Lessons from Paul: First educator of the first millennium

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Abstract

This study is a narrative inquiry (Clandinin and Connelly 2000) into ten letters written by Paul of Tarsus to four communities in the Mediterranean Basin between 50 and 55 CE. The inquiry offers new insights into the education encounter, claims that Paul's teaching practices are universalisable, and concludes that Paul's pedagogy is an enactment of what Biesta (2013) has theorised as a pedagogy of the event.

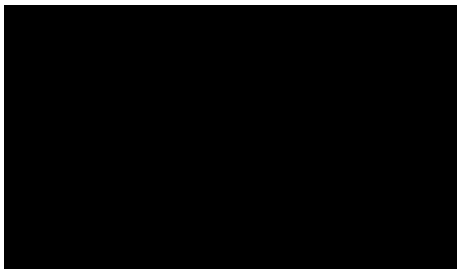
Saint Paul is the fulcrum for new conversations between philosophers, historians, theologians and social theorists (Milbank, Žižek, & Davis, 2010). This inquiry, prompted by the declaration that Paul is 'our contemporary' and 'the universal subject' (Badiou 2003, 2009), joins that conversation, with a materialist interpretation of Paul as the first educator of the first millennium.

Paul experienced an *event* (Badiou 2003) on the road to Damascus. This *event* introduced a new ontological belief into the world, resurrection, which Paul translated into a new way of living, described in this study as *agapē*. Paul formed communities, known as *ekklēsia*, that were unique social groups (Meeks 2003, Horsley 1997, 2000), and education communities (Judge in Harrison 2008; Smith 2012). These *ekklēsia* became a social system in which new structures and social practices (Giddens 1984) supported the emancipation of people from the restrictions of their identity and increased their agency through social learning. Members of the *ekklēsia* engaged in education encounters with a commitment to *agapē* relationships.

Paul's approach, revolutionary for its time and place, introduced reflexivity (Giddens 1984) and intersubjectivity (Mead 1934, 2002) into the education encounter. This new narrative of Paul foreshadows the education philosophy of Dewey (1975, 1997, 1998, 2011), Biesta (2006, 2010, 2013, 2017), Freire (1985) and Noddings (2010, 2011, 2013). The inquiry concludes with the claim that Paul enacted a pedagogy of the *event* from which there are lessons for contemporary educators.

Student Declaration

I, Michael Victory, declare that the PhD thesis entitled *Lessons from Paul: First educator of the first millennium* is no more than 100,000 words in length including quotes and exclusive of tables, figures, appendices, bibliography, references and footnotes. This thesis contains no material that has been submitted previously, in whole or part, for the award of any other academic degree or diploma. Except where otherwise indicated, this thesis is my own work.



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To Daniel, Kara and young Eve; Alex, and Vincent, who have experienced major *events* in your own lives as this inquiry has progressed; always I have felt your support, even as you experienced my absence – thank you. 'So give encouragement to each other, and keep strengthening one another, as you do already' (1 Thess 5:11).

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Prologue

A thesis that names a person first educator of the first millennium, is making an ambitious claim. When the subject of that claim has been co-opted to control women's lives, promote slavery, place boundaries on an individual's sexuality and justify anti-Semitism, then the claim seems to have moved from ambitious to fatuous. As I developed this research text many have asked 'Why bother with such a figure?' 'Do we really need an educator with that résumé?' and at times during the last seven years I struggled to respond positively to that question. I struggled to articulate why of all the possibilities in educational research I was studying Saint Paul. His letters are not the most obvious sources for education research. In many of the social and professional circles in which I am involved, he is rejected as a misogynist, a homophobe, a racist and the architect of conservative Christian morality. Despite that narrative and my own occasional misgivings, Paul is a beguiling character because he changed lives and communities in ways that continue to resonate in western civilisation 2,000 years after his death. These changes were of interest to me as an educator. My inquiry has led me to the conclusion that Paul was the first educator of the first millennium and, through a *retelling* (Clandinin 2016) of his narrative, I am inviting others into a relationship with his work as an educator.

The field texts for the inquiry, Paul's letters, are drawn from the Bible, but I have approached the research from a materialist position, which Eagleton (2016, p. 6) has described as 'respect for the otherness and integrity of the world'. For Biesta (2017, p. 83), it is 'the fact that the world, natural and social, is not a construction or projection of our phantasy, but exists in its own right and its own integrity'. The letters were written by one person in a place and time to groups of people whom he knew, about issues they shared in common. I do not consider the letters to be the product of human activity 'inspired by God' (McBrien 1981, p. 64).

The inquiry has been prompted by Badiou's text, *Saint Paul: the Foundation of Universalism* (2003 first published in French in 1997), in which he declares Paul as 'our contemporary' and the 'foundation of universalism', later qualified as 'the universal subject' (Badiou 2009). Badiou begins with a narrative describing his fascination with Paul and his letters while distancing himself from the sacred in those same letters:

> For me, truth be told, Paul is not an apostle or a saint. I care nothing for the Good News he declares or the cult dedicated to him. But he is a subjective figure of primary importance. I have always read the texts the way one returns to those classic texts with which one is familiar. (Badiou 2003, p. 1)

Badiou's intervention in the narrative of Saint Paul has opened the door for new materialist narratives of Paul of Tarsus. This text is one of those narratives.

In the Christian narrative, Paul of Tarsus experienced a life changing moment on the road to Damascus. He immediately and dramatically changed his life; from a persecutor of Christians to a great missionary for the cause of Christianity. He became the apostle to the Gentiles, and eventually a Saint of the Christian Church. The narrative is authenticated by 13 of the 27 books of the New Testament that are purportedly by, or about, Paul. This narrative has been a powerful influence on western Christianity and, consequently, all civilisations that have their roots in the Roman Empire (Agamben 2005; Nietzsche 2007; Tabor 2012; Taubes 2004; Zimmerman 2010). Badiou (2003) does not so much challenge the authenticity of this narrative, as write a new narrative in which Paul is subtracted from his Jewish and Christian roots and offered as a militant figure capable of rescuing the west from the death imposed by capitalism.

Badiou (2003, p. 109), writes in the conclusion of his book, 'The production of equality and the casting off, in thought, of differences are the material signs of the universal'. In that sentence is the possibility that education can enable people, in a material sense, to see beyond their difference, toward the universal. In responding to such a possibility, people would not deny their difference but would recognise their equality as universal subjects. The universal offers the possibility for the education encounter to be situated within the widest possible social boundaries; not limited by the learning space, by formal structures, by national borders or by the limitations of cultural, ethnic or religious backgrounds. If indeed, as Badiou argues, Paul is our contemporary (2003), and further that he is the universal subject (2009), then it is legitimate to ask questions about what contemporary educators might learn from the Paul narrative.

Badiou's (2003) treatise on Paul, along with those of Žižek (2003, 2010b, 2014), Taubes (2004)and Agamben (2005), has become the fulcrum for new conversations between philosophers, historians, theologians and social theorists (Agamben 2005; Badiou 2003, 2009, 2013; Caputo, J & Alcoff 2009; Harink 2010; Horsley 1997b, 2000b; Milbank, Žižek & Davis 2010; Miller, CR 2009; Taubes 2004; Žižek 2010a, 2010b, 2014). In making the claim of Paul as the first educator of the first millennium, I am consciously building on the foundation of these new conversations, and offering a new perspective on Paul that is outside of Christianity and Judaism. In the *retelling* of Paul's narrative, he entered into education encounters with people across the Mediterranean Basin. These encounters changed the lives of people and the communities in which they lived.

I cannot say, as Badiou does (2003, p. 1), that Paul has 'accompanied me' for a long time. In my recollection of 13 years of Catholic schooling, the study of biblical texts involved the creation of visual representations of gospel parables and reproducing historically questionable maps of Saint Paul's journeys from the *Good News Bible*. The religious tradition in which I was raised was centred on rituals and moral guidelines that were determined by an authoritative and hierarchical power structure. This was both remote, centred in Rome, and local, represented by the parish priest, religious brothers and nuns. In my world, the Pauline texts had no meaningful existence outside of church rituals. Attendance at St Peter and Paul's Catholic primary school left me in no doubt that I belonged to a Petrine social group. The book held by Paul in all of the iconography that surrounded me in that school was not an invitation to study his letters; Peter's successors would be our faithful interpreters.

A postgraduate degree in which I explored the intersection between biblical literature and the culture of western societies changed my perspective in two profound ways. One lecturer had a gift for illuminating the beauty of biblical writing; his exegesis of the nativity story in the Gospel of Luke has stayed with me for three decades. He encouraged us to fall in love with the power of narrative, and I did. Secondly, I began to wonder about the possibilities of these texts if separated from religious dogma. However, as I was a teacher of Religious Education in Catholic secondary schools at that time, it was difficult to pursue such a line of inquiry.

Many years later, and seven years on from first 'coming alongside' (Clandinin 2016, p. 35) Paul's letters, I *retell* Paul's narrative as an educator. In this research text, a narrative inquiry term (Clandinin 2016), I report the findings from my inquiry into the field texts, Paul's letters, and relate how that narrative has affected my work as a teacher educator and researcher. Developing this research text creates an opportunity for other educators who might be so inclined to experience Paul's narrative and share my experience of the letters. My purpose is not to present a defence of Paul against the accusations of misogyny, homophobia etc., nor to write a biography, but rather to construct a new narrative of Paul as the first educator of the first millennium.

This new narrative does not sit outside of Paul's place in history. The historical narrative of Paul, and I draw primarily on Murphy-O'Connor (1997, 2002, 2008a, 2008b), has the Jewish born Paul growing up in Tarsus in the first century CE. He was subject to Hellenic influences in that city before being educated in a Pharisaic school in Jerusalem. He acquired Roman citizenship through his family, which increased his mobility and offered social and economic advantages in the communities in which he lived and worked. Paul experienced a life-changing event while travelling on the road to Damascus circa 33 CE. He had been a well-known

persecutor of Christians (Gal 1:13), but following that incident he ceased his persecutions, gathered a group of companions and began travelling widely across the Mediterranean Basin drawing people into a new way of living. Paul and his 'fellow-workers' (Fitzmyer 2008, pp. 195-6) located themselves in communities where they worked, lived and convinced people to form social groups based on a new way of living.

In these communities, known as *ekklēsia*, members were to discard the binary opposites that had defined their world. They were not to be defined by being a Jew or Greek, not slaves or free, not even male and female, but all were to commit to a common endeavour of living in *agapē*, a new way of living for the other, that was introduced by Paul, and is the subject of analysis in Chapter Seven of this research text. People who joined the *ekklēsia* were emancipated from the restrictions of the rigid social, economic, legal and religious hierarchies that structured their existing lives. They adopted social practices and used language in new ways when relating to each other in these communities. These changes created discomfort for many in the *ekklēsia* who were required to make choices that were not necessarily in their own social or economic interest, but still, they chose the *ekklēsia*. This choice, and the change in people and communities, attracts my attention as an educator.

After leaving each community, Paul wrote letters to them in the common Greek language. Apart from occasional moral directives, his abiding messages were to live the new life that he had lived with them and to keep learning from each other how to live that new life. The communities preserved these letters, and they are the field texts for this inquiry.

In the Introduction I set the parameters for the research and foreshadow the key findings from the inquiry. A personal narrative begins each chapter. This is integral to the methodology of the study, to offer the reader an insight into how the field texts have shaped my narrative of myself as an educator and researcher.

In the second chapter, in a review of the literature on how Paul has been represented through history, I join with Badiou (2003) to argue the case for why Paul is, and should be, a figure of interest in the modern world. I position my narrative of Paul as educator within the narratives that have become 'Paul's new moment' (Milbank, Žižek & Davis 2010). Badiou references as direct influences a French Catholic theologian, Stanislas Breton (2011), and a German Protestant New Testament scholar, Günther Bornkamm (1971). Those two Christian traditions, Catholicism and Protestantism, have shaped what I have named the narrative of Saint Paul. There is also a narrative of Paul in Judaism, represented in recent literature by Davies (1955), Sanders (1977) and Boyarin (1994), There are alternative narratives of Paul

in which he is portrayed as the anti-Christ, a misogynist, anti-Semite, homophobe and even a promoter of slavery. I do not enter into a full discussion of these alternative narratives but I do engage with the work of Nietzsche (2007), who since the nineteenth century has provided the ballast against the hagiography of Paul (c.f. Matthews 1918). In this chapter I establish the context for my own narrative of Paul as educator.

In the third chapter I outline the narrative inquiry methodology, drawing on the work of Clandinin and Connelly who have developed a three-dimensional model for such inquiries (Clandinin 2007, 2016; Clandinin & Connelly 2000; Clandinin, Connelly & Chan 2002; Clandinin & Rosiek 2007; Connelly & Clandinin 2006). The methodology has its foundation in the work of American pragmatist philosopher and educator, John Dewey (1975, 1997, 1998, 2011), whose work had become influential in my own professional reading and practice. Narrative inquiry is 'living, telling, retelling and reliving story' (Clandinin 2016, p. 34). In this inquiry the *living* has been done in the first century CE, I am responding to the *telling* in Paul's letters, creating a *retelling* of his narrative as an educator through the lens of my experience. The *reliving* is enacted in my own practice as a teacher educator and researcher and this *reliving* may be extended to the practice of others through the production of this research text. Previous experience with the methodology had embedded in me a commitment to narrative inquiry at both an epistemological and ontological level. I had begun to think about my personal and professional life in terms of narrative and this inquiry promised further opportunity to develop that understanding. The narrative inquiry methodology, with its emphasis on experience and reflexivity, provided synchronicity with Paul's pedagogy and teaching practice.

The intent of narrative inquiry is to pose new insights into experience that will enrich the experience of others. The process accepts that the researcher brings his or her experience to the inquiry, hence use of the personal pronoun, and personal narratives and vignettes in each chapter. I am an educator and researcher, working formally in the field of teacher education and so what I bring to the texts is neither neutral nor objective. The reader is entitled to my personal experiences and reflexivity as I create 'a new sense of meaning and significance with respect to the research topic … that might incrementally add to knowledge in the field' (Clandinin & Connelly 2000, p. 42).

Paul's letters are significant texts in the experiences of people across western civilisation but to date I have not been able to unearth any other research that has used a narrative inquiry methodology to review his letters. I acknowledge the risk in taking a materialist perspective on texts that are embedded in a religious tradition, and in applying a methodology never

before applied to those texts. However, arising from this novel approach, I make a claim to new insights into the education encounter that I will argue are universalisable.

In Chapter Four I construct a narrative of Paul's life as an educator from the field texts. The field texts are letters written by Paul to groups in Thessalonica, Galatia, Philippi and Corinth between circa April 50 and the summer of 55 CE. At the time Paul was writing, all of these communities were under the control of the Roman Empire; cities and regions now located within modern day Greece and Turkey (a map is included at Appendix One). I use the term, Mediterranean Basin, to describe the region in which Paul travelled and worked. The narrative is informed by reference to secondary sources among which, as indicated earlier, I have given primacy to the work of biblical historian Murphy-O'Connor (1997, 2002, 2008a, 2008b), particularly where there are disputes about the chronology and circumstances of Paul's travels and the literary integrity of his letters. Murphy-O'Connor presents comprehensive literary, archaeological and epigraphic evidence to support what I judged to be the most internally consistent chronology of the events of Paul's life. He gives priority to Paul's own account in his letters, over the alternative contemporaneous account of Paul's life as recorded in the Book of the Acts of the Apostles.

This fourth chapter is my *retelling* of the narrative of Paul as an educator. The narrative is a significant deviation from the narrative of Paul, the Christian Saint. New Testament scholars or theologians who choose to engage with it, will likely question the narrative for having adopted a materialist analysis of the letters. However, I contend that I have been faithful to the texts and to the context in which they were written. The letters are communications written by one person to communities he knew, for specific purposes (Edsall 2014). That the letters were later added to a canon of religious texts is immaterial to their original purpose and function. Badiou (2003, 2009) has opened new possibilities for these texts. They can no longer be considered the exclusive property of religious groups; they are rightly to be considered as historical texts on the public record.

The fifth chapter deviates slightly from the typical thesis format. Before moving into the data analysis in the three subsequent chapters, I enter into a theoretical discussion of the resurrection *event*. It is this *event* that sets Paul apart from his contemporaries and his predecessors as an educator, and it is important for understanding the temporal dimension of Paul's life and teaching. I begin with Badiou's (2003) discussion of the resurrection *event* and complement that discussion with Mead's (2002) theorising of *event*, further interpreted by Joas (1997). The introduction of Mead is an explicit acknowledgment of the social character

of *event*. The resurrection *event* is the foundation of one of the major findings of the inquiry, that Paul enacted a pedagogy of the *event* (Biesta 2013).

The narrative inquiry methodology promotes an integrated data analysis and literature review. It is an explicit practice, recognising that the professional reading that I have undertaken in the compilation of the research text influences my reading of the field texts. That may seem unusual for those operating outside of a narrative methodology, but the intent is to create 'a seamless link between the theory and the practice embedded in the inquiry' (Clandinin & Connelly 2000, p. 41). The review of the education literature in Chapters Six, Seven and Eight, draws on the educational philosophies of Dewey (1975, 1997, 1998, 2011), Biesta (2006, 2010, 2013, 2017), Freire (1985a, 1985b, 1996) and Noddings (2010, 2011, 2013). These educators are linked by a commitment to education as a social experience driven by a relational centred pedagogy. Each emphasises, in different ways, the centrality of dialogic communication as the means by which education leads to freedom for the subject. While not diminishing the role of the teacher in the education encounter, they all recast the relationship between teacher and student as one in which the receiver of a communication holds authority.

In Chapter Six I focus on the *ekklēsia*, the communities created by Paul in each city and region, to whom the letters were addressed. The literature review commences with findings on the *ekklēsia* from Judge (in Harrison 2008), Smith (2012), Meeks (2003) and Horsley (1997b, 2000b), from which a conclusion is drawn that the *ekklēsia* were unique education communities in that time and place. The data from my inquiry tells a narrative of Paul forming communities in which people were emancipated from their former identity to come together to learn how to live a new resurrected life, described as living in *agapē*. The *ekklēsia* were created as sites of social learning where people learned with, and from, each other. Paul introduced to each *ekklēsia* 'recursively organised sets of rules and resources' that became a system 'reproduced across time and space in organised social practices' (Giddens 1984, p. 25). I argue that this structuration (Giddens 1984) is transferable to modern education settings.

Chapter Seven provides an exploration of Paul's pedagogy and teaching practice, viewed primarily through Paul's introduction to the *ekklēsia* of *agapē* as purpose, pedagogy and practice in his teaching. The literature on *agapē* is reviewed (Nygren 1953; Outka 1972; Spicq 1965) before analysing the data from my own inquiry. I argue that *agapē* is as an intersubjective experience that promotes the education experience as one of pure encounter, or grace (Badiou 2003), and one in which reflexivity is essential from both teacher and

student. Paul's pedagogy arises from his experience of the resurrection *event*, which provides him with great agency in the education encounters.

In Chapter Eight, I venture new insights into a pedagogy of the *event* (Biesta 2013). The education encounters created by Paul implementing this pedagogy changed lives and communities. A pedagogy of the *event* has the potential to enrich the experience of teachers and students engaged in education encounters. I argue in this chapter that the narrative of Paul as the first educator of the first millennium is a narrative that is universalisable and, therefore, contains lessons for contemporary educators who make the choice to engage with this *retelling* of Paul's texts and a *reliving* of his practice. New insights arising from the research, through an inquiry into the letters of Paul, create new knowledge of the concept of an *evental* pedagogy.

Matters of language and format

There are matters of language used in this research text that require a brief explanation. At times I use the words 'Christian' and 'Christianity' as linguistic shortcuts. The words were not in public usage until the third century, well after Paul's death (Judge 2008c). Certainly the communities created by Paul would not have identified as Christians during his lifetime, so using the words to describe the people and these communities is anachronistic. However, the words serve the purpose of distinguishing between the people who made a change in their life that was in various ways linked to Jesus of Nazareth, through Paul or other teachers, without significant interruptions to the flow of the text. Secondly, I note the dominance of the masculine pronouns he/his/man in quoting various sources. For reasons of readability and fluency, I have chosen not to denote these as errors with (sic), but to rely on the intelligence of the reader to distinguish whether it is a non-gender specific reference or does refer to a male. I have italicised words to indicate that they are not English words, primarily *agapē* and *ekklēsia*. I have also italicised common words where they are used with the specific meaning imbued in them by the research for this inquiry, notably *event,* but also words such as *reliving* and *retelling* that have a specific meaning in the narrative inquiry methodology.

Chapter One: Introduction

A personal narrative

I commenced this inquiry with little more than an intuition that Paul might offer new insights into education. I had some disparate thoughts and pieces that had the potential to come together into what Clandinin (2016) describes as a research puzzle. I was able to convince colleagues in the academy that my intuition was worthy of exploration, and the formal inquiry came into existence.

Prior to applying for the doctorate program, and during the candidature period, I had filled my bookshelves with popular narratives of Paul: *What Paul meant* (Willis 2007), *The first Paul* (Borg & Crossan 2009), *Did St Paul get Jesus right?* (Wenham 2010), *Paul among the people: The apostle reinterpreted and reimagined in his own time* (Ruden 2010), *St Paul: The misunderstood apostle* (Armstrong 2015), *How Jesus became Christian*, with three chapters on Paul's role (Wilson, B 2009), and the widely publicised, *Zealot: The life and times of Jesus of Nazareth* in which Paul is described as, 'the most influential interpreter of Jesus' message' (Aslan 2013, p. 175). These books fed my interest in the intersection between biblical literature and western society, but all had Paul at the centre of the origins of Christianity or the creation of a new Judaism. All of my working life has been in education and I was looking for a narrative of Paul that would connect with my experience as an educator.

In these narratives Paul was portrayed as an insider. He was either the archetypal Christian, and authors were reminding the audience of that, or a faithful Jew who had not intended Christianity to be separate to Judaism. He is posited as being in concert with Jesus of Nazareth, even though they never met. The texts represent a concerted effort to establish a normative Paul. In my imagining, Paul was an outsider, a term coined by Wilson (1963), and best explained as one who operates from the margins or extremes, does not fit within societal norms and is motivated by a clear vision for the world to be other than what it is. I had a similar narrative of myself as an outsider and this influenced my view of education; the education experience should lead to change in the community. I could not have articulated it when I commenced, but when I reflect, I am sure I was in search of validation of my views of the education experience. What could be more rewarding for an outsider than revealing Paul, a figure at the foundation of the establishment of western civilisation, as a radical educator?

Badiou's (2003) Paul opened new possibilities. This French philosopher had created a materialist narrative of Paul and named him the foundation of universalism. I have not comprehended all of Badiou's concepts, they remain a challenge, but the text was a

breakthrough for me, creating the possibility for credible new narratives of Paul. Nobody questions that Paul's actions prompted lasting change in people's lives or that those changes have reverberated through history. Following Badiou (2003), the possibility existed that the changes initiated by Paul could be described in terms other than changes in religious belief or as having been inspired by a deity.

