *Studies in Paul,* 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.
[26] Keener cites Philo, Special Laws 1.78 in *1-2 Corinthians,* 209.
[27] Witherington, *Conflict and Community in Corinth,* 414.
[28] Ibid., 422. Cf. Nickle, *Collection*, 84, on protecting against allegations of pilfering temple tax. For fuller treatment of Titus' relationship with the Corinthian church, see Murray J. Harris, *Second Epistle to the Corinthians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), 571-72.
[29] I am informed by Chow's *Patronage and Power,* which illuminates the contrast between Paul's approach and the patronage structures that pervaded society.
[30] A focus on major donors is often how present day fundraising operates.
[31] Chow, *Patronage and Power,* 185-86. So too Witherington, *Conflict and Community in Corinth,* 315.
[32] But cf. Meeks, *First Urban Christians*, 66: 1 Cor. 16:6 and 2 Cor. 1:16 suggest Paul received help with travel expenses.
[33] Timothy L. Carter, "'Big Men' in Corinth," *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 66 (June 1997): 64.
[34] Witherington, *Conflict and Community in Corinth,* 419.
[35] Betz, *2 Corinthians 8 and 9,* 74.

[36] Chow, *Patronage and Power,* 186-87. Contra Betz, *2 Corinthians 8 and 9*, 75.
[37] Witherington, *Conflict and Community in Corinth,* 315.
[38] Georgi, *Remembering the Poor,* 52-53. The collection acknowledges the ongoing theological importance and salvation-historical role of Jerusalem: Larry Hurtado, lecture on Pauline churches, Jesus devotion, and Jewish monotheism, St. Paul's Theological College, Brisbane, Australia, 18 July 2007. Cf. Holmberg, *Paul and Power,* 51.
[39] Hurtado, Lecture 18 July 2007.
[40] Dahl, *Studies in Paul,* 35.
[41] James D.G. Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 709.
[42] Munck, *Salvation of Mankind,* 173. Bassler, *God and Mammon,* 98-99, outlines the Corinthians' initial support for the collection, then the disruption caused by rival apostles who accused Paul of embezzlement, Paul's subsequent letter, and letter of reconciliation. Cf. Betz, *2 Corinthians 8 and 9,* 76-77, who surmises that the crisis referred to in 2 Cor. 8:20 was "a charge of fraud made by this man against the apostle."
[43] Betz, *2 Corinthians 8 and 9,* 59. So too Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 576; Keener, *1-2 Corinthians,* 205; Witherington, *Conflict and Community in Corinth,* 427.
[44] "Dictionary and Word Search for *hilaros* (Strong's 2431)" in Blue Letter Bible website.
[45] Keener, *1-2 Corinthians,* 136.
[46] In contrast to the temple tax, Paul makes the Jerusalem offering a one-time voluntary collection (2 Cor. 9:7) instead of an annual legislated levy. Nickle, *Collection,* 79, 91-92; Georgi, *Remembering the Poor,* 40.
[47] C.K. Barrett, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians* (London: Adam & Charles Black, 1973), 235. 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), 571-73.
[48] Furnish, *II Corinthians,* 439.
[49] For a detailed discussion of Paul's concept of joy, see Georgi, *Remembering the Poor*, 71.
[50] As per the temple tax. Nickle, *Collection,* 80, 89.
[51] Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 1324.
[52] Barrett, *First Epistle to the Corinthians,* 387.
[53] Witherington, *Conflict and Community in Corinth,* 315.
[54] Barrett, *First Epistle to the Corinthians,* 387.
[55] D.E. Aune, "Early Christian Worship,"*Anchor Bible Dictionary*, ed. David Noel Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1996).
[56] Witheringon, *Conflict and Community in Corinth,* 315.
[57] Half-shekel. Nickle, *Collection*, 92.
[58] It occurs elsewhere in the NT only in Rom. 1:10 and 3 John 2. W. Michaelis, "ευοδόω," *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, Volume 5*, ed. Gerhard Friedrich, trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), 112. Hereafter *TDNT*.
[59] Charles H. Talbert, *Reading Corinthians: A Literary and Tehological Commentary,* rev. ed., (Macon, GA: Smyth and Hewys, 2002), 131. The Greek term likely originates in the

Septuagint. "In some 40 instances God is directly or indirectly the one to whom true success is ascribed." W. Michaelis, "ευοδόω," *TDNT 5*, 112. The *TDNT* states that in 1 Cor. 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.

[60] Keener, *1-2 Corinthians,* 136. Contra Meeks, *The First Urban Christians,* 65.

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

[62] Keener, *1-2 Corinthians,* 139.

[63] Ibid., 205.

[64] Harris, *Second Epistle to the Corinthians,* 590.

[65] Betz, *2 Corinthians 8 and 9,* 66.

[66] Keener, *1-2 Corinthians,* 214.

[67] Furnish, *II Corinthians,* 451.

[68] Ibid., 452.

[69] Bassler, *God and Mammon,* 113. See Harris, *Second Epistle to the Corinthians,* 658.