What I did not have until I was three years into the inquiry was any significant scholarly work that positioned Paul as an educator. Paul himself, or at least his texts, continued to stymie my inquiry; he did not claim to be an educator, he did not act like the educators of his own time, nor did he write like any educator that I knew. Malherbe (2011) had written a short treatise on Paul and his pastoral care of the Thessalonians. While pastoral care is prominent in contemporary school curricula, there were limitations in using the text as Malherbe (2011) was drawing on a wider philosophical tradition, with only limited application to an educational approach. Meeks (2003), in his study of the social world of Paul, acknowledged that Paul was carrying out the work of a teacher but produced no substantive analysis. However, Meeks' writing led me to a collection of articles written in the 1960s by the classics scholar, Judge (in Harrison 2008). Judge (2008d) had written on Paul as an educator and what he described as scholastic communities. In addition, during this inquiry, two doctoral theses were published: Smith's (2012) analysis of Judge's work on scholastic communities, and Edsall's (2014) on instructional language in Paul's letters.

There was a marked shift in my relationship with the Pauline texts following my review of Judge (in Harrison 2008), Smith (2012) and Edsall (2014). I had a new level of confidence that my hunch about Paul was correct; he was an educator. I moved from defensiveness (i.e. trying to produce evidence that he was an educator), to an investigation of what type of educator he had been. There was a shift in the dynamic of my relationship with the field texts.

What has not changed throughout the inquiry is the difficulty of conversations with colleagues. Many have been unable to move beyond the narrative of Paul as a misogynist, or Paul as a conservative Christian; by implication, if I was studying Paul, then I was one, or both of those. I struggled to find a conversational narrative that justified the work and maintained its integrity. I have mumbled my way through many conversations, including several in this, the final year of the inquiry, hoping to avoid the resulting frown or scowl from my conversant. It has been complex and challenging to walk alongside Paul's texts. There were times that I wished I had chosen Seneca, Cicero or Quintillian as the source material for the research. However, and this is the point of this inquiry, none of those historical figures have had the same impact on western culture as Paul. He changed lives and communities and those changes continue to reverberate. This makes him of interest to me in my role as an educator.

Setting the parameters for the inquiry

Paul experienced a life changing *event* (Badiou 2003) while journeying on the road to Damascus circa 33 CE. This *event* introduced a new ontology into the world of the Mediterranean Basin, resurrection, which Paul translated into a new way of living in the material world. Paul travelled extensively, forming communities of people and engaging in education encounters. These encounters led people to adopt this new way of living and implement new social practices in their daily lives that changed their routinised behaviours (Giddens 1984). These *ekklēsia* became communities where people were emancipated from the restrictions of their identity and interacted as equals in a commitment to *agapē*. This was a new way of living and a radical departure from the social stratification of Graeco-Roman society and Jewish Law. That is the broad narrative arc being investigated in this inquiry.

Paul intervened in the lives of people and his interventions had consequences in the material life of those individuals and the society in which they lived. They learned and they changed. People came to a new understanding of themselves, their relationships within the new community and their ongoing relationships with wider society. I will argue that these interactions between Paul and the members of the community can be understood as education encounters and that educators in the modern world can learn from Paul's practice as an educator and his approach to the creation of education communities.

The education encounter

My understanding of the education encounter is grounded in the work of Dewey (1975, 1997, 1998, 2011), and influenced by Biesta (2006, 2010, 2013, 2017). It begins with the concept of purpose. In an education encounter there must be intent that something new will be created, be that knowledge or skills, or a change from something that was happening or existing. Dewey (1997, p. 28) refined this sense of purpose by arguing that a 'genuine education experience' is one that lives 'fruitfully and creatively in subsequent experiences'. In this approach, education has a temporal dimension. Though occurring in a present, the participants bring a past to the encounter and the encounter will have an impact on their future. Dewey (1997, p. 28) described this as 'continuity of experience', which is core to his theory of experience. At the opposite end of the continuum is 'any experience that is mis-educative that has the effect of arresting or distorting the growth of further experiences' (Dewey 1997, p. 25).

Dewey (2011) positions the continuity of experience and education in the context of how a person creates and maintains relationships in society. For Dewey, the highest order of social cooperation and the best model for living was democracy, a concept which he expanded

beyond the constraints of mere republicanism and democratic proceduralism (Bernstein 2010, p. 86). In Dewey's philosophy (1997, 2011), education encounters are social practices that form and shape a person. The relationships that each person has within his or her community are shaped and changed by education encounters, and thus society can be constantly renewed through education. Explicit in Dewey's all-encompassing theory of life, education and democracy, is dialogic communication. Language enables relationships with others and it is through language that a person's sense of self develops:

> To be a recipient of a communication is to have an enlarged and changed experience. One shares in what another has thought and felt and in so far, meagrely or amply, has his own attitude modified. Nor is the one who communicates it left unaffected. (Dewey 2011, p. 7)

It is through democratic cooperation that people have the greatest opportunity to adapt their environment in response to experience, and so education can be described as increasing the agency of the people in the encounter for enhanced participation in society.

Biesta (2010, 2013), outlines three interrelated purposes in education: qualification, socialisation and subjectification. Qualification is the acquisition by the student of knowledge, skills, values and dispositions; socialisation has to do with the ways in which a person becomes part of the existing traditions of doing and being; and subjectification is the way in which a subject comes into the world through the education encounter (Biesta 2010, 2013). In a more recent publication Biesta (2017) uses the term, 'subject-ness'. Biesta (2013, p. 128), describes the 'multi-dimensionality of educational purpose', suggesting that the three purposes exist in tension in education encounters.

Across his quartet of books (Biesta 2006, 2010, 2013, 2017), that have come to represent his theory of education, Biesta argues for a strong distinction to be made between teaching and learning. He promotes what is a widely accepted definition of learning as 'any more or less durable change that is not the result of maturation' (Biesta 2017, p. 25), but argues against the 'learnification' of education (Biesta 2010). The education encounter is formed where teaching and learning occur with a purpose:

> The point of teaching, and education more generally, is never that students 'just' learn, but always that they learn *something*, that they learn it for particular *reasons*, and that they learn it from *someone* (Biesta 2017, p. 27 original emphasis)

Biesta (2013) writes about the weakness of the education encounter, but is clear that the teacher has a prominent role in that encounter, bringing something that is outside of the experience of the student and exercising wise judgement in each encounter.

When I write of the education encounter I assume that it involves at least two people who are active within it. An encounter involves two-way communication and therefore assumes that both participants are present in all dimensions of their humanity. Where one of these two people is a teacher, then that person will bring to the education encounter a pedagogical approach and specific practices that are designed to enhance the purpose of the encounter. I have defined pedagogy simply as the frame of reference through which the teacher deliberately sets out to shape the education encounter. An education encounter can equally occur between two students in a classroom setting, though they may not bring a deliberate pedagogy to that encounter.

There are complexities in introducing the word, teacher, or teaching, into the discussion. I note Biesta's discussion of Komisar's work on 'teaching as an *occupation*, as a general *enterprise*, and as an *act*' (Biesta 2017, p. 25 original emphasis). My own work is in formal education and with people who are engaged in teaching as an occupation, and in this research I am using the word teaching as an act or, as I prefer, a practice. The research has been influenced by my own work as a teacher and teacher educator in formal education settings, but the application of the ideas need not be limited to formal settings. In using Paul's letters as field texts, I am drawing on material from a person who held no teaching qualification and did not operate in formal education settings.

The term teacher practice is the subject of debate (Dunne & Hogan 2004). MacIntyre (2004, p. 8) claims that teaching is not a practice: 'teaching is never more than a means, that is, it has no point and purpose except for the point and purpose of the activities to which it introduces students'. Hogan (2004) disagrees with MacIntyre (2004), arguing that teaching is a way of life that always involves an underlying understanding or acceptance of a philosophy. For Hogan (2004) this sets teaching apart from being a simple act of communication. Teaching involves an active relationship on the part of the teacher. Teaching itself is a form of learning with others, where the teacher is reflexive of their own actions. Noddings (2004) also disagrees with MacIntyre (2004) that teaching is simply a means to an end. For Noddings, teaching is a relational practice leading to the creation of relationships of care and trust to meet the responsibility that teachers have 'for the development of students as whole persons' (2004, p. 168). When I use the term teaching practice, I am referring to actions deliberately chosen by teachers, to contribute to, and shape relationships in, the education encounter.

I have described the education encounters initiated by Paul as intersubjective encounters. Mead's (1934, 2002) theory of intersubjectivityor, as Joas describes it, his 'intersubjective praxis' (Joas 1997, p. 192), would have it that a person can engage in communication in the

present, and hold simultaneously a perspective on the interaction with the other whilst reconstructing their own past based on the experience of that communication (Joas 1997; Mead 1934, 2002). Joas describes it as 'the ability to take two points of view simultaneously and to be aware of the relationship between them' (Joas 1997, p. 188). Intersubjectivity is fundamental to what I have described as the social learning that occurs in the *ekklēsia*. People involved in education encounters in the *ekklēsia* came to understand themselves in a new way through their interactions with the other. They experience *agapē* as a new relationship; it is an emergence, or *event*. Essential to intersubjectivity is reflexivity; the capacity of each person to reflect on their own and the actions of others. Mead (1934, p. 134) describes it as 'reflexiveness', but in this research text I have preferred Giddens' use of the term 'reflexivity' and his definition of that term as 'grounded in the continuous monitoring of action which human beings display and expect others to display' (Giddens 1984, p. 3).

Giddens (1984, p. 3) writes of human action as a '*durée*, a continuous flow of conduct' with reflexivity being the 'monitored character of the ongoing flow of social life'. Giddens' explanation of reflexivity is to be understood in light of his two levels of consciousness. He writes of 'discursive consciousness' as those actions that a person undertakes and for which they can articulate their reasons for doing so. They can bring their action to 'direct discursive expression' (Giddens 1984, p. xxiii). There is also practical consciousness, which is a person's 'knowledgeability as (an) agent', being their ability to articulate what they have done and why, but also what they know but may not express (Giddens 1984, p. xxiii). Being brought into consciousness of one's actions and being open to alternative possibilities can lead to growth and meaningful change.

Paul rejected the practices of those who were most prominent in the education of adults in his era, the Graeco-Roman rhetoricians and philosophers, and the Jewish scribes (1Cor 1:19-20). There is no evidence that he brought any pedagogical practice to his work that would have been familiar to his contemporaries. I have explored his pedagogy and teaching practice through the lens of Dewey (1975, 1997, 1998, 2011), Biesta (2006, 2010, 2013, 2017), Freire (1985a, 1985b, 1996), and Noddings (2010, 2011, 2013). In drawing on these contemporary education thinkers, who have shaped my own practice as an educator, to understand Paul's work as an educator, I am engaged in what Giddens has described as the 'double hermeneutic' (1984). Dewey (1975, 1997, 1998, 2011), Biesta (2006, 2010, 2013, 2017), Freire (1985a, 1985b, 1996), and Noddings (2010, 2011, 2013) provide a description of teaching that helps me to understand Paul's actions as teaching practice. At the same time, Paul's actions provide new insights into my reading of these educators. As I apply a modern educational lens to Paul's teaching practice, I begin to mediate the very frameworks with which I am viewing the education encounters in which Paul was engaged in the first century

CE. I come to a renewed understanding of the education encounter and the writing of these contemporary educators.

I have excluded the literature on Paul as a missionary in analysing his work as an educator. From my reading, there is an explicit recognition that missionary teaching relies on 'the power of the holy spirit' to 'plant churches' (Plummer & Terry 2012, p. 10). Such a description is both outside of the materialist perspective from which I have approached Paul's letters and is closer to indoctrination (Biesta 2017) rather than education.

Narrative inquiry

Narrative inquiry recognises that narrative is how we structure and understand experience (Clandinin 2007, 2016; Clandinin & Connelly 2000; Clandinin, Connelly & Chan 2002; Clandinin & Rosiek 2007; Connelly & Clandinin 2006). In this research text I construct a new narrative of Paul of Tarsus as an educator from field texts, which are his letters. I have sought to understand Paul's experience as an educator and, through that inquiry, to understand my own experience as an educator and the experience of others. In my professional work and in writing this research text I am engaged in *reliving* Paul's narrative (Clandinin 2016, p. 34).

I have as my field texts a series of letters written by Paul to four communities in the Mediterranean Basin circa 50-55 CE. I have approached the texts through Clandinin and Connelly's three-dimensional model of narrative inquiry (Clandinin & Connelly 2000). I inquire into Paul's letters through the dimensions of place, personal and social, and temporal.

I do not have access to Paul to clarify what he has written of his experience nor do I have access to any evidence from his audience, the members of the *ekklēsia.* I cannot know from direct evidence how their experience changed because of their education encounters with Paul. I have drawn conclusions about Paul and the audience from what Paul has written in his letters, and the accumulated commentary on those letters from secondary sources.

The available secondary sources are predominantly from New Testament scholars. I am not trained in the historical-critical method that has been the dominant form of biblical criticism for the last 200 years (Tabor 2012; Taylor 1992), and so the different methodology produces a different narrative from the texts. This is not to suggest that the narrative I have produced is fiction, but it does not follow the historical-critical method of biblical interpretation. I bring my experience as an educator to Paul's letters in search of new insights into the education encounter. Those field texts have impacted on my experience as a teacher educator; the narrative of which forms part of this research text. New Testament scholars may not accept

this *retelling* of Paul's narrative, but the test for the *retelling* is not the acceptance of those scholars, but whether educators and education researchers find value in the analysis.

The narrative inquiry methodology differs from the methodology of history. Fredriksen (2009), responding as a historian to Badiou's Paul (2003, 2009), highlights issues of integrity and interpretation in translating practices from the ancient world to a modern world. She argues that theologians and philosophers engage in systematisation, looking for meaning for the present day from foundation texts or phenomena. For Fredriksen (2009), this is a hermeneutical act. Her argument is that the frame of reference for historical interpretation is not and cannot be the present. Castelli (2010, p. 663) joins this critique, 'What we have in Badiou is far less an interpretation of a text than a projection of the interpreter, a kind of philosophical feedback loop'. The critique from Fredriksen (2009) and Castelli (2010) poses a cautionary note rather than a barrier for this inquiry. I do not make the claim that this is a history of Paul of Tarsus. I have inquired into the texts for a narrative of Paul and his education practices and transparently read the texts as an educator for that purpose. I engaged in a hermeneutical process.

The inquiry is offered greater value by the ongoing distribution and influence of Paul's letters across contemporary society. They are readily available in bookshops, libraries, hotel rooms, and in people's homes. They remain texts central to all variations of Christianity across the world, being part of sacred rituals such as the Catholic Mass, and rites of passage like weddings and funerals. The documents reach out beyond their historical provenance into the modern world. They are both historical and living documents of some influence.

Structuration theory

I have drawn on Giddens' (1984) theory of structuration to separate the structures that are contingent on the social systems of Paul's era to those which have a universal or generalisable character and are thus transferable to a modern setting. Giddens (1984, p. 284), acknowledges that 'all social research has a necessarily cultural, ethnographic or "anthropological" aspect to it', an idea that has congruence with narrative inquiry's recognition that the researcher brings their own experiences and perspectives to the inquiry.

In this research text, when using social practice, structure, social system, or agency, I am using it in the sense described by Giddens (1984). He describes agency as a person's 'capability of doing things' for which they are 'the perpetrator, in the sense that the individual could, at any phase in a given sequence of conduct, have acted differently' (Giddens 1984, p. 9). He offers a three-part analysis of the structuration of society that I have utilised across the research text:

1. Structure is 'recursively organised sets of rules and resources' that can be traced to a particular location.
2. Systems are the 'situated activities of human agents reproduced across time and space in organised social practices'.
3. Structuration is the reproduction of social systems that are 'grounded in the knowledgeable activities of situated actors who draw upon the rules and resources in the diversity of action contexts' (Giddens 1984, p. 25).

Paul implemented social practices in each *ekklēsia* to support the structures for living in the communities. These structures were lived across a wide geographic area and across several years, lasting beyond Paul's death. I draw on Giddens' (1984) structuration theory to analyse Paul's agency as an educator and the communities he created. I argue that understanding Paul's experience can increase the agency of educators in 21st century westernised countries.

Event in Paul's narrative

In naming Paul's experience of the resurrection on the road to Damascus an *event*, Badiou (2003) offers a credible materialist construction of the resurrection. It is central to this inquiry and research text. I have limited myself to Badiou's discussion of the resurrection *event* (2003, 2009) and not ventured further into the œuvre of Badiou's work on *event,* such as his opus *Being and event* (Badiou 2005). I accept that some will view the confining of discussion of Badiou on *event* to his comments on the resurrection *event*, as a limitation of the research. However, my primary purpose is learning lessons for education from a narrative of Paul as an educator and with that aim in mind, it has been necessary to limit the review of Badiou's wider contributions on *event*. It is Badiou's construction of Paul as 'our contemporary' (2003) and the 'universal subject' (2009) in response to the resurrection *event* that are of interest in this research text.

Mead's (2002) theory of emergence and *event* have provided a bridge between Badiou's narrative of the resurrection *event* (2003, 2009) and education encounters. Mead lectured on emergence and *event* in the 1930s. He was seeking to come to terms with what was then the new theory of relativity. Mead (2002) understood from Einstein's theory that time could no longer be explained as objective but was relative to the perspective of the observer. This was a radical shift in conceptions of the world. It challenged the empiricist view that the world was governed by objective truths that could be discovered through investigation. Mead (2002), in seeking to understand Einstein's theory, came to appreciate, and argue, that what it enabled was a new way of understanding the world in which the subject was an active agent in the *event*. The *event* was not something separate to the being of the actor. The *event* was 'thus conceived of **not only** as part of an objective temporal passage, but as the origin of all structuring of time' (Joas 1997, p. 176 original emphasis). In this conception of the world,

the subject shapes his or her experience in terms of past, present and future. For Mead, 'reconstruction of the past is begun by the new *event*' (Joas 1997, p. 178). Implicit in Mead's conceptualisation (2002) is the self-reflective individual who is capable of understanding the *event* that occurs in a present, while also referencing the future and reconstructing the past (i.e. the person is engaged in reflexivity).

To be clear about terminology, I have followed Badiou (2003) and preferred the term *event* to describe the appearance of something new in the world, which Mead (2002) refers to as emergence. I draw on Mead's theory of ideation (1934, 2002) to argue that an *event*, when brought into existence by a response that changes actions and increases agency, can be explained as the passage from the present experience to a reconstruction of the past and planning for the future. This understanding of *event* is explored in more detail in Chapter Five and in the discussion of a pedagogy of the *event* (Biesta 2013). The proposition in this research text is that Paul of Tarsus offers an example of having implemented a pedagogy of the *event* that transformed society in the Mediterranean Basin in the first century CE. From this understanding of pedagogy, contemporary educators will find lessons to inform their own contribution to education encounters.

Ekklēsia: new education communities

Ekklēsia is the name given to the groups who gathered at Paul's initiative. Its original Greek meaning referred to a meeting of the 'male citizens of a city of Greek constitution' (Meeks 2003, p. 108). It is also a term used in the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Old Testament, to refer to 'all of Israel assembled before the Lord' (Harrill 2012, p. 51). So the word has roots in the two major cultural and language groups that Paul encountered in his work. Paul used the word to describe the groups that gathered in each of the cities and regions. It was not an exclusive description, he also used the label, *hoi pisteuentes:* 'those who believe' (Sanders cited in Caputo, J & Alcoff 2009, p. 175). In this research text, I use the term *ekklēsia* to describe the assemblies of people who gathered and identified with the teachings of Paul. In some cases this was a small group in one city or several small groups across a region such as Galatia or a larger city such as Corinth, where it appears several groups met separately. I am not referring to a building or institution, and do not make the claim that these *ekklēsia* were anything like a contemporary church. At times I use the plural *ekklēsiai*, as the collective name for all of the groups formed under Paul's influence.

Judge (2008d) appears to have been the first to describe and support with documentary analysis, a view that Paul constructed the *ekklēsia* as education communities. He described them as scholastic communities. He sets out his views on the distinctive educational purpose of the *ekklēsia* in the context of differentiating that social group from the cult groups of the

period (Judge 2008c). His interest is in 'the form and organisation of their scholastic activities and their implications for the social status of the movement' (Judge 2008d, p. 531). Judge is significant in establishing the educative function of the *ekklēsia.* For Judge (2008c, 2008d), these communities were a new form of adult education with an educational intent being constitutive of the groups.

Smith (2012) reviewed Judge's work and affirmed the core of his thesis that the *ekklēsia* were education communities engaged in 'a wide range of rational, intellectual, educational or academic activities, which included teaching and learning, studying and debating, modelling and imitating, and thinking and reasoning' (Smith 2012, p. 6). The substance of Smith's study (2012, p. 31) is 'an exegetical study of vocabulary belonging to one broad semantic domain … that attempts to build a picture of the educational environment'. She develops a lexical tool to analyse the teaching language in four Pauline letters, finding nine semantic groupings of teaching words in three Pauline letters. Similarly, Edsall (2014) undertook a comprehensive study of the instructional language in three of Paul's letters. He analysed the language with a view to understanding how Paul's preaching and other teaching contributed to the unity of the early 'church' (Edsall 2014, p. 3). While I draw on both Smith (2012) and Edsall (2014), we differ in our educational frameworks. For both Edsall (2014) and Smith (2012), teaching is primarily a process of transmission from teacher to student.

Meeks (2003), a social historian, came to a different conclusion about the *ekklēsia*. He undertook a functional analysis of the *ekklēsia,* comparing Paul's groups with other social groups of the time and place: the household, the voluntary association, the synagogue and philosophic or rhetorical schools. Meeks (2003, p. 74) concluded that the *ekklēsia* represented a unique and distinctive social group that do not fit with any of the existing group types from the period as we currently understand them. Meeks (2003), acknowledges that Paul and the other leaders of his circle did carry out teaching activities but he argues, in contrast to Judge (2008c, 2008d), that these educational characteristics were not constitutive of the *ekklēsia.*

Horsley (1997b, 2000b), has joined with other scholars to argue that the *ekklēsia* were created by Paul to challenge 'Roman rule and the Jerusalem priestly aristocracy' (Horsley 1997b, p. 1). His analysis is structured around relationships of power and authority in ancient Roman society. Horsley (1997a, 2000c), describes the *ekklēsia* as a social movement comprising a network of cells, maintained by people of some wealth, and linked by the communication of Paul and his travelling group. Paul set out an alternative social structure that posed a direct threat to Roman governance. The implication to be drawn from this is that Paul was an activist engaged in the political education of members of the *ekklēsia.*

A review of the work of these scholars, along with a selection of New Testament scholars, as listed in the references, has provided a foundation for understanding the historical and social context in which Paul established the *ekklēsia*. The work of Judge (in Harrison 2008), Smith (2012), and Edsall (2014), with support from Meeks (2003) and Horsley (1997b, 2000b), provides substantive evidence for my claim that the *ekklēsia* were education communities. In the analysis of the data from my inquiry into Paul's letters, I reach two conclusions about the *ekklēsia.* Firstly, they were communities of emancipation. People were freed from the social, legal, religious and economic hierarchies and identities of the period, gathering in equality in the *ekklēsia*. In Paul's letter to the Galatians we find, 'there are no more distinctions between Jew and Greek, slave and free, male and female, but all of you are one in Christ Jesus' (Gal 3:28). Paul promoted the agency of each person to make the choice to live a new life, regardless of birthright, economic circumstances, gender or social status. This freedom from the restrictions of identity was an essential quality of the education encounters in the *ekklēsia*. I also note that this new life created tension between the *ekklēsia* and wider society and, as I argue later, it was not always in their social or economic interest to make the choice for the *ekklēsia*, but people did. Secondly, the *ekklēsia* were unique communities committed to learning with, and from, each other about living a life of *agapē. Agape* is introduced by Paul as both his pedagogy and practice and as the way of life that people should live in fidelity to the resurrection *event*.

Introducing *agapē*

Paul introduced to the people of the *ekklēsia* a new way of relating, described as *agapē.* It brought each person into a new relationship with the community (Malherbe 2011; Smith 2012). As I will describe, *agapē* is translated as love, which is not a helpful translation for an education narrative, given the romantic connotations of the word, love. I have set out in Chapter Seven a detailed set of characteristics of *agapē*. Here I need to note that what was new about *agapē* in Paul's teaching was its foundation in intersubjectivity and reflexivity. This was what made it new for the people of the *ekklēsia*, and what makes it a universal way of relating that is relevant for contemporary education.

Paul and his fellow-workers lived in *agapē* with the people and established social practices that supported people learning together how to live this new life. The literature is clear that *agapē* is Paul's creation and so, a unique legacy (Nygren 1953; Spicq 1965). Paul's most succinct expression of *agapē* is in a letter to the Philippians:

> Always consider the other person to be better than yourself, so that nobody thinks of his own interests first but everybody thinks of other people's interests instead. (Phil 2:3-4)

Living in *agapē* required each person to put aside self-interest and to act for the good of the other. This was a remarkable change in how people lived. They encountered each other in relationships unencumbered by the restrictions of identity and therefore were freed to look to the good of the other in pure encounters. In introducing *agapē*, Paul had introduced intersubjectivity and reflexivity to the people of the *ekklēsia*, as a new way of relating and living together.

In Thessalonica, Galatia, Philippi, and Corinth, Paul was actively living and teaching fidelity to the *event* of the resurrection. For Paul, living in fidelity to the truth of the *event* meant living a life of *agapē* and teaching others how to live this life; it became his purpose, pedagogy and practice. He describes himself as coming in 'fear and trembling' (1 Cor 2:3) to each group in what was a powerful description of reflexivity. A*gapē* must be lived with others. It was not a fixed idea, but an evolving relationship that required reflexivity on the part of each person who committed to live this way. Knowledge about how to live in these new relationships was not located in the past; it required an orientation to change and to the future.

A pedagogy of the *event*

Badiou's claim (2009) that Paul is the universal subject invites the question of whether Paul's response to the resurrection *event* can be universalised. The *ekklēsia* that Paul created were communities in which teaching and learning were constitutive of the group, and he engaged in practices that I describe as teaching. The teaching practices he applied and the structures he created were implemented with intent and purpose and can be rightly described as a pedagogy. People who joined the *ekklēsia* learned to live a new life of *agapē*. I draw on Biesta's (2013) pedagogy of the *event* for a theoretical framework to describe Paul's pedagogy and practice. I build an argument that Paul enacted a particular approach to a pedagogy of the *event* from which modern educators can learn lessons, concluding that his teaching practice can be universalised. The qualities of intersubjectivity and reflexivity are universal in Paul's pedagogy of the *event*.

Conclusion

In this narrative inquiry I focus on letters from Paul of Tarsus written to four communities in the Mediterranean Basin in the first century CE. Paul wrote letters to the communities as a continuation of his in-person engagement with the people. Those letters are the field texts for this investigation. I have sought to *retell* the narrative of Paul as an educator, and his

involvement in education encounters. In this *retelling*, Paul introduces a new ontology into the world; the possibility of a resurrected life, lived as *agapē*. Through the lens of contemporary educators Dewey (1975, 1997, 1998, 2011), Biesta (2006, 2010, 2013, 2017), Freire (1985a, 1985b, 1996), and Noddings (2010, 2011, 2013) I have *retold* and analysed the education encounters in which Paul was involved and his contribution as a teacher to those encounters. I have relied on Giddens' (1984) structuration theory to support my argument that it is possible to universalise the social system created by Paul in the first century CE, to education encounters in the 21st century.

Walking alongside the field texts over a seven-year period has generated new learning for me about intersubjectivity and reflexivity in the education encounter. I have witnessed in Paul's letters the growth in agency that is possible when people are emancipated from the restrictions of identity, and how that agency can prepare them to respond to an *event*. Paul promoted social learning in the group, for people to learn with, and from, each other in intersubjective encounters. These encounters did not rely on his physical presence. I am still coming to terms with how this might be enacted in my work in teacher education. However, expressed in Dewey's words (1997, p. 28), it has been a 'genuine education experience' that continues to generate fruitful experiences. The creation of the research text is an invitation to others to engage with my experience and to engage with the *retelling* of Paul's narrative as an educator. A change in practice has enriched my experience as an educator, leading to what Clandinin and Rosiek (2007, p. 39), have described as a 'pragmatic view of knowledge', in which 'our representations arise from experience and must return to that experience for their validation'. The challenge for this research text is to communicate the *retelling* and my *reliving* of the narrative of Paul as educator and open that narrative to the experience of others.

New knowledge is claimed from this inquiry, with the narrative of *agapē* as a new education encounter founded on intersubjectivity and reflexivity, the narrative of the *ekklēsia* as communities of emancipation and social learning, and the finding that Paul's pedagogy is an enactment of what Biesta (2013) has theorised as a pedagogy of the *event*. This is the basis of my claim that Paul was the first educator of the first millennium.

Many narratives have been constructed of Paul over the past 2,000 years. This investigation now turns to an exploration of the constructions of Paul through history, as I seek to locate my narrative of Paul as educator within the context of those narratives.

Chapter Two: Constructions of Paul

A personal narrative

In the resource gathering phase of this study, in a second-hand bookshop in rural South Australia, I found a battered copy of *Paul the dauntless: The course of a great adventurer* (Matthews 1918). In the conclusion of the book, the author summarises the life of Paul:

> Yet out of the prison, out of the silence and the darkness comes a Voice. It is the voice of the hero who, trembling and astonished, had long years before laid down the flail of the persecutor at the feet of his risen Lord on the road to Damascus, and had in that hour begun to run the course of his great adventure; a course that carried him up the steep ascent over the mountain pass and by robber den, under blazing sun and through blinding blizzard, travelling on in peril from city to city across the Empire, often without food and in rags, labouring with his own hands, tossed on the sea and shipwrecked, stoned by the Jews, beaten with Roman rods and torn with scourges, chained, imprisoned and at last led out to his death; yet unafraid to the end. And that valiant Voice out of the darkness rings triumphantly across the centuries: **I have fought a good fight; I have run my course; I have kept the faith.** (Matthews 1918, pp. 434-5 original emphasis)

The hagiography in the book is almost comical, and yet, the author unashamedly, and with great integrity, presents the biography as 'historically true and as accurate in detail as the knowledge now available can make it' (Matthews 1918, p. 8). Paul's letters can be used to justify much of Matthews' narrative, and yet it is not a Paul that is familiar to me, from my childhood or now. From my perspective it is a misreading of Paul's letters. However, the context of Matthews' account is revealing. The book was originally published in 1916, in what would have been the peak of interest in explorers such as 'Scott of the Antarctic' (d. 1913), and other adventures sponsored by the Royal Geographic Society. We also learn that Matthews wrote his narrative after his own experiences travelling though the Mediterranean to the towns and cities of Paul's life. He dedicated the book to his 'comrade and fellow-traveller on the journey, my wife'. The book is replete with his personal travel photos of those Mediterranean cities. It is a deeply personal communication of his experience with Paul. In his world, this construction of Saint Paul makes sense and is legitimised by both the publication of the book (my copy is a second edition) and the award of the book to a worthy child at a Wesleyan Methodist Sunday School, as evidenced by an internal plate.

Later in this research text I write about my initial undergraduate education degree completed in the 1980s, but here I want to share a specific memory of a lecturer in 'Twentieth Century

European History' from that degree course. The significance of the experience has varied in the 35 years since it occurred. I have now constructed a *retelling* of that experience through my understanding of the personal and social dimension of narrative.

It was my final year of a four-year undergraduate degree. The lecturer asked me, by name, to stay back after a tutorial. She opened a conversation with me about my experience and the course content. In four years at that urban university, she was the first lecturer who both used my name and took an interest in my experience. It was compulsory to read fiction from a selected country in post World War II Europe. The lecturer's message was that story was embedded in history and that narratives, even fictional narratives, provide an entrée to the lived experience of people. While I do not recollect her using these words, I am sure she understood that the fiction that we studied as part of the course would become part of our own narrative. True enough, *The leper and other stories* by the Montenegrin author, Milovan Djilas, continues to hold a treasured place on my library shelves. In an unrelated occurrence, many years later and in a different city, I discussed the book with a neighbour, a Communist from the former Yugoslavia, who became a refugee like Djilas, after falling out with Josip Tito.

On first reading, there may appear to be no connection between my experience of the university history course and Matthews' narrative, but there is a relationship between them. Firstly, they point to the obvious: that people construct narratives and respond to narratives that are connected to their own life experience. This can be a direct experience or mediated through another, such as in my case with the history lecturer. Secondly, Clandinin (2016, p. 46), reminds us that 'field texts are co-compositions that are reflective of the experiences of researchers and participants'. When I construct a mental field text of the former Yugoslavia in World War II, it is framed through my reading of Djilas and the content of that history course, indeed framed through the relationship with the lecturer. Matthews' Paul is a person who set out to conquer new land and new people and who sacrificed his own interests in the service of a greater good. In his narrative of Paul, Matthews is holding up a mirror to his own life.

In the chapter below, I survey the constructions of Paul through history. The chapter communicates different narratives of Paul, as he has been constructed in the social world. It is an essential component of the research text enabling me to contextualise both Badiou's (2003) and my own narrative of Paul as an educator.

Introduction

For 2,000 years people have constructed Paul for their own purposes. That he has been composed and shaped to meet the needs of interest groups comes as no surprise to those who have read his letters. Paul established this pattern in his own lifetime. To the group he formed in Corinth, Paul wrote:

> So though I am not a slave of any man I have made myself the slave of everyone so as to win as many as I could. I made myself a Jew to the Jews, to win the Jews; that is, I who am not a subject of the Law made myself a subject of the Law to those who are the subjects of the Law, to win those who are subject to the Law. To those who have no Law, I was free of the Law myself … For the weak I made myself weak. I made myself all things to all men in order to save some at any cost. (1 Cor 9:19-22)

Paul was willing to become all things to all people to connect with their experience. Within Paul's own letters is the portent of the struggle over his work that has ensued since his death. His narrative has lived in constant tension between Judaism and Christianity and, in this chapter, I outline the significant constructions of Paul that made him the subject of that tension. I acknowledge the contributions of Luther (in Harrill 2012) and Nietzsche (2007) to the Pauline narrative before coming to rest with Badiou (2009) and his claim that Paul is the universal subject. Badiou's construction of Paul (2003, 2009) is located within a late 20th century conversation between theologians, historians, philosophers and biblical scholars that is neatly captured in the title of the book, *Paul's new moment* (Milbank, Žižek & Davis 2010). The chapter focuses on constructions of Paul as experienced from the perspective of western or Roman Christianity. It does not include eastern or Orthodox Christianity or perspectives from within the Judaic tradition, both of which developed different narratives of Paul.

Paul through history

The battle for Paul's legacy commenced soon after his death in circa 67 CE (Murphy-O'Connor 1997). Collections of his letters were circulated as early as the end of the first century and a Pauline school developed that imitated his letter writing (Perrin & Duling 1982). There is correspondence from the Pauline school that extends well into the fourth century confirming the ongoing influence of Paul's thinking, his letters and the legacy of the *ekklēsia* in the region (Meeks & Fitzgerald 2007; Perrin & Duling 1982). In the immediate aftermath of his death, letters were written from within the group of Paul's close followers; these are often referred to as the deutero-Pauline and Pastoral letters. The writers assumed Paul's name and claimed his authority, 'which was not an unusual practice for the time' (MacDonald cited in Meeks & Fitzgerald 2007, p. 304). The letter of Paul to the Ephesians, written circa 70-90 CE is an

example. While no credible New Testament scholar attributes this as an authentic letter from Paul, it is accepted that the author sought to continue Paul's teaching (Perrin & Duling 1982). The existence of these additional letters has complicated the Paul legacy by introducing new ideas and themes that were not germane to his initial teaching.

Early constructions of Paul

The death of the historical figure, Jesus of Nazareth, generated a response across the Roman Empire. New groups, initially formed in the eastern provinces of the Empire, extended over time to the capital, Rome. Within 20 or 30 years following the death of Jesus of Nazareth, Christian groups existed in the four most important cities in the Mediterranean world: Corinth, Antioch, Rome and Alexandria (Fitzmyer 2008). There was a milieu of diverse assemblies across the Empire and Paul's *ekklēsiai* were just one group of communities that was created.

When Paul first visited the four communities at the heart of this inquiry, he did so as an emissary of the community at Antioch (Bornkamm 1971; Murphy-O'Connor 1997; Taylor 1992). There was also a Johannine community attested to by the Gospel of John, the book of Revelation and three letters in the New Testament (Perrin & Duling 1982). Another group of interest were the Essenes, a closed community, living in exclusion from general society but with some similarity in moral codes to the early Christian groups and operating as a form of philosophical school (Fredriksen 2000). This group came to prominence through the discovery of documents of the Qumran community and the Dead Sea Scrolls, in the 1940s and 1950s.

The final group that I have noted are the Judaic-Christians. This group was closely aligned with the historical figure of Jesus of Nazareth, was based in Jerusalem and operated within the broad parameters of Judaism. Tabor (2006, 2012) has this group being led by Cephas (Peter), and James, the brother of Jesus. Three letters in the New Testament, one from James and two from Peter, represent the literature of this movement. In Paul's early years of teaching, he worked in collaboration with the Judaic-Christians, but a serious conflict developed and led to an eventual separation following a disagreement with Cephas at Antioch. I refer to that conflict throughout this research text as the Incident at Antioch, following Badiou's play of that name (Badiou 2013) and note that it was a decisive experience in Paul's teaching. Following this incident, Paul and the Judaic-Christians become rivals; they were the subject of vitriolic attacks in his letters to the Galatians and the Philippians.

Given the diversity of these communities and their disparate locations within the Roman Empire, it is unsurprising that different narratives developed. Harrill (2012) identifies

several narratives of Paul including a 'Manichean Paul' (216-277 CE), 'Pelagius' Paul' (ca 407 CE), 'Paul of Latin commentaries of the late fourth century' and 'Augustine's Paul' (354–430 CE). These constructions of Paul all evolved in the lead up to, and following, the legitimation of Christianity under the Emperor Constantine, and the institution of Christianity as the state religion in 380 CE (Hill 2013; Veyne 2010). Augustine's Paul became the most significant of that group of narratives, having influenced, among others, Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274), Martin Luther (1483-1546) and Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900). Augustine's Paul, refined by Aquinas, became the orthodoxy on Paul through to the Reformation. Harrill summarises Augustine's narrative and its impact:

> Augustine's autobiographical reading of Paul created a foundational model of the introspective self that became normative in western culture. Augustine portrayed Paul as an anguished convert and miserable sinner, whose spiritual dissatisfaction and tormented introspective conscience led the apostle at his 'conversion' to repudiate his past religious self. (2012, p. 155)

Luther, the German reformation and Nietzsche

Luther's study of Paul's letter to the Romans created a significant fault line in what had become the orthodoxy on Paul. Luther constructed a Protestant Paul with the authorised narrative necessarily becoming a Catholic Paul (see for example Borg & Crossan 2009, pp. 5-7). Luther's narrative, and the ensuing Reformation, nurtured the insights of scholars across Germany, notably Hegel (1770–1831) who was influential on German scholarship, particularly the Tübingen school (Taylor 1992). The roll-call of German and German-influenced New Testament scholars includes, among many others, Baur, von Harnack, Deissman, Schweitzer, Käsemann, (cited by Taylor 1992, p. 15ff), Bultmann (1951), Barth (1959), Theissen (1982, 1992) and Bornkamm (1971, 1974). Hegel's dialectical philosophy encouraged the writing of many theses on Paul, each one an antithesis to the previous construction, all the time seeking to understand the person who had described himself as becoming 'all things to all men in order to save some at any cost' (1 Cor 9:22). The contest of ideas is taken for granted in modern democracies, but the institutional church that dominated western civilisation from the fourth century through to the Reformation and beyond, had brutally reinforced orthodoxy of religious doctrines. The creation of Protestant church groups, divorced from Roman control, and Hegel's dialecticism represented a new freedom for intellectual debate on Paul's contribution to Christianity.

In my reading of Paul through history, Nietzsche widened the fault line in the orthodox narrative of Paul more than any other person since Luther. Nietzsche's (2007), vehement attack on Paul in which he described him as the anti-Christ established a foundation for narratives of Paul that are highly critical of the man and the values represented in his letters.

Nietzsche (2007) constructed Paul as a Jewish political figure who created a Jewish Christianity to suit his own partisan interests. Nietzsche (2007) blamed Paul for the perversion of the life of Jesus that became the Christian faith. For Nietzsche, Paul 'simply cancelled the yesterday, and the day before that, out of Christianity; **he contrived of his own accord a history of the birth of Christianity'** (2007 § 42 original emphasis). Nietzsche bemoaned Paul's Christianity, in which all were equal, as a religion in which,

> no one any longer possesses today the courage to claim special privileges or the right to rule, the courage to feel a sense of reverence towards himself and towards his equals … the aristocratic outlook has been undermined most deeply by the lie of equality of souls. (Nietzsche 2007 § 43)

The natural world for Nietzsche (2007) was hierarchical and it dominated the spiritual. From this belief evolved the 'Dionysian Übermensch' (Kroeker 2010, p. 45) or superman who was beyond history.

Nietzsche has become notorious for his condemnation, not only of Paul, but also of Judaism. He wrote of the Jewish people:

> They twisted first religion, then the cult, then morality, history and psychology, about in a manner so perfectly hopeless that they were made **to contradict their natural value.** (Nietzsche 2007 § 24 original emphasis)

In what must have been a calculated insult to both religions, Judaism and Christianity, Nietzsche (2007) claimed only one figure in the entire New Testament was worthy of his respect and that was Pilate, he who condemned Jesus to death, for 'one Jew more or less – what does it matter?' (§ 46). These anti-Jewish sentiments were exploited by the Nazis. The Nazis' anti-Semitism and their perversion of Christianity, influenced by Nietzsche, shaped much of the conversation about Paul in the second half of the 20th century.

Paul in the modern era

Nietzsche had tapped into the most persistent rift in the narrative of Paul, the conflict between Christianity and Judaism. The contest between Judaism and Christianity for Paul's legacy has been traced by others (Harrill 2012; Taylor 1992). I connect with the narrative in the post World War II era, where there has been a significant turn in the conversations about Paul, a turn that has influenced Paul's new moment. As the details of the Nazi atrocities were revealed and society came to understand the anti-Semitism that underpinned the regime, New Testament scholars responded with an attempt to find a new Paul. They sought a narrative of Paul to counter Nietzsche's and Augustine's 'miserable, guilt filled figure of

introspection'(Harrill 2012, p. 138); one that could not be used to justify a repeat of the Holocaust.

In one major strand of this new narrative, Paul sought to convert Gentiles to a new Judaism (Boyarin 1994; Davies 1955; Sanders 1977). In these constructions, Paul is redeemed from Catholic and Protestant orthodoxy to become Jewish once again. This Jewish Paul was also promoted by Protestant theologian, Krister Stendahl (1963), who argued for continuity between Paul's Jewish life and the life he lived after Damascus; Paul maintained his Jewishness, despite the radical interruption in his life. Horsley (2000a, p. 1), claims Stendahl's assertion has wider influence, it was 'a fundamental challenge to the established understanding of Paul that stood at the center of Protestant theology and biblical studies'. According to Horsley, Stendahl broke open the introspective individualism of Augustine's Paul; he 'challenged an entrenched understanding of Paul and opened the way toward a liberative criticism of Paul and his letters and their subsequent appropriation in Western culture' (Horsley 2000a, p. 5). For some, a synthesis was achieved by portraying Paul as the leader of a Jewish sect known as Christianity (Hengel & Schwemer 1997).

A different movement developed in the latter part of the 20th century that emphasised Paul's Hellenic credentials (Cameron & Miller 2011; Engberg-Pedersen 1994b, 2001; Sampley 2003; Vermes 2012). Scholars maintained Paul within authoritative Christian circles through a synthesis of the reclaimed Jewish Paul with previous narratives of Paul as apostle to the Gentiles. The Danish scholar, Engberg-Pedersen concluded that Paul was 'neither **specifically** Jewish nor **specifically** Hellenistic' (1994a, p. xix original emphasis) but his letters are a 'fusion of originally Greek, originally Jewish and specifically Christian elements' (Engberg-Pedersen 1994a, p. xxv). Vermes argues that second century Christianity, following Paul's example, 'became largely Greek in speech and thought' (2012, p. xiii).

In recent years there has been a movement to open new perspectives of Paul from non-European and non-traditional approaches to biblical scholarship. Horsley (2000b) includes in his edited collection interpretations of Paul's letters that reflect a feminist perspective (Briggs Kittredge 2000; Clark Wire 2000; Schüssler Fiorenza 2000), the liberation theology movement (Briggs Kittredge 2000; Callahan 2000), and post-colonial interpretations (Wan 2000). New strands of narrative on Paul are emerging from the Global South (Castelli 2010). While these conversations about Paul occur outside of the realm of church authorities, they remain within the broad scope of Christianity. However, in a post-modern world in which it is argued that the grand narratives have ceased to exist (Lyotard 1984), a more radical conversation about Paul has developed. The monopoly on Paul's letters held by religious

authorities has fragmented. Continental philosophers have extracted Paul from the Judaism, Christianity and Hellenism to which he had been confined and argue for his universality.

Badiou (2003, 2009, 2013), Žižek (2003, 2010a, 2010b, 2014), Taubes (2004) and Agamben (2005) are the philosophers most commonly linked with the new conversation between philosophy, theology and history. In this research text I have preferenced the work of Badiou. Badiou (2003, 2009, 2013) locates his militant political construction of Paul within his theorising of the *event* and truth procedures. Agamben (2005) and Taubes (2004) share with Badiou an attempt to 'invigorate the possibilities for political life in a post-Christian lawless world' (Miller, CR 2009, p. 570), but I have excluded Agamben (2005) and Taubes (2004) from the discussion for methodological reasons. Both draw almost exclusively on Paul's letter to the Romans, a text written by Paul to a community that he did not know and had not met. It has a very different character to Paul's remaining authentic letters. I have drawn this boundary to allow me to write within the limitations of this research text.