[70] Dahl, *Studies in Paul*, 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*, 554-55.

[71] Bassler, *God and Mammon,* 101.

[72] Dunn, *Theology of Paul*, 707-08. See Harris, *Second Epistle to the Corinthians,* 559-60 for a summary of how χάρις is used in 2 Cor. 8-9. Also Dunn, *Theology of Paul,* 319-23 for how Paul uses the term in his writing.

[73] Dunn, *Theology of Paul*, 707-08.

[74] Harris, *Second Epistle to the Corinthians,* 560.

[75] Dunn, *Theology of Paul,* 707.

[76] Ibid., 708.

[77] Al Rempel, phone conversation with author, 16 August 2007.

[78] Furnish, *II Corinthians,* 452.

[79] Bassler, *God and Mammon,* 111.

[80] Witherington, *Conflict and Community in Corinth,* 428.

[81] Dahl, *Studies in Paul*, 37.

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

[83] 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), 210-11.

[84] Keener, *1-2 Corinthians,* 206. See also Betz, *2 Corinthians 8 and 9,* 67.

[85] Bassler, *God and Mammon*, 94.

[86] Dunn, *Theology of Paul,* 709.

[87] Dahl, *Studies in Paul,* 37.

[88] Dunn, *Theology of Paul,* 709.

[89] Cf. Matt. 5:46-48.

[90] Fred B. Craddock, "The Poverty of Christ: An Investigation of II Cor. 8:9," *Interpretation* 22 (April 1968):165,168. So too Betz, *2 Corinthians 8 and 9,* 62.
[91] Craddock, "Poverty," 162, writes that "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."
[92] Craddock, "Poverty," 166. Contra Dunn, *Theology of Paul,* 292.
[93] Betz, *2 Corinthians 8 and 9,* 61.
[94] Furnish, *II Corinthians,* 418.
[95] The temple tax precedent provides a legal way to transport money to Jerusalem. Paul employs a similar large delegation model, which provides security and represents the community in Jerusalem. Nickle, *Collection,* 83, 88.
[96] See for instance Holmberg, *Paul and Power,* 38.
[97] Munck, *Salvation of Mankind,* 303; Georgi, *Remembering the Poor,* 123-24; Murphy-O'Connor, *A Critical Life,* 346.
[98] Munck, *Salvation of Mankind*, 303-04.
[99] Georgi, *Remembering the Poor,* 75.
[100] Ibid., 73-74. Contra Bruce J. Malina and John J. Pilch, *Social-Science Commentary on the Letters of Paul* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2006), 174, who suggest the man will serve "as some sort of accountant."
[101] Gerhard Friedrich, "ευαγγέλιον," *TDNT 2*, 729. Translating *en tō euaggeliō* as "a preacher of the good news" (NLT) or "proclaiming the good news" (NRSV) is consistent with how Paul uses the word to describe himself (2 Cor. 2:12, Rom. 1:9), and himself and his companions (2 Cor. 10:14). With Keener, *1-2 Corinthians*, 208; Thrall, *II Corinthians VIII-XIII*, 548. Contra Harris, *Second Epistle to the Corinthians,* 601, who cites Rom. 1:9, Phil. 4:3 and 1 Thess. 4:2; Furnish, *II Corinthians,* 422.
[102] Contra Meeks, *The First Urban Christians,* 133, and V. George Shillington, *2 Corinthians* (Scottdale: Herald Press, 1998), 183, who see a lesser role for the messengers.
[103] I hold to the traditional interpretation of the "offering of the Gentiles" as a genitive of apposition and not a subjective genitive. 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* (Scottdale: Herald Press, 2004), 352. With Karl Barth, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 6th ed., trans. Edwyn C. Hoskins (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1968), 530; Hurtado lecture, 18 July 2007. Paul could also be referring to the gift made by the Gentiles (Wan, *Paul and Politics*, 206) although I prefer to think it is the Gentiles and not the money which the Spirit sanctifies.
[104] "Paul's offering turns out to be the Gentiles themselves, evidenced to be so because they have been 'sanctified by the Holy Spirit.'" Gordon D. Fee, *God's Empowering Presence: the Holy Spirit in the Letters of Paul* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2002), 626.
[105] Mark L.Vincent, *A Christian View of Money: Celebrating God's Generosity* (Scottdale: Herald Press, 1997), 90.
[106] Ibid., 91.
[107] From my own fundraising experience, I would argue this is not just possible but extremely likely.

[108] Al Rempel, phone conversation with author, 16 August 2007.
[109] Furnish, *II Corinthians,* 418.
[110] Jeff Steckley, phone conversation with author, 6 June 2007.
[111] Further study on Mennonite giving to the American charity *Focus on the Family* would be instructive here.
[112] Related by Gord Penner, phone conversation with author, 31 August 2007.

Lori Guenther Reesor received her Master of Theological Studies degree in 2008 from Conrad Grebel University College. This paper is a condensed version of her MTS thesis.