For Žižek (2003, 2010a, 2010b,), Paul is the Jewish outsider who organises a revolutionary new institution, Christianity, raised by him to the Universal. As such, he is neither Judaic nor Hellenic, nor even Roman, but open to all by choice (Žižek 2003). Žižek and Badiou differ in emphasis on the cross and resurrection. Žižek finds significance in the cross and Paul's representation of it (c.f. Žižek 2010a). For Badiou (2003), the death on the cross signals only that God became human. He finds no dialectic connection between that and resurrection. I am drawn to Badiou's (2003) description of the ongoing renewal of knowledge that is offered in the resurrection *event*; it has a direct appeal to me as an educator. For this reason, I have preferenced Badiou's Paul over Žižek in this research text. At times I have drawn on Žižek (2003, 2010a, 2010b), where his writing helps to illuminate an idea raised by Badiou (2003, 2009). There is an opportunity for further research into Paul's work as an educator utilising Žižek's concept of the *event* (2014).

Paul: a subject for Badiou

It seems improbable that Badiou, a communist and atheist, a radical pro-revolutionary presence in French society, has found the new 'militant figure' (2003, p. 2) in a moral conservative from Christianity; however, that is what he does. Badiou names his predecessors as Hegel, Comte, Nietzsche, Freud, Heidegger and Lyotard, all of whom have contended with Paul and his letters (Badiou 2003, p. 5). To this list he adds the German Protestant scholar Bornkamm (1971, 1974) and the French Catholic theologian Breton (2011 first published in 1988). Badiou acknowledges that this is an unlikely triangle of 'Catholic, Protestant and atheist', drawn together for his construction of Paul (Badiou 2003, p. 3).

New Testament scholar, Bornkamm (1971, 1974) is associated with the Tübingen School. This grouping of New Testament scholars is underpinned by the dialectic philosophy of Hegel (Harrill 2012; Taylor 1992) and the search for a synthesis between the teaching of Jesus the Jew and Paul the Christian. The work of the Tübingen school has been questioned (Harrill 2012), but regardless of these criticisms, it opened the possibility for new narratives of Paul. Bornkamm offers a detailed analysis of Paul's theology, suggesting it is about 'the encounter between God, man and the world' (1971, p. 11), but it is Bornkamm's communication of the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth that appears to have influenced Badiou.

Bornkamm describes the resurrection as an event which, 'bursts asunder the horizons and potentialities of the world and mankind's history and brings it to an end' (1971, p. 199). For Bornkamm, it is Paul who established the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth as the 'turning point of the ages' (1971, p. 199). Paul refused to take up a fixed standpoint, hence his statement to the Corinthians quoted at the beginning of this chapter. Paul met people 'in the place where they stand on earth and in history' (Bornkamm 1971, p. 175). Paul recognised that people lived in a particular place and time, he recognised identity, but would not allow people to be confined by that time, place or identity. Paul brought to the people a message that stands outside of those parameters. He offered an opportunity for people to change their life, even if they could not change their social and economic status, 'they can put freedom into operation' (Bornkamm 1971, p. 175).

For Bornkamm (1971), Paul lived in humility, free of boasting, and renouncing greatness. This was not an easy message in its time. The Corinthians who joined with Paul struggled to embrace this idea that the humiliation and suffering of the cross could lead to strength in the resurrection (Bornkamm 1971). This is where Badiou (2003) departs from Bornkamm. Badiou decentres the cross to the resurrection. He separates death and resurrection, finding that 'Death which is the thought of the flesh cannot be constitutive of the Christ-event' (Badiou 2003, p. 68). He declares the resurrection an *event*:

> (It) is neither a sublation, nor an overcoming of death. They are two distinct functions, whose articulation contains no necessity. For the event's sudden emergence never follows from the existence of an evental site. Although it requires conditions of immanence, that sudden emergence nevertheless remains of the order of grace. (Badiou 2003, p. 71)

The resurrection, experienced as an *event*, is outside of the normal process of life and death.

Breton (2011) has a complex view on Paul's use of the crucifixion which appears to have influenced Badiou (2003). In the discussion below I follow Kroeker (2010), on Breton. For Breton, the crucifixion is not some form of sacrifice or atonement but a symbol of the paradox of what Paul offers. The cross disrupts the wisdom of the Greeks and the strength of the Romans. For Breton the 'power of the cross is a performative act, a mission that constantly moves outside itself in unseen, quotidian service to the least' (cited in Kroeker 2010, p. 57). Described in terms of *kenosis,* or the willingness to empty oneself of desire and live for the other, the death of Jesus of Nazareth on a cross becomes not a singular act of atonement at a historical moment, but an act of love that is replicable by all across space and time in 'giving rather than receiving' (Breton 2011, p. 153). The crucifixion of Jesus loses its historically contingent place to become an experience that is lived and re-lived each time a person commits to a love 'that is endlessly *kenotic* and dispossessive rather than acquisitive and cumulative' (Kroeker 2010, p. 57). What Paul experiences in the Damascus *event* is a powerful sense of love from the other; the materiality or otherwise of a resurrected body is unimportant to the experience. Influenced by Breton (2011) and Bornkamm (1971), Badiou (2003, p. 4), summarises Paul's message as 'Jesus is resurrected'. This *event* is central to Badiou's construction of Paul, the universal subject (2009) and our contemporary (2003).

Badiou (2003) cites Nietzsche as a predecessor rather than a direct influence, but Nietzsche is pervasive in Badiou's text. Like Nietzsche's Zarathustra (2007), Badiou's Paul is the author of the 'self-legitimating subjective declaration', the one who breaks history in two and brings guilty slavery to an end and affirms life (Badiou 2003, p. 61). Badiou (2003, p. 61) would have Paul as Nietzsche's 'rival far more than his opponent'. Badiou makes of the resurrection, an *event*, and in so doing offers an alternative to Nietzsche's words that Paul 'simply cancelled the yesterday, and the day before that' (Nietzsche 2007 § 42). For Badiou, the equality for all, despised by Nietzsche, becomes Paul's universalism. The *event* offers new life that is constantly renewed in the choices and actions that a person makes each day. Such openness derives not from a position of authority, but from weakness. Those who would claim power and authority, such as Nietzsche's Übermensch (2007), are undermined by an *event.*

Paul: our contemporary

For Badiou (2003), truth is not subject to historical time (i.e. if it were true then it is also true now). Paul is the instigator of a truth procedure and therefore our contemporary. For Badiou, Paul is removed from identity politics, it matters not that he is Jewish, or Roman, or Greek educated, or a male or young or old, or a citizen of the first century CE. A truth procedure is not historically contingent on place and time, 'for if it is true that every truth erupts as singular, its singularity is immediately universalizable' (Badiou 2003, p. 11). A truth

procedure begins with the *event,* which brings into being new knowledge and then vanishes as soon as it appears. What must follow in a truth procedure is fidelity to the *event*. Fidelity implies an immanent and continuing break with what preceded the *event*.

In declaring that Jesus is resurrected, Badiou claims that Paul created a 'connection between a subject without identity and a law without support' that 'provides the foundation for a possibility of a universal teaching within history itself' (Badiou 2003, p. 11). Paul has subtracted 'truth from the communitarian grasp, be that of a people, a city, an empire, a territory, or a social class' (Badiou 2003, p. 11). Truth is the conviction to be faithful to the declaration that Jesus is resurrected and its message that new life is available to all. Ordinary time is rendered meaningless, for the truth of the *event* is always true. So, the resurrection *event* is not just for the first century CE, but a truth procedure to be lived always.

Badiou's Paul (2003) would save contemporary France and western society from its subservience to capital and identitarian politics. Badiou laments that all people now have the singular identity as consumers in one homogenised world market. That market relies on the constant creation of new identities and new groups of people to whom new products can be sold. Badiou (2003), finds the community fragmented into closed identities, based on race, religion, sexuality, (e.g. moderate Muslims, Black homosexuals, married priests, disabled Serbs), for which new products and shopping malls are authorised, new magazines and advertising created. He searches in Paul's texts for the new militant to escape this dilemma.

Badiou relates an anecdote that illuminates his understanding of contemporary. As part of a general strike in France in May 1968, three groups of people, academics, trade unionists and young people, marched on the Chausson factory in Reims. They came together in the physical space outside the gates of the factory. Badiou takes up the narrative:

> The solid union and party dispositif usually kept workers, young people and intellectuals strictly apart in their respective organisations … (but) … we found ourselves in a situation in which the dispositif was falling apart before our very eyes … This was an event in the philosophical sense of the term: something was happening but its consequences were incalculable. (2015 (b), p. 45)

Badiou (2015 (b), p. 48), describes how, through the ongoing struggles of the three groups, workers, young people and intellectuals, they 'remain the contemporaries of 1968'.

Paul: the universal subject

Badiou (2003, p. 107) acknowledges that the subtitle of his book, *The Foundation of Universalism* is 'an excessive title'. He writes that real universalism had been and is present in

many other forms (e.g. the theorems of Archimedes, a tragedy of Sophocles). In a later interview, Badiou described Paul as founding a new conception of universalism (Miller, AS 2005) and more recently described Paul as 'Founder of the Universal Subject' (Badiou 2009). I have used the latter term when discussing Badiou's construction of Paul in this research text.

Two examples from Badiou have assisted me in understanding his concept of subject. He describes the experience of two people falling in love and then names, love, as the subject that is created. The subject, love, is not reducible to the aggregate of the two individuals. These people exist in the real world and interact in public. They are obviously, in-love, but there is no empirical data to demonstrate that love (Badiou & Tarby 2013). Love is brought into being as the subject by the two people and is that which exists between them because of the *event* of falling in love. He proposes a further example in the political sphere where people contribute to, and others experience the impact of, an insurrection. What is created is a truth procedure, to which the people 'constitute a subject together' (Badiou & Tarby 2013, p. 59ff). A person might reject the cause of an insurrection, they may not contribute to it, nor agree with its premise, but that does not negate the experience of those who were in the insurrection, or those who were bystanders. Something new is created from the experience of the insurrection; it is the experience of having experienced the insurrection. The insurrection becomes the subject. I can now offer a third example of the concept of subject. Paul wrote letters to an audience of his contemporaries, and those letters are available to a modern audience. This new modern audience reads the letters in light of their own experience, and a subject is created: the experience of reading or listening to Paul's letters. That subject connects the modern reader including myself with the people of the *ekklēsia* in Galatia, Philippi, Thessalonica and Corinth in the first century CE.

What of the universal in Badiou's description? In the Mediterranean Basin in the first century CE, Paul experienced Jewish, Hellenic and Roman culture and societies. Paul wrote of the 'Law', meaning the Jewish Law, and 'Wisdom', meaning the philosophy and worldview of the Greeks and Romans. In an interview, Badiou argues that in Paul's new conception of universalism, 'the sign of a new truth is that these differences become indifferent … we have an absorption of an evident natural difference into something that is beyond difference' (Miller, AS 2005, p. 38). Paul, as the universal subject, brings to an end the world of Jewish Law and Graeco-Roman Wisdom by offering new life that can be lived by all, regardless of their background, birthright, religion or gender. His most succinct expression of universality, a sentence highlighted in Chapter 1 that echoes throughout this research text reads: 'there are no more distinctions between Jew and Greek, slave and free, male and female' (Gal 3:28).

People of the *ekklēsia* experience the *event* through their relationship with Paul and his fellow-workers. The *event* comes into existence through *agapē* and that is a universalisable relationship. To live in *agapē* is to live beyond the differences that separate people.

Paul becomes subject to the universal singularity of the resurrection *event* and lives in fidelity to that *event*. He creates the possibility for all to experience the *event* and to live in fidelity to the *event* regardless of their identity. People experience a new way of living in their relationship with Paul, and they are offered, through emancipation in the *ekklēsia,* the opportunity to share the experience without restraint or the restriction of their identity. Within the *ekklēsia* they have the autonomy and freedom to choose to live this new life, which Paul has authenticated with them.

Badiou's construction of Paul as the universal subject (2009), removed from the particularity of his own time, raises concerns among biblical historians, five of whom were invited to respond to Badiou at a conference in 2005 (Caputo, J & Alcoff 2009). For Fredriksen removing Paul from his historical circumstances is antithetical to the historian who must respond to the 'lived messiness that the primary evidence attests to' (2009, p. 72). Castelli is critical of Badiou for quoting only part of Galatians 3:28, leaving out 'for you are all one in Jesus Christ', thus allowing him to leave his 'noncontingent universalism … unproblematically intact' (2010, p. 661). Castelli is also critical of Paul's use of the old Jewish and Greek discourses theory, and accuses Badiou of 'reproducing a theory of Christian supercessionism' (2010, p. 663). Fowl (2010) describes Badiou's thesis as demonstrating a particular universalism, thus negating the very concept itself. These critiques of Badiou rest largely on methodological differences and I acknowledge them as cautionary advice rather than refutation of the essential narrative of Paul as the universal subject and our contemporary.

Badiou's construction of Paul (2003, 2009) subtracts him from his historical circumstances, from the particularity of the world in which he lived in the first century CE, but does not ignore that place or time. He was of that time and place, but his experience of the *event,* and his response to it, creates a truth procedure that is universal. Badiou articulates what this means:

> In any period of time, in any sequence of history, it is important that we maintain a relationship with what exceeds our possibilities – with what, as an idea, exists beyond the natural needs of the human animal. In crucial experiences, such as the construction of love, artistic creations, scientific discoveries or political sequences, we are offered the chance of exceeding the limits of our vital and social determinations. (Badiou 2015 (a), p. 31)

An experience of an *event,* enables people to look beyond their immediate routinised behaviours (Giddens 1984), beyond their differences, in pursuit of a universal way of living. It is my argument that this can be understood as *agapē*, and that Paul lives *agapē* as the purpose in his education encounters, and his pedagogy and practice.

Beyond the undesirable Paul

People in positions of power have used Paul's letters to support slavery, misogyny and homophobia, and they have become narrative constructions of Paul. Those who know Paul only through the lens of an oppressor will find it difficult to accept the universality of Paul, or a need for him as our contemporary. I acknowledge those concerns, and this research text does not negate the experiences of those people. However, it is my argument that the narratives of the undesirable Paul, the misogynist, the homophobe etc., are deliberate constructions, by those who have a particular intent. I have not set out to defend Paul against the accusations, but I acknowledge that having walked alongside Paul's letter for seven years, a defensive stance may be evident in the following discussion.

The dominant interpretation of the Pauline texts has been in the hands of men from western countries. This is evident in the literature review undertaken earlier in this chapter. The use of the texts in the interests of misogyny is a narrative construction of Paul that has flowed from interpretations of the Pauline texts by particular men for the purpose of exercising power and domination. It can also be noted that many of the passages described as Paul's most misogynistic, appear in the deutero-Pauline letters (e.g. 1 Timothy 2:9-15). Paul did not write them, but they remain in the New Testament under his name, and hence feed into the narrative construction of Paul the misogynist. The exercise of power within texts and in the use of texts has been a focus for feminist scholars in New Testament studies. Contributors to this movement have been Fiorenza (1997, 2000), Kitteridge (2000), Clark Wire (2000), Osiek (2000), Ehrensperger (2005) and Polaski (2005). What these scholars have revealed are much deeper insights into the gendered power structures of Graeco-Roman society. Increasingly these scholars are demonstrating that Paul challenged the existing power structures and provided new opportunities for women within the *ekklēsia.*

Paul's letters have also been used to justify slavery and homophobia. Horsley (2000a), cites one harrowing anecdote from Howard Thurman who wrote of his grandmother's experience of being read passages from Paul by her slave master's religious minister. The offending passage on slavery is generally quoted as:

> If, when you were called, you were a slave, do not let this bother you; but if you should have the chance of being free, accept it. A slave, when he is called in the Lord, becomes

> the Lord's freedman, and a freeman called in the Lord becomes Christ's slave. You have all been bought and paid for; do not be slaves of other men. (1 Cor 7:21-23)

Briggs (2000), has explored this passage and others in the context of the Graeco-Roman approach to slavery. She opens the discussion about Paul's meaning in context and moves away from a literal interpretation of the words. Briggs argues that Paul was influenced by the Stoic tradition, that true liberty is inner freedom. She highlights Paul's use of slavery as a metaphor, and cites Philippians (Phil 2:6-11) where Jesus on the cross is described in the form of slavery (Briggs 2000).

To justify a position against homosexuality, people have typically referred to Paul's letters to the Romans (1:26-27) and to the Corinthians, in which he writes:

> You know perfectly well that people who do wrong will not inherit the kingdom of God: people of immoral lives, idolaters, adulterers, catamites, sodomites, thieves, usurers, drunkards, slanderers and swindlers will never inherit the kingdom of God. (1 Cor 6:9-10)

There is no question that Paul has 'repeated the attitude of his own Jewish tradition about homosexual activity' (Fitzmyer 2008, p. 257). Questions are rightly asked about whether this judgement should be accepted as a universal and timeless condemnation of same sex relationships, or accepted for what it is, a 'catalogue of vices' that were considered unacceptable to some people in that place at that time (Fitzmyer 2008, p. 255).

I am not seeking to defend Paul against those and other accusations; the historical record is there to show that his words and those of his imitators have been used to justify oppression. This inquiry follows in the footsteps of Badiou (2003), to create a new a narrative of Paul, in which he is not an oppressor but one who emancipated people from the restrictions of their identity.

Conclusion

It is a testament to the power of the narrative of Saint Paul that this chapter has even been necessary. Saint Paul the great crusader, who took Christianity to the Gentiles, is a pervasive narrative in western civilisation. It is matched in the modern world by the notoriety of narratives of his misogyny, homophobia and position on slavery. In this chapter I have sought to demonstrate that there are many narratives of Paul, each one constructed to meet the needs of its creator. The crusading Christian Paul is one of those narratives, while Badiou's Paul (2003, 2009) is a construct to meet Badiou's desire for the new militant. I am

constructing a narrative of Paul as the first educator of the first millennium, to meet my purpose as an educator.

In this chapter I have established the historical context for the narratives of Paul. While Paul may be the foundation of universalism, our experience of him is mediated through the historical time and place in which he lived and wrote his letters. Paul does not live outside of history and so understanding his narrative through history is important in constructing a narrative of him as an educator.

I am searching for new insights into the education encounter that might invigorate education as a vehicle for the ongoing renewal of the society in which I live. In naming Paul as the universal subject, Badiou (2009) has constructed a narrative of Paul that informs my exploration of Paul as an educator. In linking Paul and the resurrection to his theory of *event*, Badiou (2003, 2009) has opened the possibility that Paul established a universal way of living, subtracted from the singularity of the time and place in which he lived. According to Badiou's reading of Paul, people can move beyond difference to live for a new truth, in this case the possibility of new life. Therein lies the attraction for the educator: how to create an environment where new knowledge or new truth can flourish. I argue that this new knowledge can be understood as *agapē*, and that Paul lives *agapē* as purpose, pedagogy and practice in his education encounters.

In the following methodology chapter, I discuss narrative inquiry from which I have constructed my narrative of Paul as the first educator of the first millennium. I also outline the selection of field texts and the method of analysis.

Chapter Three: Methodology

A personal narrative

On several occasions in my work as a teacher educator I have been invited to present workshops on the topic of teacher-parent relationships. For many of those sessions I presented a standard communication theory workshop that included attentive listening, restating concerns, identifying the issue, clarifying intent and purpose, and so on. They were always, in my view, worthy workshops that engaged the attention of most teachers for the duration of the sessions. I have no evidence if anything changed in teacher practice, or in the experience of the parents with whom those teachers were interacting, but I suspect that little if anything improved. When I look back now, I know that what I was doing was transmitting information; not problematic in terms of the brief I was given, but unsatisfying for me as an educator. In preparing one workshop I took a risk and designed the session using what I had learned about the narrative inquiry methodology.

For this new workshop, delivered to the entire staff at a large outer-suburban primary school, I changed the design and content of the session. I ignored all of my earnest theory about communication and managing difficult conversations; instead I asked teachers to write and talk about their experience in education. I asked them to write about their own experience at school, at university and as a teacher. I asked them to talk with each other about how they felt being a teacher in this school at this time. I asked them to write about the places where they met parents, either formally or informally. I had a series of questions based on Clandinin and Connelly's three-dimensional model of narrative inquiry. The room buzzed with noise and excitement. I then asked the group to think and talk about the parents who they engaged with and what might their narrative be about school and education. The over-arching question was, 'What was happening when the parent narrative met the teacher narrative at formal parent-teacher interviews on the school premises?' I can distinctly remember the period of quiet that settled on the room when the group re-storied these meetings. I understood the stillness as recognition, and what I believe was the realisation, of the gap between their own narrative and that of the parents. In asking the teachers to reconstruct the narrative of their experience in terms of place, personal and social, and temporal dimensions, they had, in my view, come to a new understanding about the parent-teacher relationship.

The workshop concluded with a discussion centred on, 'So where to now?'. I don't have any evidence of what changed, if anything, at the school or in the teacher-parent relationships; that was an unfortunate gap in the work. However, what I learned from the experience was

that a narrative inquiry methodology had allowed me to bring something new into the experience of these teachers. In having them consider their own and the experience of others, and encouraging them to construct those experiences into a narrative that included place, personal and social, and temporal, I believe they had come to new insights about themselves. I have since used a narrative approach in a wide range of leadership development programs and it is infused through most of the work that I do as a teacher educator.

What I did not anticipate was the influence that narrative inquiry would have on my personal life. I began to consciously think about narrative in my life, and reflected on the experiences of my life in narrative form. The study of the methodology had brought narrative into my discursive consciousness. I began to talk and write about narrative as a way of understanding my experience and the work of teaching. This should not have surprised me; Clandinin and Connelly articulate clearly the power of their methodology:

> Education and educational studies are a form of experience. For us, narrative is the best way of representing and understanding experience. Experience is what we study, and we study it narratively because narrative thinking is a key form of experience and a key way of writing and thinking about it. (2000, p. 18)

I was committed at an epistemological and ontological level to narrative and to furthering my understanding of the narrative inquiry methodology.

I have set myself a significant epistemological challenge in this inquiry. As I indicated earlier, Paul's letters are not the most obvious source for a study of the education encounter and the use of historical texts in narrative inquiry is not the most common application of the methodology (Clandinin 2016). I find myself operating at the borderlands of the methodology, but I hope that the study advances, even marginally, an appreciation of the capacity of narrative inquiry. The second challenge has been to find the right balance between personal and professional. I am a teacher educator and researcher and that affects the inquiry. I have been transparent about that. The field texts are part of a religious tradition with which I have a long history. I have been transparent about my personal background that may impact on my experience with the texts, but I acknowledge that there may be much of that experience that I am unable to articulate. It is one of the reasons why research based on the narrative inquiry methodology should only make the claim to be a communication of experience. I invite others into the representation of my experience, and to the extent that others share that experience, or are informed by that experience, then the inquiry is validated. It is what Clandinin and Rosiek (2007) describe as a pragmatic view of knowledge.

Introduction

This research is a narrative inquiry, one that follows the three-dimensional model developed by Clandinin and Connelly (Clandinin 2007, 2016; Clandinin & Connelly 2000; Clandinin, Connelly & Chan 2002; Clandinin & Rosiek 2007; Connelly & Clandinin 2006). The foundation of this model of narrative inquiry is in the work of Dewey, 'the preeminent thinker in education' whose philosophy provides narrative inquiry its 'conceptual imaginative backdrop' (Clandinin & Connelly 2000, p. 2). As already indicated, the primary source material, or field texts, for the inquiry are ten letters written by Paul of Tarsus to four communities of the Mediterranean Basin in the first century CE. These letters trace a relationship between Paul and the people of these communities that I argue is a relationship of education encounters. I begin the chapter with a discussion of the narrative inquiry methodology and the borderland tensions between it and other approaches to analysing Paul's letters. I then explain the process of how the field texts were selected, and a description of the method of analysis. Given the antiquity of the field texts, I have also explored the historical context for the creation of the letters.

When we encounter texts and engage in narrative inquiry, we do so not just to discover the world of another but to enhance our own experience of the world. As Clandinin and Connelly (2000, p. 85) write, 'enhancing personal and social growth is one of the purposes of narrative inquiry'. I have been explicit in the personal narratives about the ontological impact of narrative inquiry in my life. I have also been transparent about my experience of the letters and their place in my life experience. There were also clear epistemological reasons for choosing narrative inquiry as a methodology. I have as my field texts, 2000 year old documents that are English translations of the original Greek. All of the participating agents are long dead, the cities either abandoned or much changed, and the institutional state, the Roman Empire, has passed into history, while the legacy of the protagonist's work, the Christian church, is much altered from the *ekklēsia* that Paul created.

Smith (2012) and Edsall (2014) have both undertaken a lexical analysis of selections of Paul's letters, offering informative insights into Paul's work as a teacher. However, as indicated earlier, I find myself with a different understanding of the education encounter to those two scholars. An analysis of Paul's language and words, separate to the experience of the other in the dialogic encounter, offers a more limited view of the education encounter than is possible with a narrative inquiry approach. In this inquiry, I am more closely aligned with how Judge (in Harrison 2008) has portrayed the education encounter, though his principal interest is in Paul as a historical figure. Judge did not propose any analysis of how a contemporary

educator might experience Paul's letters, which is my primary interest. I draw on Judge (in Harrison 2008) for the historical context of Paul's work as an educator but through the narrative inquiry methodology focus on the impact of the letters, existing and potential, for the experience of contemporary educators, including myself.

Clandinin and Connelly and narrative inquiry

There are two frames of reference that support narrative inquiry. The first is that narrative is how we structure and understand experience. Clandinin and Connelly recognise the contributions of MacIntyre on narrative unity, and Lyotard on grand narratives (Clandinin 2007; Clandinin & Connelly 2000). From these two philosophers, Clandinin and Connelly develop their concept of narrative. Experience, and they begin with Dewey's concept of experience (Clandinin & Connelly 2000), is the second frame of reference for their methodology. Clandinin (2016, p. 13) writes, 'narrative inquiry is a way of understanding and inquiring into experience. It is nothing more and nothing less'. I begin with Dewey's concept of experience, as interpreted by Clandinin and Connelly in their approach to narrative inquiry

Dewey as the philosophical foundation for experience

For Dewey (1997), experience is how we understand the world; it involves interaction and continuity. Experience is both primary, our direct sensory experience of people and nature, and secondary, where we theorise or intellectualise our primary experiences. Secondary experience involves reflecting on the primary experience, and then returning to the primary or direct experience to test the theorising that has occurred, in a continuous cycle of interaction. Experience in Dewey's terms is an ontological experience (Clandinin 2016).

Communication is a shared or social interaction that is constructed between the participants in an experience; it is personal and social. Each person comes to the interaction with unique experiences, engaging in the communication as co-creators, but affected as individuals by the encounter. Communication is not a separate entity to the people involved. In positioning experience in the narrative inquiry framework, Clandinin and Connelly (2000, 2007) emphasise the intersubjectivity in Dewey's concept of experience. For Dewey (1997) language enabled us to be reflexive, allowing for the development of a self; a self that is changed when we interact with others. This understanding of experience is critical to the narrative inquiry process:

> Experience (is) both personal and social … People are individuals and need to be understood as such, but they cannot be understood only as individuals. They are always in relation, always in a social context. (Clandinin & Connelly 2000, p. 2)

It is through narrative that we incorporate into our inner world the physical encounter with the external world. When we successfully incorporate experiences into our own narrative, we grow. In Dewey's description of experience (1997), each person recognises him or herself in relation to the surrounding physical and social world, and seeks to incorporate the self with that world. This understanding of experience is central to the philosophy of pragmatism. Rorty writes, 'the whole point of pragmatism is to insist that human beings are answerable only to one another' (cited in Bernstein 2010, p. 211).

We can summarise Dewey's influence on the narrative inquiry methodology through three central ideas on experience:

- Experience comprises interaction and continuity.
- Experience is both personal and social.
- Experience occurs in the natural and social world.

Here are the beginnings of a narrative conception of the world; we construct a story to make sense of our primary experience and we then test that story in the real world. It is from these elements of Dewey's philosophy that a model for narrative inquiry has been developed (Clandinin & Connelly 2000).

I will come to the model in detail, but before doing so I want to provide a brief example of how I have applied that methodology in this inquiry into Paul's letters. In one of his earliest letters, to the Thessalonians, Paul writes 'you have shown your faith in action, worked for love and persevered through hope' (1 Thess 1:3). Paul begins with demonstrated experience (you have shown) that leads to a commitment to act (faith in action), with recognition that all that we do is learned from and enacted in relationships (worked for love). From experience to action through relationship leads us to modify the environment (persevered through hope), and thus we have a new experience, from which new action arises.

Narrative as the basis for a research methodology

Scholars working in the field of narrative research, identify Jerome Bruner's 1984 address to the annual meeting of the American Psychological Association (APA) as a significant turn toward the use and understanding of narrative in research (Connelly & Clandinin 2006; Goodson et al. 2010; Lyons & LaBoskey 2002). Several decades earlier, Dewey had written about continuity and interaction (1997 first published 1938), but had not named it as narrative. Bruner is credited, by those in the field, as distinguishing narrative as a unique way of thinking and has thus had a significant influence on narrative researchers:

> He (Bruner) asserted baldly that there were two modes of thought or cognitive functioning: the traditional logical-scientific mode and a narrative mode. Bruner contended that although the two modes are complementary, neither is reducible to the other. Each provides a distinctive way of ordering experience, of constructing reality and causality. The logical-scientific (or paradigmatic) mode is centered on the narrow epistemological question of how to know the truth, and searches for universal truth conditions; the "narrative, looks for particular conditions and is centered around the broader and more inclusive question of the meaning of experience". (Connelly & Clandinin 2006, p. 614)

Bruner asserted that western societies had privileged paradigmatic or logical-scientific cognition over narrative cognition (Goodson et al. 2010). What had been achieved was a repositioning of narrative cognition as a legitimate alternative for research and understanding. Bruner created a new narrative in which narrative work could be located, thus validating the very existence of narrative as a methodological approach, and 'making comprehensible a deviation from canonical cultural patterns' (Bruner cited in Goodson et al. 2010, p. 10).

Lyotard (1984) argues that post-modernism has effectively delegitimised the grand narratives of history. For Lyotard we are no longer actors or contributors to, or even subject to, meta-narratives constructed by authorities (e.g. the meta-narrative of Saint Paul is no longer the only legitimate construction of Paul). Lyotard argues that it the experience of participation that creates the narrative of our lives, and that any 'consensus on the rules defining a game and the moves playable within it **must** be local, in other words agreed on by its present players and subject to eventual cancellation' (Lyotard 1984, p. 66 original emphasis). For Lyotard we are active agents in creating the narrative by which we live.

MacIntyre (2011), like Lyotard, is interested in how the rules of the game are constructed. He questions the commitment to the Enlightenment values of whole world knowledge and empirically driven predictions of human behaviour, which are guided, in part, by a Platonist view of ideal Forms. With reference to Machiavelli's concept of *Fortuna,* MacIntyre (2011, p. 108) introduces 'unpredictability'. He goes on to argue that even armed with knowledge and 'some certainty what game is being played', all occurrences cannot be known to us; episodes in a life can take a direction 'conferred only retrospectively by its outcome' (MacIntyre 2011, p. 115). I find in MacIntyre's expression the language of *event*; that the rules of the game can be disturbed by incidents that are unpredictable and change the direction of life. There is also acknowledgement that our understanding of previous experiences develops as we encounter new experiences.

As humans we construct the narratives that make sense of the past and our current condition and which, in our best judgement, will provide for us the most desirable future. In MacIntyre's view, this future is one that preserves independence, freedom, creativity and inner reflection that is free from the invasion of others (MacIntyre 2011). This implies that we should be free to construct our lives from knowledge available to us rather than responding to the determination of external forces or institutions. In theorising the role of the human person within the group, he argues that:

> It is necessary, if life is to be meaningful, for us to be in possession of ourselves and not merely to be the creations of other people's projects, intentions and desires, and this requires unpredictability. (MacIntyre 2011, p. 121)

MacIntyre (2011) cautions against being subject to the imposed narrative from external authorities, instead we should remain open to learning from our own experience.

From Dewey (1997), MacIntyre (2011) and Lyotard (1984), we have the underpinning theory for narrative inquiry. Beginning with experience, Clandinin and Connelly establish that in people's interactions with the natural and social world they are constantly testing the validity of their experience. They find order in the continuity of these interactions through a narrative process in which they reconstruct the past and reimagine the future to make sense of their experience in the present. For Clandinin and Connelly, narrative is more than an approach to research, it is a way of understanding experience, and living our lives:

> People shape their daily lives by stories of who they and others are and as they interpret their past in terms of these stories. Story, in the current idiom, is a portal through which a person enters the world and by which his or her experience of the world is interpreted and made personally meaningful. Viewed this way, narrative is the phenomena studied in inquiry. Narrative inquiry, the study of experience as story, then, is the first and foremost way of thinking about experience. (2006, p. 477)

Narrative places the experience of life in the control of each person. While subject to the unpredictability of external forces, such as an *event*, the response to the *event* is not pre-determined. Clandinin and Connelly's significant contribution to the field is to create a practical methodology based on this theoretical foundation.

A three-dimensional model for narrative inquiry

Clandinin and Connelly (Clandinin 2007, 2016; Clandinin & Connelly 2000; Clandinin, Connelly & Chan 2002; Clandinin & Rosiek 2007; Connelly & Clandinin 2006) have fashioned

a three-dimensional model for narrative inquiry consisting of place, personal and social, and temporal dimensions.

The temporal dimension of the narrative inquiry process is drawn from Dewey's (1997) notion of continuity; that each experience impacts on subsequent experience and past experiences shape our response to current interactions. Mead's (2002) description of *event* as the passage between the systems of past, present and future, which is discussed in Chapter Five, offers further insight into an understanding of the temporality of experience. It highlights the organic nature of our life, that to live life fully is to be constantly in a process of change and reflection. Narrative is how we construct meaning for ourselves from this constant change and re-evaluation. Clandinin and Connelly capture this as: 'we retell our stories, remake our past' (2000, p. 85).

The personal in the second dimension is the feelings, hopes, desires, aesthetic reactions, and moral dispositions of the person, whether inquirer or participant. Inherent in this dimension is reflexivity, the capacity to stand outside of oneself and to review experiences in the light of our personal narrative and the narrative of the social groups to which we belong. The social conditions are the existential conditions, the environment, surrounding factors and forces, people and structures, that form the individual's context. These interactions can be understood as intersubjective encounters in which each person is open to changing his or her narrative based on an experience. The personal and social dimension can be understood as looking inward and outward.

This second dimension presents a complex challenge for this inquiry. Typically the process involves direct communication between the researcher and participant. The researcher is looking to the disposition of the participant, and is reflexive about their own experience in constructing the field texts and then the research text. In this inquiry I already have the field texts, Paul's letters, from which I can make some determinations about his hopes, desires etc., but I cannot check those determinations with him. I have no direct material about the hopes, fears etc., of the audience to whom Paul was writing. I can make some inferences from the content of Paul's letters and refer to secondary sources but no more than that. I cannot know, for example, the impact of his letters on any individual who lived in the first century. However, given that the texts are living documents in the 21st century, I can be reflexive about my experience with those texts in the contemporary world.

Connelly and Clandinin's (2006, p. 480) definition of the dimension of place is, 'the specific concrete, physical, and topological boundaries of place or sequence of places where the

inquiry and events take place'. The qualities of place and the impact of places on lived and told experiences are crucial. Paul lived a material life in the Mediterranean Basin in the first century CE. We have an evolving archaeological and epigraphic record of the people and cities of his time, but nothing that is personal to him other than his letters. We have no photos, no illustrations, no voice recordings and no direct accounts of interactions with him from those who knew him. We have between seven and thirteen letters as a literary record of his experiences, providing the story of his relationship with people of the Mediterranean Basin. In this research text I have had to supplement the field texts with extensive secondary source material, as listed in the Reference section, to get to an understanding of place.

The inquiry reveals how Paul builds a new understanding of place. He creates communities, *ekklēsia*, in specific locations, but through common structures, which exist beyond physical and topographical boundaries. The *ekklēsiai* becomes a transnational place. In the formation of those communities with new structures, we have a sense of place that is universalisable.

The choice of narrative inquiry as a methodology was made to allow for an understanding of the experience of Paul as an educator, and to enrich my own experience as an educator. As the inquirer, the methodology guides me to do three things:

1) Recover Paul's meaning to work out what led him to construct the *telling* in the way that he did. This includes consideration of the audience for his letters.
2) Acknowledge that as the inquirer I am looking for meaning for my own purpose. Paul was not writing on education theory but I *retell* his story as an educator.
3) Recognise the gaps and limitations in this recovery and reconstruction process; not all can be known with clarity and my own ongoing experiences influence my interactions with the texts. (Clandinin, Connelly & Chan 2002)

In this research text I have created a *retelling* of the narrative of Paul as educator through the three dimensions of place, personal and social, and temporal. The *retelling* of the narrative of Paul as an educator is presented in Chapter Four. In that chapter, I 'unpack the lived and told stories' (Clandinin 2016, p. 34) of Paul's engagement with the four communities. The retelling of the narrative is influenced by my ongoing experience and evolving understanding and thus this research text is an 'intersubjective text rather than objective text' (Clandinin 2016, p. 46).

The *reliving* stage of narrative inquiry is a defining aspect of the methodology. In narrative inquiry the primary experience continues to generate new experiences for the inquirer and this *reliving* is a valid experience in the inquiry (Clandinin 2016, p. 34). The inquirer moves into a relationship with the person or the field texts, or even both:

> Narrative inquiry … is collaboration between researcher and participants, over time, in a place or series of places, and in social interaction with milieus. An inquirer enters this matrix in the midst and progresses in the same spirit, concluding the inquiry still in the midst of living and telling, reliving and retelling, the stories of the experiences that make up people's lives, both individual and social.
> (Clandinin & Connelly 2000, p. 20)

The *reliving* of the Pauline experience as an educator is operating in two fields. Firstly, as a teacher educator these field texts have become 'part of my present landscape' and they are part of my past landscape 'that has helped shape the world in which I find myself' (Clandinin 2016, p. 82 pronouns changed in the quotes). These field texts have also shaped the past and present landscape of western civilisation. In *retelling* the narrative I am re-composing a core narrative of the society in which I live, and then seeking to bring that new narrative into a *reliving* in my experience as an educator. As I have recounted in the Prologue and personal narratives, there has been resistance to the *retelling*, but, to date, *reliving* my experience with the field texts in my work as a teacher educator has been validated by the experience of those with whom I have interacted in education encounters.

In the following section I seek to distinguish narrative inquiry from similar methodological approaches. I have borrowed the concept of exploring the 'borderland tensions' from the *Handbook of Narrative Inquiry* (Clandinin & Rosiek 2007). Rather than distinguishing narrative inquiry from other philosophical traditions such as post-positivism, Marxism and post-structuralism as they have, I explore the borderlands with history and biblical criticism. These borderland tensions are derived from my own experiences of having pursued history and biblical literature in previous undergraduate and postgraduate study. Following the conceptual thinking of Lyotard (1984), in exploring these borderland tensions, I am signalling those experiences that may have influenced my *retelling* of Paul's narrative.

The borderland tensions for narrative inquiry

Theissen (1992, p. 231), asks the question of researchers, 'How do we extract sociologically relevant evidence from the New Testament's sociography and historiography and from its parenetic poetic and mythological utterances?' Historians, using well-established historical methodology, provide one response to such a challenge. New Testament studies using historical-criticism and form-criticism, accounting for the historical time and the literary genre, provide another response. Narrative inquiry is another approach.

Narrative inquiry and history

The historian seeks to understand events of the past through the study of available sources. They will categorise sources and then make judgements about the merits of those sources,

always with the intention of constructing a narrative or narratives of the events of the past. Fredriksen (2000) argues that history is public and social. It appeals to data and judgements about coherence and plausibility. It is to some degree 'testable'. She contrasts this with personal reflections, memoirs and recollections which, while they may contribute to a historical narrative, are individual, subjective and private and in many ways 'untestable' (Fredriksen 2000, p. 76). Judge provides a helpful bridge between history and narrative:

> A person who studies these themes of ancient history is therefore studying not only ancient history, but his own dilemmas and the dilemmas of modern society. He is not only studying their distant historical origins, but he is studying himself. (2008g, p. 683)

In writing more generally about narrative, Goodson et al. (2010) describe the integrity of narrative in a way that is helpful to distinguish it from history. Narrative does not depend on factual truth. This is not to say that facts are ignored in narrative, but the narrative methodology looks beyond the facts to 'the function, both for narrators and themselves and in relation to the social settings in which lives are narrated' (Goodson et al. 2010, p. 12).

Historical methodology is an essential component of this narrative inquiry. In this inquiry I have, for example, access to letters from a person to a group in Corinth. I use the methods of history to determine the provenance of the letters. That investigation leads me to the conclusion that the historical person, Paul of Tarsus, wrote the letters to members of an *ekklēsia* in the city of Corinth circa 54 CE. Narrative inquiry then invites an exploration of the place where the letter was written and received, the temporality of that letter and its message, and what it reveals of the personal and social relationships between the writer and the audience. I further narrow the inquiry to what it reveals about the teaching relationship that exists between the writer and the audience of the letter. I construct the narrative on plausible assumptions. I also draw on secondary interpretations from those using social-scientific methods, including historians, to construct the social world in which Paul worked.

The use of historical field texts is not unknown in narrative inquiry but does introduce complexities and limitations. There are several examples of narrative analysis using historical records in Dauite and Lightfoot (2004), and Gubrium and Holstein (2009) acknowledge existing field texts as sources for narrative inquiry. However, Riesman when writing about narrative analysis makes an observation that is pertinent, 'Narratives are composed for particular audiences at moments in history, and they draw on taken-for-granted discourses and values circulating in a particular culture' (2008, p. 3). This idea also resonates with my reading of Fredriksen (2009). She argues that it is legitimate to perform a hermeneutical or

theological act in interpreting ancient texts from within a religious tradition and attempt to make sense of them for the present day; or to use the methodology of history where one makes a best attempt to understand the text in its own time. In this view of texts, the past is preferenced. Fredriksen argues: 'What you cannot do is say "This is what Paul means" and then go on to say something that Paul could not possibly have meant'; that is 'cheating' (cited in Caputo, J & Alcoff 2009, p. 178).

An historian will construct a portrait of the social world at the time to understand that social world. The narrative inquirer constructs a portrait of the social world to *retell* the narrative and to open the possibility of *reliving* the experience in the modern world. A narrative inquirer has a responsibility to be clear about the rules of the game, but within those rules has the freedom to inject their own experience. Thus, in this research text, I am not writing a history but using the field texts to understand and extend on contemporary experience. There is a temporal dimension to the work of the narrative inquirer.

Narrative inquiry and biblical criticism

The dominant form of biblical criticism since the early nineteenth century has been the historical–critical method. The emergence of this approach to studying the Bible is generally linked to Baur and the Tübingen school (Tabor 2012; Taylor 1992). It is perhaps best understood as a form of literary criticism in which an attempt is made to understand the origins of the text so that its original meaning can be understood within its historical period 'as a prerequisite for sound exegesis' (Taylor 1992, p. 25). Having established a firm historical foundation, the exegete seeks to draw moral, ethical or religious lessons from the text for the modern world. This is also described as hermeneutics (Fredriksen in Caputo, J & Alcoff 2009, p. 178). In New Testament scholarship, hermeneutics is confined to the impact of the text on religious practice and belief. So the central question becomes, 'What does the text contribute to our understanding of the religious belief of this person or group of people?'

Horrell (2009), outlines the change in New Testament scholarship that has seen them draw on the social science models of theorists such as Weber, Marx, Habermas and Durkheim, the methods of sociology and social historians, and even models from anthropology to extend upon the historical-critical method of analysis. These new methods are seen to 'complement and improve the prevailing method of biblical interpretation through more rigorous attention to the social dimension of the biblical text and to the sociological dimension of the exegetical text' (Elliot cited in Taylor 1992, p. 28). Some are cautious about the extent to which the methods of the social sciences should be applied to biblical criticism. Taylor (1992, p. 29), cautions that the research techniques developed by the social sciences 'have been developed

for the purpose of data gathering through field work and other forms of direct observation' and they may not always transfer easily to the work of biblical exegesis.

These field texts have been accorded value by Paul's acceptance as an honoured figure in the Christian church. Within that social group, Christianity, there is a natural desire to understand the texts, as they inform the ethics, the morality and the theology of that religion. My inquiry takes no interest in the meaning of Paul's texts for Christianity. However, I do leverage the status given to the documents by Christianity; they are influential documents in western civilisation because of the influence of the Christian church. However, the primary interest of narrative inquiry is experience. There is interest in the experience of the author, the experience of the original audience, and how the texts live in the experience of the one undertaking the inquiry.

The tension with narrative learning

The focus on narrative as a way of understanding experience has generated new thinking about using narrative in teaching. Goodson et al. write:

> In a very real sense the story constitutes the life and the self. Life and self are thus at the same time 'object' and 'outcome' of the story. What complicates the matter further is that the self is also the author of the story. All this means that the construction of the story – the storying of the life and the self – is a central 'element' of the learning process. (2010, p. 2)

Goodson et al. differ from Clandinin and Connelly (2000), who, they argue, focus on the use of narratives in education, 'but without explicit reference to the meaning or the significance of narratives for learning' (Goodson et al. 2010, p. 3). Proponents of narrative learning seek to define a new learning theory. They focus on the role of narrative and narration in learning, and the role of narrative in human subjectivity, in an effort to re-position learning within the ongoing preoccupation with identity and agency (Goodson et al. 2010). Narrative learning springs from the same philosophical foundation as narrative inquiry. Narrative inquiry recognises the internal conversation but looks to the narrative as a means to understand the lived experience of the self and others. It is the experience of *reliving* by the inquirer that is a defining aspect of the narrative inquiry methodology.

The inquiry process

In the following section I set out the background to the creation of the field texts in the first century CE. Given the provenance of the texts, it is important to provide some historical

context. I outline the process for choosing the field texts, identify the field texts and describe the method for inquiring into those texts.

The creation of the field texts in the context of the first century

We do not know with any certainty why Paul began writing letters. We do know there were times when he was prevented from attending to the *ekklēsia* in person. Civic authorities from both Thessalonica and Philippi evicted him, Galatia was too remote for a return visit at the time needed, and attending to duties and being detained in Ephesus prevented Paul from visiting Corinth when requested. Face-to-face contact sustained relationships in the first century CE. In the modern world, with mobile technologies, instant digital communication, social media relationships and widespread written literacy, we can take for granted our ability to connect with others without being in their presence. One of the great Roman teachers and writers, Seneca, wrote of the importance of physical presence:

> The living voice and the intimacy of a common life will help you more than the written word. You must go to the scene of the action, first because men put more faith in their eyes than in their ears. (cited in Malherbe 2000, p. 83)

Paul wrote to each *ekklēsia* that he would rather be with them (Phil 2:24; 1 Thess 3:5; 1 Cor 16:5-7; 2 Cor 1:15-16). He is consistent with the attitudes of the time and place in wanting to be a personal presence, but his inability to visit each place created a new pattern of communication. His letters became an important connection with the *ekklēsia*.

Conventions existed for the different types of letters that could be written. Letters could be official or public documents, private, literary, or 'Diaspora letters', but these categories were not always clearly distinguishable (Edsall 2014, p. 37). Where a writer had a specific purpose, there were guides on how to write letters that included samples of each style (Meeks & Fitzgerald 2007). These guides were vital where a writer did not know the reader and so depended on conventions of style and genre to communicate effectively (Gamble 1995). Where people knew each other, then the letter was to be written as if replacing the person's actual presence. It represented one side of the dialogue and was to be written as such (Malherbe 2000). Again from Seneca, in a letter to his friend Lucilius, we have an example of this convention, 'I prefer that my letters should be just what my conversation would be if you and I were sitting in one another's company' (cited in Malherbe 2000, p. 95).

While there was a tradition of letter writing in Graeco-Roman society, Bornkamm claims that in writing his letters to the *ekklēsia*, Paul created something new:

> The Pauline letters became the oldest literary genre in primitive Christianity. Classical literature has nothing similar … It was Paul who created this primitive Christian genre, letters, as a means of communication; and they remain its model, often imitated but never matched. (Bornkamm 1971, p. xxiv).

In a later publication, Bornkamm (1974, p. 73) builds on this argument writing that Paul is 'the first to use – and use exclusively – this form of self expression'. Other scholars also find a unique approach in Paul's letters, though none as definitive as Bornkamm. Some recognise that Paul draws on conventions of Hellenistic letter-writing but the major sections of his letters have no parallel in the traditional forms (Malherbe 2000; Smith 2012); they defy easy categorisation within the genres of the time (Edsall 2014); 'the form of his letters is unusual' (Meeks & Fitzgerald 2007, p. 3) and 'in the process (he) created something new' (Malherbe 2000, p. 95). Witherington (2011), in his socio-rhetorical commentary on Philippians, makes a case for Paul using rhetorical techniques, rather than a typical epistolary style of letters. Gamble (1995, p. 39), is one that underplays the differences: 'they could not have been utterly peculiar to a sociocultural setting, since complete novelty of form and content would have made them unintelligible to Christian and non-Christian alike'.

Paul's letters become part of his pedagogy; they were filled with teaching language (Edsall 2014; Smith 2012). In this research text, I argue that the letters are examples of intersubjectivity, in which Paul is openly reflexive with each of the communities. He is changed by the experience of writing the letter and anticipates that the audience will also be changed. That is what gives the letters a very distinctive character. Paul knew his audience. He had lived with them and formed relationships with them. These groups had already committed to a new way of life based on what he had taught them. Paul wrote letters to sustain the relationships, modifying the oratorical style to meet his own needs and those of the community (Meeks & Fitzgerald 2007; Witherington 2011).

It seems likely Paul followed the typical pattern of the era and dictated his letters to a secretary or *amanuensis* (Gamble 1995; Malherbe 2000; Perrin & Duling 1982). In Paul's letter to the Romans, we have the interpolation, 'I Tertius, the writer of the letter' (Rom 16:22). We also have the remarkable image of Paul taking up the pen himself, to give his letters extra integrity, such as, 'Take good note of what I am adding in my own handwriting and in large letters' (Gal 6:11) and similar comments in other letters (1 Cor 16:21; 2 Thess 3:17). The custom of the time was to engage a traveller to carry the document to the community to whom the letter was addressed (Gamble 1995). We have no evidence of how the letters were distributed, but one tradition of the time was for multiple copies to be made of formal letters at the time and place they were written. Alternatively, the letters may have

been copied within the recipient community and a copy sent to another *ekklēsia* (Meeks & Fitzgerald 2007).

Once received in the community, the letters were to be read aloud in public. Paul made this clear to the Thessalonians (1 Thess 5:27 and 2 Thess 3:14-15) and it is generally agreed that this was the situation for all of his letters (Gamble 1995; Malherbe 2000; Perrin & Duling 1982). The person reading required a high level of training and the time to familiarise themselves with the content, particularly if they were not one of Paul's fellow-workers involved in the drafting of the letter (Witherington 2011). The letters were written in,

> 'continuous script' (scriptio continua) with no division between words, sentences, or paragraphs, and no punctuation … A practiced reader would have developed an eye for patterns of characters, and by sounding those patterns aloud could grasp words by ear before distinguishing them by sight. (Gamble 1995, pp. 203-4)

The complexity of the writing raises questions of the literacy levels of the recipient audience. We know that Paul wrote in Greek and that most people who joined the *ekklēsia* would have had some familiarity with that language. One study estimated that throughout the entire period of classical Greek, Hellenistic, and Roman imperial civilisation, 'the extent of literacy was about ten per cent and never exceeded fifteen to twenty per cent of the population as a whole' (Gamble 1995, p. 4). If these percentages are accurate, and the early members of the *ekklēsiai* represented the broader population, we can assume that somewhere between ten and twenty per cent of the audience may have been able to read and study the letter, with assistance. The remainder would have listened to the letter, possibly on many occasions.

The selection of field texts

Meeks and Fitzgerald (2007) have identified 19 literary works that are attributed to Paul. Thirteen of these works appear in the New Testament; none of the remaining six are believed to have been written by Paul. Of the 13 letters in the New Testament attributed to Paul, only seven are undisputed as having been authored by him. There are divided opinions on Paul's second letter to the Thessalonians, however, there is sufficient support from scholars for me to include it as an authentic letter written by Paul (Jewett 1986; Malherbe 2000; Murphy-O'Connor 1997). I have eight authentic letters authored by Paul. The remaining letters attributed to Paul in the New Testament (e.g. Ephesians, the Pastorals to Timothy and Titus), were not written by Paul but by associates and those who knew his work.

The authentic letters are all included in the New Testament and are the earliest extant Christian writings. In summary, we have as authentic literary works by Paul letters to communities in the following locations:

- Thessalonica (1 & 2)
- Galatia
- Philippi
- Corinth (1 & 2)
- Rome

There is also a single letter to a friend, Philemon, pleading for the manumission of a slave who had assisted Paul. It is the only authentic letter written by Paul to an individual. I have excluded it from the field texts. It is not a letter to a community with the primary intent of continuing a relationship based on education encounters.

Paul's letter to the Romans is often considered to be Paul's signature letter, the 'most complete outline of his thoughts' (Perrin & Duling 1982, p. 186). It is the primary focus for the treatises by modern philosophers Taubes (2004) and Agamben (2005). However, I have not included this letter in the field texts. Paul's letter to the Romans was constructed for a different purpose than the letters written to the other communities. Paul did not establish the *ekklēsia* in Rome, nor had he visited Rome prior to writing his letter (Edsall 2014; Murphy-O'Connor 1997). He confirms this in the letter: 'I have always, however, made it an unbroken rule never to preach where Christ's name has already been heard' (Rom 15:20). Paul introduced himself to the Christian community in Rome, not by living and working in the city, but by transmitting his theology in letter format. Barth (1959, p. 11) writes that the letter to the Romans, 'has often been compared to a catechism, or even to a handbook of dogmatics'. This is not characteristic of Paul's letters to the other four communities. These letters continued his engagement with the people with whom he had lived and worked; the letters were written following shared experiences and the content is shaped by their ongoing interactions. I have limited the field texts to letters written by Paul to communities with whom he had lived prior to writing.

Murphy-O'Connor (1997) argued for Colossians as an authentic Pauline letter. Without entering into that debate on its authenticity, I have excluded this letter as a field text, on the same basis as I excluded the letter to the Romans. Paul did not establish that *ekklēsia*, nor had he visited that city prior to writing. The lack of a visit by Paul prior to the writing of the letter gives a different character to the letter, even if it were confirmed as an authentic letter.

One final issue in the selection of texts is the role of the Book of the Acts of the Apostles. This purported history was written around 85 CE, after Paul's death, by an author referred to as Luke (Perrin & Duling 1982, p. 294). He is generally considered the same author who wrote the Gospel of Luke, and is reputed to have been a travelling companion of Paul, though no one of that name is mentioned in any of Paul's authentic letters. I have drawn on Acts for some material but it is not a field text in this inquiry. This research text is a narrative construction of Paul as an educator, as evident in letters written by him, not a history of Paul of Tarsus.

As indicated earlier, Paul's letters were composed in Greek and were written without punctuation or gaps between words, as was the convention (Marrou 1956, p. 279). This practice has led to complex interpretations as the texts were translated. There are many translations of the letters available and in wide circulation. I have relied on English translations of the letters as contained in the Jerusalem Bible (*The online Jerusalem Bible*), a mainstream translation. The online version was chosen for the practical reason that it facilitated the method of analysis, which I explain in the next section. All quotes from Paul's letters are from that translation, unless otherwise indicated.

Some letters, as they appear in the New Testament, are considered composites or redactions of the original letters written by Paul. The creation of the letters, their background and what they say about the relationships between the author and the audience are important for constructing a narrative of Paul as an educator. The sequence of letters informs us about the evolving personal relationship between Paul and the communities, and directly contributes to our understanding of how historical events impacted on the content of the letters. There is debate in the scholarly community about the chronological sequence, the place of origin and the composition, or literary integrity of the letters as they appear in the New Testament. Where there are differences, I have preferenced the work of Murphy-O'Connor (1997, 2002, 2008a, 2008b), based on the breadth and depth of his archaeological, textual and epigraphic research and his literary analysis of the texts themselves. Some readers, versed in New Testament scholarship, might contest Murphy-O'Connor's work and therefore some of the judgements I have made. If, and when, more information comes to light about the letters and the scholarly community reaches consensus on their origins, sequence and composition, and should this be a different sequence to that which I have used, then some of the findings I have reached about Paul may require review.

From the six Pauline letters as they appear in the New Testament, I have created ten field texts. Table 3.1 lists these texts, their sequence, their New Testament origins, and the textual coding I have used in my analysis.

Table 3.1: The ten field texts for the inquiry

Letter	Coding in text	Date written	Paul's location	Audience	Word length	Biblical letter#
Thessalonians Letter A	TA	March – May of 50 CE	Athens	*ekklēsia* in Thessalonica	640 words	1 Thessalonians 2:13 – 4:1
Thessalonians Letter B	TB	June – August of 50 CE (some months after TA)	Corinth	*ekklēsia* in Thessalonica	1,480 words	1 Thessalonians 1:1 – 2:12 and 4:2 – 5:28
Thessalonians Letter C	TC	August – November of 50 CE	Corinth	*ekklēsia* in Thessalonica	1,120 words	2 Thessalonians
Galatians		March – May of 53 CE	Ephesus	*ekklēsia* in the north of the province of Galatia	3400 words	Galatians
Philippians Letter A	PA	June - August of 53 CE	Ephesus	*ekklēsia* in Philippi	250 words	Philippians 4:10 – 4:20
Philippians Letter B	PB	Sept – Nov of 53 CE	Ephesus	*ekklēsia* in Philippi	1,550 words	Philippians 1:1 – 3:1, 4:2 – 4:9 and 4:21- 4:23
Philippians Letter C	PC	Sept-Nov of 53 CE	Ephesus	*ekklēsia* in Philippi	670 words	Philippians 3:2 – 3:21 and 4:1
Corinthians Letter B	CB	May - June 54 CE	Ephesus	*ekklēsia* in Corinth	10,500 words	1 Corinthians
Corinthians Letter D	CD	January – February 55 CE	Thessalonica or Philippi	*ekklēsia* in Corinth	4,400 words	2 Corinthians 1-9
Corinthians Letter E*	CË (to distinguish from CE)	June – August 55 CE	Illyricum	*ekklēsia* in Corinth	2,200 words	2 Corinthians 10-13

Notes:

* There is evidence from Paul that he wrote five letters to the *ekklēsia* in Corinth. However, we have only the text of three of those letters, the first and third letters are missing, hence the coding.

Biblical nomenclature is used in quoting from the letters and should be read as in the following example: 1 Thess 2:13 is the canonical first letter by Paul to the Thessalonians, the second chapter, the thirteenth verse. Standard abbreviations are Thessalonians (1 Thess and 2 Thess), Galatians (Gal), Philippians (Phil) and Corinthians (1 Cor and 2 Cor).

Method

Having selected ten field texts, I commenced an inquiry into those texts using Clandinin and Connelly's three-dimensional model. I developed a set of questions to guide the inquiry and to frame the *retelling* of Paul's narrative as an educator. Those initial questions served my inquiry well, though they did evolve over the seven years of the inquiry. As I walked alongside the letters and my understanding of the methodology evolved, new questions demanded answers. The final questions appear in Table 3.2. I have italicised the original questions. Differentiating the original and new questions provides an insight into the temporality of my experience as the inquirer.

Table 3.2: Questions for the inquiry process

The dimension of place The inquiry into the dimension of place in the field texts responds to the following questions: *a) From where was Paul writing and how does this impact on the content of the letters?* *b) Given the physical separation, how did Paul connect with the experience of the people and maintain the relationships he had established?* *c) What were the characteristics of the physical place where the recipients of the letter lived?* d) What is transferable about the sense of place from the Roman Empire in the first century CE to my experience in a contemporary western society?
The personal and social dimension The inquiry into the personal and social dimension of the field texts responds to the following questions: *a) What is evident about Paul's own emotions at the time of writing and how did that affect his relationships with the communities?* *b) How did Paul perceive his relationship with each community?* *c) What was the experience offered by Paul that led people to change existing social practices?* d) How did the relationships with Paul change the social interactions in those communities? e) What reflexivity is prompted in me, when reading the letters in the 21st century?
The temporal dimension The inquiry into the temporal dimension of the field texts responds to the following questions: *a) How did Paul build on his lived experience with the communities to maintain a shared sense of purpose?* *b) How did the philosophy initiated by Paul change over time in each of the communities?* c) What changed for the people in each of the communities? d) How did Paul's experience of the resurrection *event* change his actions and those of the communities with whom he shared that experience? e) What is universal in Paul's experience with the four communities?

I commenced reading the field texts alongside a standard set of commentaries, the Anchor Yale Bible publications (Fitzmyer 2008; Furnish 1985; Malherbe 2000; Martyn 2010; Reumann 2008). With over 26,000 words in the field texts, this first step of using standard biblical commentaries was helpful in identifying key features of the letters, understanding the context in which they were written, recognising major differences in interpretation of language, and appreciating the layered meanings of the text. The Anchor Yale Bible commentaries led me to scholars who were identified as having expertise across one or more letters (e.g. Jewett 1986; Malherbe 2011; Murphy-O'Connor 1997; Stowers 2011b; Witherington 1998). After that reading and note-taking process, I had achieved a grounding in the background and content of each field text. As a second step, social histories helped me to position the letters in their historical context (e.g. Harrill 2012; Judge 2008a, 2008b, 2008c, 2008d, 2008e, 2008f, 2008g; Meeks 2003; Taylor 1992).

In the third step I identified my own response to each text. Clandinin (2016) writes of the inquirer being in a relationship with the participants, in my case in a relationship with Paul's letters. I moved from reliance on New Testament scholars who had followed the historical-critical and social–science methods of analysing the field texts, to being in a relationship with the texts. I engaged in free-form note taking. As an example, at one stage in the process of living alongside the texts, I came to consider Paul's letter to the Galatians, 'the most engaging of all of the field texts. This is the letter in which we see Paul at his most vulnerable' (MV notes). I have provided an example of these field notes for the Galatians letter in Appendix Six. At this point I had two sets of notes: my personal responses to the field texts, emerging from my own experience as an educator; and notes from reading New Testament commentaries and scholars.

In the fourth step of the process, the content of each letter was tabulated using the sectional divisions of the letters outlined in the Anchor Yale Bible commentaries. Using a table format, I answered my initial questions utilising the three narrative dimensions of place, temporal, and personal and social. The responses were cross-referenced by using the additional fields of 'pedagogy' and 'curriculum' to ensure a concentrated focus on education encounters. At the end of this process I had very detailed tables that included the original text of each of Paul's ten letters and five columns of analysis of what the text revealed about Paul as an educator. From these tables I could draw key themes and identify Paul's education practices. This became my foundation document. An extract of this document is included in Appendix Three.

This next stage of the method was an iterative process, with select ideas presented as conference papers (European Education Research Association 2014 & 2016; Australian

Association for Research in Education 2015 & 2016). This is a standard process in the development of this type of research text, and an obvious comment to make, but I use it to make two methodological points. Firstly, narrative inquiry is a methodology that explicitly accepts that the inquirer is an actor in the research process. This is not an objective scientific study, it emerges from my experience prior to commencing this work and my experiences in the natural and social world as this research text developed. Feedback from colleagues at those presentations altered interim conclusions that I had reached, and offered new directions for the inquiry. Secondly, in overtly acknowledging these actions as a part of the method for the inquiry, I am modelling education as a social practice.

This research text developed in collaboration with a team of people, myself and three supervisors appointed by the university. While the analysis, reflection and writing is mine, the learning has occurred in relationship with others. This is to be presumed in a process of thesis development and supervision, and once again is an obvious recognition of practice. However, what I contend is that in our regular meetings and ongoing contact we *relived* an experience with Paul's letters that reflected the inquiry. We created an *ekklēsia* that drew on *agapē* relationships. The act of engaging with the field texts to create a *retelling* changed the experience of the education encounters for the four people involved.

Conclusion

Paul is an influential figure in western civilisation, and narrative constructions of him continue to shape contemporary society. His authentic letters provide an insight into the person and his interactions with the people of four communities in a specific time and place. Returning to the source material has been important in creating a new narrative of Paul in the contested space that surrounds him.

In this chapter I have justified my choice for inquiring into ten authentic letters written in the first century CE to four different communities with whom Paul had lived and worked prior to writing. The three-dimensional model of narrative inquiry, developed by Clandinin and Connelly (2000), is the framework. Inspired by Dewey's intellectual imagination, this model has provided the rich depth of inquiry into experience required for the investigation. The model promoted consideration of Paul's actions, the dialogic process of writing and receiving the letters and the impact on the future of Paul and the people of the *ekklēsia.*

In leveraging Badiou's construction of Paul as the universal subject (2009) I accepted the centrality of the resurrection *event.* Clandinin and Connelly's model, because of its

consideration of the temporal dimension of experience, has been valuable for exploring the *eventa*l experience of Paul, the people of the *ekklēsia* and my own experience in the modern world. With Dewey's (1997) concept of experience as the intellectual framework for the model I was free to explore how an experience of *event* changed Paul and the people of the *ekklēsia*. This extends to my own experience with the letters in the contemporary world.

From Macintyre (2011) we learn that narrative offers the freedom to construct our lives from the knowledge available to us, rather than responding to the determination of external forces or institutions. We are challenged to incorporate the perspective of the other who is different, and to engage with unpredictability, for this expands our understanding of the natural and social world. Paul brought difference and unpredictability to the *ekklēsia* through the resurrection *event*. Paul used education encounters to enable people to enter into the experience of the *event*, using narrative to order that experience. It is my argument in this research text that Paul's narrative as an educator is universalisable.

The research contributes a new insight into the capacity of the narrative inquiry methodology. It is the first narrative inquiry into Paul's letters, significant documents in western civilisation. If we accept Bornkamm's (1974) argument that Paul created a new literary genre, then this is also the first inquiry into a unique genre of field texts. I have undertaken an epistemological challenge in using ancient texts with a deep and profound connection to a dominant religious tradition, but inquiring into those texts from a materialist perspective. If the inquiry is validated in the experience of others then it will have extended the scope of the narrative inquiry methodology.

Narrative inquiry distinguishes itself in explicitly recognising the experience of the inquirer as central to the research. Walking alongside the texts, *retelling* Paul's narrative and *reliving* my experience with the letters has changed me as an educator and researcher. I made the observation earlier in this chapter that *reliving* my experience with the field texts in my work has so far been validated by the experience of those with whom I have interacted in education encounters. This may be extended through the production of this research text.

In Chapter Four I come to the *retelling* of a narrative of Paul as educator, co-created from my experience of living alongside those texts over a seven-year period. This chapter relates the narrative of the education encounters between Paul and the members of the *ekklēsiai* in Thessalonica, Galatia, Philippi and Corinth. The narrative also includes an account of Paul's experience in Antioch, which had a significant impact on his teaching and relationships with the communities.

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Chapter Four: Paul and four *ekklēsia* - a new narrative

A personal narrative

Paul's letters are not diaries or travelogues or historical accounts that paint a visual picture of the initial encounters between Paul and the communities. Of all the letters, the Thessalonian correspondence is the most helpful in creating a visual image because of the many references to Paul's working life with the people. I have an image in my mind of Paul working in Thessalonica based on my own visit to the ancient souks of Marrakesh. There I found a dark and intricate labyrinth of workers and sellers eking out a basic living from their own craftsmanship. I can imagine how Paul would have entered that space, negotiated with an owner, set out his tools and joined in the work task. Others with more imagination have conjured detailed pictures of Paul interacting with the natural and social environment in that first century. I found one of the most vivid images in the previously mentioned book by Matthews, *Paul the Dauntless.* Quoted below is his fictional narrative of Paul's work in Thessalonica:

> On a weekday Paul went on with his tent-making work, and spoke at the same time to those who would hear him. He talked in this way to all kinds of people. The dyer with his arms blue to the elbows, bending over his vats; the potter shaping the clay on his whirling wheel; the leather-worker making crimson shoes or a saddle for one of the merchants of the city; the ship-wrights bending the tough wood to its place on the bow of a new boat; - all would hear Paul … and were convinced.
> (Matthews 1918, p. 242)

Perhaps in the *insula,* Paul began by talking about his experience on the road to Damascus, or maybe he started talking about a new life and resurrection. Perhaps he spoke about a new type of relationship and how to treat each other. Perhaps he just related to people in a very different way and that generated questions. How did the Thessalonians experience Paul's conversation about *agapē*? It leads me to speculate on the sort of conversations that might be equally startling in some modern workplaces in Australia - about unions, about welcoming refugees, about domestic violence, about quantum physics. I wonder what might capture people in the same way. We do know that the people in those workplaces of Thessalonica engaged with Paul, and eventually formed an *ekklēsia*. They changed their daily life and implemented social practices that Paul introduced, and they continued after his departure.

The task I set myself was to try and understand from Paul's letters just what happened in the encounters with 'the dyer with his arms blue to the elbows; the potter shaping the clay on his whirling wheel; the leather-worker making crimson shoes; the ship-wrights bending the tough wood'. Something was different in the relationship between Paul and his fellow-workers and they noticed, or as Matthews writes, they 'were convinced'. Being convinced meant that people changed their practices.

In inquiring into the encounters between Paul, his fellow-workers and the people of the four communities, I was in search of the universalisability of the education experiences that led people to change their life in a lasting way. Badiou (2003) found in Paul the universal militant figure to challenge identitarian politics; I am in pursuit of new insights to make the education encounter more meaningful and purposeful for teachers, students and the communities in which they live.

Introduction

In this chapter I construct a *retelling* of the narrative of Paul's visits and interactions with the four communities, and a conflict in Antioch that is significant to the narrative. I create a narrative of Paul as an educator, through my lens as a teacher educator. The narrative is developed from an inquiry into the field texts framed by the questions set out in Table 3.2 in the previous chapter. The narrative builds on the observations in that chapter, that Paul established *ekklēsia* in response to his experience of the resurrection *event* and his drive to live and teach about *agapē* relationships. His letters were written to maintain and develop relationships. I use the three dimensions, place, personal and social, and temporal, articulated by Clandinin and Connelly (2000) to construct this narrative of Paul. The interactions in each community are described in terms of the *ekklēsia* and living in *agapē*. I commence the chapter with a brief discussion of what was known of the education system at this time, to provide a context for Paul's work in the region and a contrast with his contemporaries.

Throughout the chapter, when I refer to social practices, structures and the social system I am drawing on the theoretical work of Giddens (1984).

The historical context for Paul and the ekklēsia

Mediterranean cities of the first century CE were small but densely populated, 'up to one quarter of the cities were devoted to public spaces … private homes were very crowded … life was lived on the streets and sidewalks, squares and porticoes' (Meeks 2003, pp. 28-9). Rhetoricians and philosophers made use of this proximity, typically speaking from a public space, a central square or highly visible street corner. Paul did not go to the street corners or to the public places, except for one memorable experience in Athens. As a tent-maker, or leather-worker, he followed the artisans' custom of moving 'from place to place, carrying their tools with them and seeking out, say, the leatherworkers' street or quarter' (Meeks 2003, p. 17). Following which, it was very likely they would be accommodated in the owner's workshop. Into this environment would have come other artisans to trade goods and gossip, and customers seeking to make purchases or to commission work. These were the people who Paul first engaged in conversations. Interacting with people in workplaces and homes was one of the practices that set Paul apart from other teachers of his time.

In the first century CE there were well-established systems for education that operated in the interests of the wealthy, and to the advantage of males. In this discussion I refer to the public education of adults rather than the education of children by school masters or the pedagogues who influenced a child's moral education (Marrou 1956). Two distinct

approaches to education evolved within Graeco-Roman society. Plato was the architect of the philosophical tradition that pursued truth through knowledge and wisdom over the practical necessities of life. For Plato there were universal truths known as Forms to be discovered. The right education for the right person led that person to know these truths. To live a good life within your class, with an eye to the eternal virtues of love, justice, beauty and truth, was valued over living a practical life (Hock 2003; Marrou 1956). Philosophers deliberately cultivated a following of students (Winter 2001), or sought to establish a patron-client relationship, that was characteristic of the wider society (Kloppenborg 2011). There were fixed schools where students came to study, Plato's Academy, and Aristotle's Lyceum being the best known. There were also 'wandering philosophers giving public lectures or speaking from street corners … and isolated teachers working on their own account in some city in which they had established themselves' (Marrou 1956, p. 207).

The second approach to education was characterised by Isocrates. He fostered the culture of rhetoric and 'the literary kind of education that was to become the dominant feature of the classical tradition', and trained his pupils for life, particularly political life (Marrou 1956, p. 79). In the Isocratic tradition, education had a functional purpose where teachers trained students in technical skills. As with the philosophers, there were locations where one studied under a rhetorician. Isocrates had his own school (Marrou 1956) as did Quintilian (Lawton & Gordon 2002).

Among the Jewish community, the Sadducees and Pharisees were the most prominent groups with a teaching function. The Pharisees were generally regarded as being hostile to new ideas from outside of the Jewish community, while the Sadducees were open to Greek philosophy where it could be separated from religious belief (Lawton & Gordon 2002). Notwithstanding the variations between groups, the focus of education in Jewish communities was religious, with all aspects, including history and literature, filtered through a religious ideology designed to maintain the religious culture (Gamble 1995; Lawton & Gordon 2002). It tended toward an oral tradition with the study of written Hebrew being a specialised skill for those who entered into formal training (Lawton & Gordon 2002). Given Paul's Jewish background, it is reasonable to assume that his early education was grounded within this scholastic tradition, with its emphasis on language. We also know that he experienced Pharisaic training in the Jerusalem school of Gamaliel (Murphy-O'Connor 1997).

Paul had no qualifications as a philosopher or teacher within Graeco-Roman society. His Pharisaic training might have been acknowledged within Jewish communities but his

constant derision of the Law (e.g. Gal 2:16) undermined any claim to authority based on this knowledge and training. After the Incident at Antioch he no longer represented a group or body with any recognised authority. He garnered no authority from his physical presence either, having been seriously ill in Galatia and given a 'thorn in the flesh' (2 Cor 12:7). Though written after his death, one anonymous author from antiquity derided his physical appearance, calling him 'a man small in size, bald-headed, bandy legged' (cited in Meeks & Fitzgerald 2007, p. 212). This was no Gamaliel 'held in honour by all of the people' (Murphy-O'Connor 1997, p. 56).

Paul described himself as 'constantly travelling' (2 Cor 11:26). One estimate is that he travelled by foot or boat more than 16,000 kilometres in the 12 years of his public life (Hock cited in Meeks 2003, p. 16). His travel was facilitated by the systems of the Roman Empire, its infrastructure, and the relative stability in the cities of the Empire that followed the rule of Augustus (Meeks 2003, p. 11ff). In capturing the difference between Paul and his contemporaries, Judge (2008d, p. 551), posed the rhetorical question, 'What other touring preacher established a set or corporate societies independent of himself and yet linked to him by a constant traffic of delegations?' Theissen (1992, p. 54) argues that the extent of Paul's travels is evidence that he was not just a 'wandering preacher', his schedule required planning and organisation.

Paul established a group of fellow-workers to join with him in establishing *ekklēsia* and to teach in the communities. It was a matter of safety for Paul to travel with companions, but it also enabled him to remain in more frequent dialogue with his communities. We learn of Timothy, who was sent to Thessalonica (1 Thess 3:2) and to the Philippians with the recommendation, 'I have nobody else like him here, as wholeheartedly concerned for your welfare' (Phil 2:20). Timothy was also sent to the Corinthians (1 Cor. 4:17) along with Titus, 'who has proved to be as true as anything that we ever said to you' (1 Cor. 7:14). Paul described his fellow-workers as being of the same character and spirit as himself (Witherington 2011).

The *ekklēsiai* comprised a cross-section of people of diverse economic, religious and social status (Malherbe 2011; Meeks 2003). Each *ekklēsia* was likely to have comprised households, including slaves, labourers, tenants and sometimes business associates, who would have followed the head of a household into joining (Ascough 1998; Meeks 2003). The household was a central feature of life in Roman society; one 'could expect support from their families, kinsmen and dependents both inside and outside the household, and friends, patrons,

protégés and clients' (Garnsey & Saller 1997, p. 96). This support was underpinned by complex rules of patronage and obligation that were built on social stratification but served to bring society together as a cohesive whole (Garnsey & Saller 1997). When an *ekklēsia* gathered, it was likely that many household groups would have met in the house of one of the wealthier members (e.g. 'Aquila and Prisca, with the church that meets at their house' (1 Cor 16:19)). At other times, members of the *ekklēsia* may have met in the workshops of the artisans and craftspeople (Adams 2009).

The *ekklēsia* were ethnically and religiously mixed groups. When Paul first visited the four cities and regions, he described them as being populated by Gentiles. The Gentiles were Greeks, Romans and immigrants from many other nations; the term effectively delineated the people as being all those who were not Jews. At times Paul also simply called them Greeks (e.g. 'and the Greeks look for wisdom' (1 Cor 1:22)). Paul frequently referred to the Jews as those who are under the Law. The Jewish Law created practices that separated Jews from the wider community. Both Gentiles and Jews joined the *ekklēsia*.

There is a consensus that the *ekklēsia* formed by Paul did not constitute a religious movement (Alexander 1994; Ascough 1998; Horsley 1997b; Judge 2008h; Stowers 2011a; Wright, NT 2000). Paul created social groups, not a new religion:

> Early Christians did not look very much like religious groups … there are no temples on the land, no ties or concerns for the land, no animal or other types of sacrifice, and no agricultural festivals or festivals of other types of productivity. (Stowers 2011a, p. 226)

The structures that Paul introduced and the social practices that he initiated did not mirror what his audience would have understood as a new religion. This research text proceeds on the basis that Paul, in establishing the *ekklēsia,* was not consciously founding a new religion, though translators consistently use the word 'church' to describe the communities that Paul established. That Christianity emerged, decades after his death, could best be described as a significant, if unintended consequence (Giddens 1984) of Paul's actions.

I have separated Paul's narrative into his interactions with each of the four communities and a brief discussion of the Incident at Antioch. The four community narratives are shaped around *ekklēsia* and *agapē* but are underpinned by recognition of the three dimensions: place, personal and social and temporal. I have set out in Table 4.1 a simple chronology of Paul's visits and letters. His letters were written in a different sequence to the initial visits to

the *ekklēsia* (e.g. the letters to the Thessalonians were the first letters written by Paul, but Thessalonica was the third community in which Paul established an *ekklēsia*). A more detailed chronology, with dates for each visit and letter, is included in Appendix Two.

Table 4.1: The sequence of Paul's initial visits and letters

Sequence of first visits	Sequence of letters
Galatia	
Philippi	
Thessalonica	
Corinth	Three letters to the Thessalonians
The incident at Antioch	
	A single letter to the Galatians
	Three letters to the Philippians
	Three letters to the Corinthians

Source: Derived from Murphy-O'Connor (1997)

Thessalonica: a working relationship

Thessalonica was a successful free city positioned on the Via Egnatia, a major east-west trading route, and a port for north-south traders (Meeks 2003). It was 'a visibly Greek city under Roman rule' (Meeks 2003, p. 46). While subject to Roman rule, Thessalonica had a degree of local autonomy that included freedom from military occupation, the right to mint coins, an advantageous tax regime and a citizens' assembly (Jewett 1986; Meeks 2003).

Paul arrived and settled in the city in the Spring of 49 CE as an emissary of the Christian community at Antioch. As a Roman citizen, Paul would have had easy access to, and freedom of movement around, the city. As a Greek speaker he shared a common language with the people who were largely of Greek descent (Jewett 1986). He stayed in the city for about 12 months until he was evicted. When Paul wrote that he was 'hindered from preaching to the pagans' (1 Thess 2:16) and 'separated in body but never in thought' (1 Thess 2:17), we can presume that he had come into conflict with the local citizens' assembly.

By the time Paul arrived in Thessalonica, he had already lived for long periods of time in the cities of Damascus, Antioch and Philippi, and the regions of Syria and southern and northern Galatia (Murphy-O'Connor 1997). He had established a distinctive practice of living in each community, building relationships with people across many months. This was very different to his contemporaries who spoke in public squares. Paul's choice to live in the communities

was driven by his experience of the resurrection *event* and his commitment to living *agapē* relationships in fidelity to that *event.* We have evidence of just one city where Paul spoke in a public square, in Athens after he was evicted from Thessalonica. He went to the Council of Areopagus, where the members laughed at his speech (Acts 17:32). He engaged in debates in the market place, where he failed badly:

> Some said, 'Does this parrot know what he's talking about?' And, because he was preaching about Jesus and the resurrection, others said, 'He sounds like a propagandist for some outlandish gods'. (Acts 17:17-18)

Paul does not mention these incidents in his letters. His silence lends some credence to a theory of failure in Athens, for surely, he would not have ignored the opportunity to work in such a significant city.

Letters TB and TC were written while Paul was living in Corinth, during his first residence in that city. While we cannot know with certainty, it seems likely that the letters were written before Paul experienced conflict with the Corinthians. Paul gives little indication that he was experiencing difficulty in that city, just one oblique reference to the 'interference of bigoted and evil people' (2 Thess 3:2). The period of interactions covered by the field texts for the Thessalonians extends from his arrival in the city in the Spring of 49 to the writing of letter TC in September of 51, approximately 30 months, the most concentrated time period of the four communities. Paul made a brief second visit to Thessalonica in July of 54 and wintered in either Philippi or Thessalonica in 54-55 (Murphy-O'Connor 1997). There is nothing in Paul's letters about these later visits; they are a gap in the overall narrative of Paul as an educator.

Paul's letters to the Thessalonians have an intimacy unlike any other set of his letters. He was writing to people with whom he had been sharing meals, workspaces and daily life just a few weeks prior. In letter TA, written while in Athens in April 50 CE, he laments his inability to be with them (1 Thess 2:18) and confirms their friendship:

> What do you think is our pride and joy? You are; and you will be the crown of which we shall be proudest in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ when he comes, you are our pride and our joy. (1 Thess 2:19-20)

While it was common to be openly affectionate in letters (Meeks 2003), even by the standards of his day Paul was particularly effusive. While only speculation, it would seem reasonable that Paul's humiliation in Athens prompted him to strengthen his bond with the nearby Thessalonians, hence his effusive proclamations of affection in letter TA. In Paul's

second and third letters he moved to strong and powerful metaphors of parent and child, 'Like a mother feeding and looking after her own children, we felt so devoted and protective towards you' (1 Thess 2:7-8); and then almost as if they were lovers, '(we) had come to love you so much, that we were eager to hand over to you not only the Good News but our whole lives as well' (1 Thess 2:8). From the perspective of the 21st century, this is remarkable language for a teacher to use with students, and it invites inquiry.

The Thessalonian letters are Paul's first. Therefore, they are the introduction to the language of *agapē* for the reader who progresses through the letters chronologically. *Agapē* is the language of the *ekklēsia.*

Ekklēsia in Thessalonica

It was within the *ekklēsia* that people were to learn the ethics of living a new life. They were to learn by living with each other, and learning from each other what it meant to live this new life of love. Paul praised them constantly for learning together:

> Make more and more progress in the kind of life that you are meant to live: the life that God wants, as you learnt from us, and as you are already living it (1 Thess 4:1)

and

> You observed the sort of life we lived when we were with you, which was for your instruction, and you were led to become imitators of us (1 Thess 1:5-6)

and

> As for loving our brothers, there is no need for anyone to write to you about that, since you have learnt from God yourselves to love one another, and in fact this is what you are doing with all the brothers throughout the whole of Macedonia. … So give encouragement to each other, and keep strengthening one another, as you do already. (1 Thess 4:9-10 & 5:11)

The phrase 'strengthening one another' can be taken as a direct instruction from Paul to keep learning with, and from, each other. Paul had introduced the idea that learning was a social experience that occurred in their relationships with one another. We recognise this as the language of intersubjectivity (Mead 1934, 2002); the Thessalonians would be changed in purposeful encounters with each other. These encounters were to occur within the *ekklēsia*.

Two important dimensions of the *ekklēsia* begin to emerge in the Thessalonian letters. Paul writes about the group being separate to general society; there was to be a spatial-temporal

divide between the *ekklēsia* and the economic and political life that people had beyond the group. Secondly, the *ekklēsia,* was located in a time and place (i.e. Thessalonica in 49 CE), but it was not defined by that physical location or time. The *ekklēsia* was beyond a physical location; the *ekklēsia* was all the people who had responded to the experienced of *agapē*.

Membership of the *ekklēsia* was defined by the relationships that people lived over time, not by their presence in a particular location at a specific time. This is emphasised when Paul praised the Thessalonians for being a great example to believers across Macedonia and Achaia (1 Thess 1:7-8) and acknowledged his special pride in them for their constancy and faith among 'all the churches of God' (2 Thess 1:4). Paul linked the Thessalonians with other groups across the region, including Macedonia and Achaia, extending as far as Judaea, (1 Thess 2:14). That a social group could extend across city and regional boundaries was unusual; typically, social and cultic groups, with which the *ekklēsia* have been compared, were bound within a city or region (Stowers 2011a). This transnational dimension (Judge 2008c) extended the *ekklēsia* into a social system with the potential for universal application.

Paul accepted that the Thessalonians would continue with their existing economic and political life, but within the *ekklēsia,* relationships were to change:

> Make a point of living quietly, attending to your own business and earning your living, just as we told you to, so that you are seen to be respectable by those outside the Church, though you do not have to depend on them. (1 Thess 4:11-12)

There is little evidence that the Thessalonians struggled with this dichotomy, though it is to be remembered that we have a concentrated snapshot of Paul's relationships with the Thessalonians taken over a shorter period than with every other community. The complexity of dividing life within the *ekklēsia* from life outside becomes an issue for the Corinthians.

There were difficulties with people who were outside of the *ekklēsia*. With his experience of being evicted from Thessalonica, Paul warns people 'to expect to have persecutions to bear' (1 Thess 3:4), and in letter TC praises them for their 'constancy and faith under all the persecutions and troubles you have to bear' (2 Thess 1:4). There are further references to enduring persecution across the three letters (1 Thess 1:6, 2:2, 2:15, 3:7, 2 Thess 1:6-7). In Chapters Six and Seven, I propose possible reasons for why people might have joined and remained in the *ekklēsia* when it was not in their own personal, economic, or even physical interest to do so. In the absence of any direct response from the people of the *ekklēsia*, we cannot be definitive about these reasons.

The Thessalonian letters are distinctive for their strong focus on manual labour and the value of work to the community. In letter TB, Paul reminded the Thessalonians 'how hard we used to work, slaving night and day so as not to be a burden on any one of you while we were proclaiming God's Good News to you' (1 Thess 2:9). Later in the same letter he warns against the 'idlers' (1 Thess 5:15), with a stronger admonition in his third letter:

> We gave you a rule when we were with you: not to let anyone have any food if he refused to do any work. Now we hear that there are some of you who are living in idleness, doing no work themselves but interfering with everyone else's.
> (2 Thess 3:10-11)

Murphy-O'Connor makes the observation that the artisans and craftsmen with whom Paul was sharing a workspace were likely to have been hard-headed individuals with little interest in Paul if he was talking about life in a manner that was not aligned with their own desires (Murphy-O'Connor 1997). We can also express this in terms of intersubjectivity that is specific to the dimension of place. Paul knew these people, having lived and worked with them, and we can reasonably assume that he understood what was important to them. He chose to use the language of daily work to connect with the community.

The sequences on work reveal Paul's emphasis on building a community of people with a commitment to each other. Whatever we might determine from not making food available to the idlers, the stronger message is that the group was to come together for a purpose, united by a common ontology. Belonging to the *ekklēsia* brought with it a responsibility to the other. Paul's teaching was not separate to their experience. He was not teaching about faithfulness to an external god, a historic and bookish law, or about a Platonic world that was beyond daily experience. His teaching was centred in the world in which people lived, that included the world of work, which was not only about physical survival but also their social experience as a human person.

While the *ekklēsia* was created through Paul's agency, his intent was to grow the agency of the members. As the *ekklēsia* developed, the locus moved away from Paul to the interactions between the Thessalonians. Paul's physical presence was no longer required, he trusted in the power of the *event* and *agapē* to bring each person to an openness to learn. Each person in the *ekklēsia* was to become both teacher and learner. Paul did not remove himself as a member of the *ekklēsia*; rather, as I noted in the previous chapter, Paul's letters were written to maintain his relationship with the people.

Agapē in Thessalonica

The opening of letter TA sets the tone for what Paul seeks to communicate in his letters to this community:

> As soon as you heard the message that we brought you as God's message, you accepted it for what it really is, God's message and not some human thinking; and it is still a **living power** among you who believe it. (1 Thess 2:13 emphasis added)

Here is the language of the *event*. The relationships that Paul developed in living with them had disrupted the Thessalonians from the predictability that composed their existence. He brought to them the resurrection *event* and *agapē* relationships which 'exceed(ed) the structures of Being' (Badiou 2009, p. 36). Paul reminds the Thessalonians that their experience with him was not about something that was fixed for all time; they had experienced the *event* as a 'living power' among them. They were to continue to be open to change over time, to continue to learn. Paul moved the education encounter away from the fixed virtues of the Greek philosophers and Platonist Forms and away from the rules for relationships, eating, marriage, worship and social practices that were prominent in the Jewish law. Across the three letters he wrote only brief instructions against fornication and taking advantage of a brother (1 Thess 4:3-6). Paul moved the focus of the education encounter away from one-way transmission of knowledge and toward intersubjectivity.

Agapē was to be learned over time, it had a temporal quality. The Thessalonians had experienced *agapē* with Paul and it had changed their lives, but *agapē* required ongoing learning and change, it was a living power, and would remain so while they committed to the resurrection *event*. In letter TC we find not only acknowledgement that they had learned and changed, but also 'your faith is growing so wonderfully and the love that you have for one another never stops increasing' (2 Thess 1:3). The relationships in the *ekklēsia* were orientated to the future. Paul writes to the Thessalonians to 'make more and more progress', and 'go on making even greater progress'. He draws on their past experiences together: 'you can remember how we treated every one of you as a father treats his children, teaching you what was right, encouraging you and appealing to you' (1 Thess 2:11-12); and in the same letter, 'think before you do anything – hold on to what is good' (1 Thess 5:21). The Thessalonians are to continue to learn, but this learning does not occur in a vacuum. He reminds them of having experienced living in *agapē* with them and he creates a new encounter of *agapē* in the present in the language of the letter. This narrative is grounded in the resurrection *event* and the future life that is now open to them.

The language in Paul's letters indicates that the Thessalonians had understood his teaching about *agapē* and they had responded. He gives one clear description of *agapē* as living for the other in the *ekklēsia*:

> And this is what we ask you to do, brothers: warn the idlers, give courage to those who are apprehensive, care for the weak and be patient with everyone. Make sure that people do not try to take revenge; you must all think of what is best for each other and for the community. (1 Thess 5:14-15)

There are several reminders of what they have learned from Paul, including:

> As for loving our brothers, there is no need for anyone to write to you about that, since you have learnt from God yourselves to love one another, and in fact this is what you are doing with all the brothers throughout the whole of Macedonia.
> (1 Thess 4:9-10)

I have noted above his comment that the Thessalonians had accepted the message as soon as they heard it (1 Thess 2:13) and in the same letter he thanked them for holding firm in the Lord. In letter TB he acknowledged that they had 'become great imitators of him' (1 Thess 1:6) and in TC he acknowledges their constancy and faith (2 Thess 1:4).

The Thessalonian correspondence introduces reflexivity as an element of *agapē*. When writing of reflexivity in this research text I am drawing on Giddens (1984, p. 3) who defines it as 'the continuous monitoring of actions', one's own actions and that of others. Paul directs the Thessalonians to be reflexive, to be constantly aware of their actions: 'you are all sons of light and sons of the day: we do not belong to the night or to darkness, so we should not go on sleeping, as everyone else does, but stay wide awake and sober' (1 Thess 5:5-6). In the *ekklēsia*, people must be constantly aware of their choices and be ready to modify their actions in relationship with others. Paul demonstrates his own reflexivity. He shares his fears, 'I was afraid the Tempter might have tried you too hard, and all our work might have been wasted' (1 Thess 3:5). Paul uses this language to describe his own actions, 'we are earnestly praying night and day to be able to see you face to face again' (1 Thess 3:10); it is a regular feature of the letters (1 Thess 1:2, 3:10, 5:17, 2 Thess 1:11, 2:13, 3:1, 3:2). Prayer can be understood as an inner reflexive conversation in which a person monitors his or her own actions and that of others.

The Thessalonians ask Paul for new teaching on an issue that had arisen after he left the community. They are concerned about loved ones who have died. He writes in an extended passage that 'any of us who are left alive until the Lord's coming will not have any advantage

over those who have died' and 'those who have died in Christ will be the first to rise' (1 Thess 4:13-17). He assured the members of the *ekklēsia* that the changes they were making in their daily lives, even if it involved suffering, would bring them into new life. He does not leave his teaching at that point. In the final line of this passage, he reinforces the responsibility that each person has for the other, and reminds them of the importance of teaching one another: 'With such thoughts as these you should comfort one another' (1 Thess 4:18).

Concluding the narrative of Thessalonica

Place is important to the narrative of Paul as an educator. The Thessalonian *ekklēsia* existed in an historical time and place, as with all of the cities and regions in this inquiry. However, what Paul achieved was to make the *ekklēsia* more than a physical location. Paul's experience of the resurrection *event* had brought him to a new life, which had become a universal way of living, transferable across time and geographic space. Paul created structures that allowed the Thessalonians to be an example across Macedonia, Achaia and Judaea. It is my argument that those same structures, which were reliant on education encounters, are transferable to contemporary settings.

What these three letters to Thessalonica reveal is that Paul makes a significant shift in what would have been understood as an education encounter in the first century CE. In fidelity to his experience of the resurrection *event* he is driven to create communities where people learn to live in *agapē*. *Agapē* can only be lived in a community of people who are committed to living for that purpose, and so we have the *ekklēsia*. *Agapē* interactions are intersubjective education encounters in which people are open to change from every purposeful encounter, and to be reflexive in their daily actions. Education was to be a personal and social experience, and so much more than the transmission of fixed knowledge.

The experience of the resurrection *event* prompted Paul to re-create his own past and to envision a new future. Paul brings to the Thessalonian community his experience of the resurrection *event*, which is expressed in the material world as living in *agapē*. Paul teaches the Thessalonians that each purposeful encounter with another must be open to new experience that is likely to lead to a re-creation of their past and a new vision for the future. The argument that develops in this research text is that each experience of *agapē* is an *eventa*l experience, where a person's routine life is interrupted and they are open to being changed by the encounter. When people commit to living in *agapē* they commit to encounters of intersubjectivity and reflexivity. *Agapē* increases the agency of all those who commit to living this way.

Paul's approach to the *ekklēsiai* was disturbed by a conflict with leaders of the Judaic-Christians at Antioch. It is significant in the narrative of Paul's experience as an educator.

The Incident at Antioch

Paul attended the Jerusalem Conference in October 51 CE (Murphy-O'Connor 1997), where he met with Cephas, John and James, leaders of the Judaic-Christians. Paul attended with Barnabas, and fellow-worker Titus, a Greek, and therefore uncircumcised (Gal 2:3). They concluded with an agreement on how they would engage with different communities:

> James, Cephas and John, these leaders, these pillars, shook hands with Barnabas and me as a sign of partnership: we were to go to the pagans and they to the circumcised. (Gal 2:9-10)

In dividing the community between pagans and the circumcised, the agreement acknowledged the significant dichotomy in Graeco-Roman society. From a Jewish perspective, males were either circumcised and a Jew, or uncircumcised and a Gentile. Male circumcision was the physical sign of the covenant between the Jewish people and their God, 'the circumcision of the husband/father and sons is understood as the event by which the household enters into the observance of the law' (Martyn 2010, p. 470). Observance of the Law separated Jews from the wider Graeco-Roman society through complex food laws, rituals of purity and cleanliness, and observance of the Sabbath.

Cephas visited Antioch some weeks after the Jerusalem conference. Initially, he shared a table and food with the uncircumcised Titus but changed his approach when challenged by the arrival of more observant members of the Judaic-Christian group, led by James. Paul became angry when the Judaic-Christians placed the Law above the interests of the community. He wrote to the Galatians about the incident:

> His (Cephas') custom had been to eat with the pagans, but after certain friends of James arrived he stopped doing this and kept away from them altogether for fear of the group that insisted on circumcision. The other Jews joined him in this pretence, and even Barnabas felt himself obliged to copy their behaviour. When I saw they were not respecting the true meaning of the Good News, I said to Cephas in front of everyone, 'In spite of being a Jew, you live like the pagans and not like the Jews, so you have no right to make the pagans copy Jewish ways'. (Gal 2:12-14)

Paul objected to the imposition of the Jewish Law on those Gentiles who had committed to the resurrection; for Paul *agapē* was beyond the Law. Clearly, the parties to the Jerusalem Conference had not reached a common understanding of the conference agreement.

Badiou (2013), whose play in English translation has the title, *The Incident at Antioch,* suggests that this is the time when Paul separates irrevocably from the Judaic-Christians. Meeks (2003, p. 113) describes the Incident at Antioch, 'as the starting point for his (Paul's) formation of a more clearly distinct and self-conscious missionary organisation of his own'. The timing of the incident needs to be recognised. Paul had completed the first visit, and therefore had established *ekklēsia* in each of the four locations prior to the Incident at Antioch. All letters, except those to the Thessalonians, were written after this break with the Judaic-Christians.

The conflict at Antioch arose from the choice between continuation of the religious, social and cultural practices of Judaism, as represented by the Judaic-Christians, and the approach of Paul for whom the resurrection *event* had superseded all else, including the Law. Miller, drawing on Badiou, connects the threads of the incident; in Paul's world, circumcision is neither good nor bad, nor is it something good that has become bad, it is simply that 'something that constitutes a difference in this world becomes indifferent in the light of the new event' (Miller, AS 2005, p. 39). This is the universality of Badiou's Paul (2003, 2009), responding in fidelity to the resurrection *event* takes him beyond established differences. The narrative of Paul's letters following this Incident at Antioch, is one in which he emphasises the need for education encounters to be freed from the restrictions of identity; they are to become pure encounters.

Galatia: maintaining a connection with the most remote community

The Galatian letter, as I have acknowledged, captivated me for much of the inquiry. In part, this is because it confounds the narrative of Saint Paul and my early childish experiences, in part because Paul communicates extraordinary ideas in succinct and striking language, but mostly because his emotions are so raw and powerful that his language communicates a strong sense of the human person. At times I have used a translation of the letter by Martyn (2010), for in his rendition Paul's words have even greater intensity. At Appendix Six, I have included an example of an 'interim research text' (Clandinin 2016, p. 47) in which I explored the intersubjectivity in this letter and attempted to communicate some of the emotion that I experienced when living alongside it. The reader of this research text may find that those notes add to their experience of Paul's Galatian letter.

Paul arrived in northern Galatia, a large Roman administrative region incorporating several cities and towns, in what is now modern Turkey, around September 46 CE (Murphy-O'Connor 1997). (A map is provided at Appendix One) He suffered an illness (Gal 4:13) and chose to remain for over 18 months, until May 48. During that time, he worked in and around the cities of Ancyra, Tavium and Pessinus. Paul made a second visit to the region in July 52, after the Incident at Antioch.

While accepting the imposition of Roman rule, the Galatians maintained a strong connection to their Celtic roots (Murphy-O'Connor 1997). They continued to speak a Celtic language with Greek adopted as a second language – hence the ability to communicate with Paul. It appears the Romans had little regard for these Celts. The Roman historian, Livy, described the Galatians as a 'degenerate, mongrel race' (Murphy-O'Connor 1997, p. 90). Paul, raised as a Jew, with Roman citizenship and a strong Greek influence in his education, would appear to have been at a greater cultural distance from the Galatians than any of the other communities in which he worked. Despite the differences, this was the first community where we know that he established an *ekklēsia.*

Paul received news when he arrived in Ephesus circa 52 CE, that 'false teachers' from the Judaic–Christian group had influenced some members of the *ekklēsia* in Galatia. In his journey from Jerusalem to Ephesus via Galatia and Antioch, Paul had travelled 3,000km, walking for 100 days with an additional nine days by boat (Murphy-O'Connor 1997). To return to Galatia would have taken many more weeks of travel, backtracking across the roads he had just traversed, and still further travel to reach each community across the cities of the Galatian province. It is in this context that he writes the letter.

The letter was written just a few weeks after this second visit, but six years after his first arrival in Galatia, so we have a glimpse of the relationship between Paul and the Galatians from his arrival in 46 CE to his letter in 52 CE. There are elements in common between Paul's communication with the Galatians and the Thessalonians. The Galatians are urged to copy Paul (Gal 4:12); they are called to serve one another in love (Gal 5:13); to teach each other (Gal 6:1) and to choose *agapē* over the Law (3:21-22). However, this letter is written after the Incident at Antioch; Paul is now isolated from the Judaic-Christians and setting out his own direction. The letter has new insights into *agapē* and the *ekklēsia* and how people were to live in these communities.

Ekklēsia in Galatia

In what is perhaps Paul's most memorable line across all of his letters, he wrote to the Galatians, 'there are no more distinctions between Jew and Greek, slave and free, male and female, but all of you are one in Christ Jesus' (Gal 3:28). For the *ekklēsia*, he brought to an end the religious, social and economic, and gender divisions within society. Membership of the *ekklēsia* freed people from the restrictions of their existing identity. This was a radical intervention in the way that community life was conceived and structured.

The social systems operating across the Mediterranean Basin were built on distinctive, rigid and hierarchical relationship structures. In Graeco-Roman society, social stratification was evident within the basic structure of society; 'in any household of any size there was an informal pecking order that was taken seriously' and the distinction between slave and free was 'fundamental in the perception of one's place in society' (Meeks 2003, p. 21). The greatest change of status for a person of the lower classes was from slave to freedom and vice versa (Meeks 2003). There were few opportunities for a person to move beyond the status in life that they were born into; perhaps in times of war, entry into the Roman army and a successful campaign provided an opportunity to lift one's social and economic status. The Law governed the rules of society for those born into Judaism. Membership of the synagogue was 'automatic for a Jew by right of birth' (Meeks 2003, p. 35). The Jews set themselves apart from the Gentile community whilst continuing to live within the broader social system, '(they) knew their very identity depended upon their maintaining some distinct boundaries between themselves and 'the nations'" (Meeks 2003, p. 36).

Badiou (2003, 2009) places Galatians 3:28 at the centre of his argument for Paul as the universal subject. In my early readings of this letter, it seemed to arrive as an unexpected thought from Paul, albeit one that proposed radical change. Further inquiry revealed Paul's foregrounding of the idea in an exposition on Abraham and the Law. The sequence of statements prior to 3:28 reads:

> Before faith, we were allowed no freedom by the Law. (Gal 3:23)
> The Law was to be our guardian until the Christ came and we could be justified by faith. (Gal 3:24)
> Now that time has come we are no longer under the guardian. (Gal 3:25)
> All baptised in Christ, you have clothed yourselves in Christ. (Gal 3:27)

If we read 'Christ coming' as the resurrection *event,* and 'clothed in Christ' as committing to the *ekklēsia,* then we can see how Paul grounded this new way of living in past experiences. Paul is reminding them of the growth or learning that has occurred in their lives. Now in this

letter he brings to them a new understanding of *agapē*. He articulates for them what is really happening when they encounter each other in *agapē* relationships; they encounter each other without the restrictions of identity. *Agapē* relationships become the truth of the *event*. Paul opens the possibility for a pure encounter between people, unmediated by social roles or economic or religious constructions of identity.

In the language of narrative, the past is reconstructed by the experience of Paul's letter in the present, in which he offers a new future. Paul called people to be united by a new ontology that resurrected life was possible and could be achieved by living in *agapē*. It was a powerful reconstruction of social life in its time and place, which can be translated to the modern world. For an educator it offers the possibility of an intersubjective encounter in which all are freed to teach and to learn from the other.

There are several examples where Paul distinguishes the *eventa*l encounter from the routinised activities of daily life. In the opening to the letter, he wrote that he 'does not owe his authority to men … but to Jesus Christ' (Gal 1:2) and his Good News was not a 'human message that I was given by men, it is something that I learnt only through a revelation of Jesus Christ' (Gal 1:12). He described himself as being 'dead to the Law', so that 'I live now not with my own life but with life of Christ who lives in me' (Gal 2:19-20). Once again, if we read 'life with Christ' as Paul responding to the resurrection *event*, then we begin to understand the change in Paul and the change he sought for those who joined the *ekklēsia*. He would have had them choose to move away from the Law with its rigid constitution and regulation of daily life, and be open to the dynamics of accepting the *event* and living in *agapē*. Male circumcision becomes the battleground for this conflict.

Paul wrote 'it does not matter if a person is circumcised or not: what matters is for him to become an altogether new creature' (Gal 6:15). This message was for Jews who had undergone circumcision and Gentiles who had not, and for women who did not undergo circumcision. There were new structures, new rules at work in the *ekklēsia*; the past they had lived would no longer determine their future. Whether you were circumcised or not was irrelevant to Paul; he attached no significance to the physical act or what it represented. His dismissal of the meaning of circumcision would have shocked both Jews and Gentiles. Paul was discarding the divisions between Jew and Gentile that had been an established social system in this region for centuries. Martyn (2010, p. 472) writes that Paul was 'signaling the termination of the cosmos that had at its foundation a religious pair of opposites, and announcing the dawn of the cosmos that … lies beyond religious differentiation'. It is

important to note not just Paul's dismissal of circumcision but also the second part of the sentence, that what matters is to become a 'new creature'. Paul's ontology looks to the future not to the past.

The modern western world does not need a debate about male circumcision in education encounters. The universal message is that social practices should not divide a community. Paul tells the Galatians:

> Everyone who accepts circumcision is obliged to keep the whole Law. But if you do look to the Law to make you justified, then you have separated yourselves from Christ, and have fallen from grace … whether you are circumcised or not makes no difference - what matters is faith that makes its power felt through love. (Gal 5:3-6)

This statement was a clear expression to the Galatians that belonging to the *ekklēsia* required a deliberate choice to relate to others in a new way, 'faith that makes its power felt through love'. There was no compromise with the Law, for it asked something that was the opposite of what Paul taught. Paul had set aside that which had divided the communities, everything that was represented by circumcision, and brought them to *agapē*. It is *agapē* and the setting aside of differences that are the universal practices of the education encounter, which can be brought into the modern world.

Agapē in Galatia

The Galatians had experienced the resurrection *event* living in *agapē* with Paul and each other prior to the arrival of the false teachers. He reminded them, in the first and only time he uses this sentence in the field texts, that they are to love their neighbour as themselves (Gal 5:14). He then sets out a long passage about avoiding self-indulgence, for it leads to feuds, wrangling, jealousy, bad temper and more, while those who commit to *agapē* will experience 'love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, truthfulness' (Gal 5:15-23). Belonging to the *ekklēsia* meant that they were to understand themselves as people who 'do good to all, and especially to our brothers in the faith' (Gal 6:10). In the face of opposition from the false teachers, Paul was bringing the Galatians back to their lived experience, reminding them that they had learned to be people who live in *agapē*.

I want to comment briefly on Paul's use of 'love your neighbour'. In the Jewish Torah this command to love is written as, 'You must love your neighbor as yourself. I am Yahweh. You must keep my Laws' (Lev 19:18-19). In this iteration it is Yahweh and the Law that demand obedience to the command. In contrast, Paul writes, 'Serve one another, rather, in works of love since the whole of the Law is summarised in a single command: Love your neighbour as

yourself' (Gal 5:13-14). An attentive Jewish listener in Galatia, including the false teachers, would not have missed this statement in Paul's letter. He removes the presence of Yahweh and focuses people's attention firmly on the good of the 'other'. He expresses the command as an element of community rather than the Law. Paul was reinforcing with the Galatians that they had chosen to be members of a new social system.

Paul reminds the Galatians of the changes they had implemented in their lives because of their encounters with his fellow-workers and himself:

> Once you were ignorant of God, and enslaved to 'gods' who are not really gods at all; but now that you have come to acknowledge God - or rather, now that God has acknowledged you - how can you want to go back to elemental things like these, that can do nothing and give nothing, and be their slaves? (Gal 4:8-9)

Paul had taught the Galatians that paying homage to the local gods should be foregone in favour of living *agapē* relationships with each other. They had learned to turn away from the gods and look to each other, 'to serve one another, rather, in works of love' (Gal 5:13). The Galatians had changed and learned to live new lives. In the letter, Paul is bringing the Galatians back to this way of living and revealing the pitfalls of their previous life, to which the false teachers would have them return.

In the Thessalonian letters, Paul writes about learning with, and from, each other. We see another dimension of this teaching in the letter to the Galatians:

> Brothers, if one of you misbehaves, the more spiritual of you who set him right should do so in a spirit of gentleness, not forgetting that you may be tempted yourselves. You should carry each other's troubles and fulfil the law of Christ (Gal 6:1-2).

Each person of the *ekklēsia* lives in *agapē* and fulfills the law of Christ, which is to live in fidelity to the resurrection *event*. The obligation is not only to learn from each other but also to correct each other; it is a step further than Paul's instructions to the Thessalonians. We come to a richer understanding of this statement through the lens of intersubjectivity (Mead 1934, 2002). The Galatians have a responsibility to set right the other, but it is not just a simple matter of correction. Firstly, there is reflexivity on the part of the one who is to set right the other. Each person is to recognise that they may be tempted into the same error, so any correction is to be done with gentleness. There is reflexivity that precedes any corrective action. It is the last sentence that is most intriguing. To fulfil the law of Christ, or as I have understood it, to live in *agapē,* is to carry the burden of the other. To carry the burden of the

other is to be changed by the experience of the other. The person who does the correcting, and we should understand this as an act of teaching, must be a learner in the process and come to a new understanding of him or herself. This is intersubjectivity in the education encounter; the teacher must also be open to change.

Agapē relationships are characterised by reflexivity. Even in the disappointment, the anger and the frustration with the Galatians, Paul prompts the members of the *ekklēsia* to be reflexive about that decision to abandon *agapē*: 'You began your race well, what made you less anxious to obey the truth' (Gal 5:7). Later, he has them consider their behaviour with each other and what it is they are trying to achieve, 'we must never get tired of doing good because if we don't give up the struggle we shall get our harvest at the proper time' (Gal 6:9).

Paul reminds the Galatians of his own transformation and 'how enthusiastic I was for the traditions of my ancestors' before coming to the realisation, through the resurrection *event*, that he had been specially chosen while 'still in my mother's womb' to 'preach the Good News about him to the pagans' (Gal 1:14-16). We also have his exasperation toward the end of the letter, 'You and your special days and months and seasons and years! You make me feel I have wasted my time with you' (Gal 4:10-11). Then his plaintive cry of desperation, 'I wish I were with you now so that I could know exactly what to say; as it is, I have no idea what to do for the best' (Gal 4:20). At this end point of the letter there is none of the anger that we have witnessed earlier in the letter, he has asserted his position, he has emptied himself for them. One can imagine him physically drained as we read the admission of this tiredness and resignation: 'Let no one make trouble for me anymore for I bear in my own body scars that are the marks of Jesus' (Gal 6:17 translation from Martyn 2010). He was vulnerable to the choices that the Galatians might make and he is open with them about that.

There is a disparity between Paul's language of correction and his urging the Galatians to correct each other with gentleness. In part his anger was directed at the Galatians, 'You foolish Galatians' (Gal 3:1 translation from Martyn 2010), but it is Paul's statements to the false teachers, who would have been in the audience, that are the most violent. He wrote 'Tell those who are disturbing you I would like to see the knife slip' (Gal 5:12), or as translated by Martyn, 'I wish that the people who are troubling your minds would castrate themselves' (Gal 5:12 translation from Martyn 2010). Paul has set out to reinforce the structures of the *ekklēsia* in the face of a serious challenge. There was no common ground between his approach and the false teachers. Consideration of the other is important, but a teacher must be frank in highlighting the effect of actions that are inconsistent with a person's interests.

Concluding the narrative of Galatia

The vast distance and time separating Paul and the Galatians make the caustic opening of Paul's letter quite remarkable: 'I am amazed that you are so rapidly defecting from the God who called you in his grace, and are turning your allegiance to a different gospel' (Gal 1:6). These were his opening words in a letter to a community that he knew he was unlikely to meet again for several months. Paul is using powerful language to bridge the great geographic space. But this language cannot be explained solely in terms of place; his language reflects a person who feels rejected.

Paul had lived with the Galatians for 18 months and we can presume forged relationships of some depth with people in that community. His letter contains the pain and anger that comes with being wronged by those he had trusted. Nor can we underestimate the impact of the Incident at Antioch on Paul. Paul is now isolated from the Judaic-Christians and is forced to defend himself against their attempts to undermine the *ekklēsia*. It is in this context that we should read his instruction to the Galatians to 'set right' the other. Paul cannot be physically in their company, nor can he be the teacher who defends them against the false teachers. It is the agency of the members of the *ekklēsia* that will sustain a new life of *agapē*. They must become a community that learns together how to remain faithful to the resurrection *event*.

Paul corrects, or re-teaches, the Galatians. He describes it as going through the pain of 'giving birth to you all over again, until Christ is formed in you' (Gal 4:19). He was reflexive with the Galatians about who he was and who he had become as a result of his experience of the resurrection *event* and his commitment to *agapē.* Paul had transformed his life, as they had, but the learning is ongoing, 'we must never get tired of doing good' (Gal 6:9). While Paul's language is strong and forceful, the overwhelming message is that the Galatians have the freedom to choose. Fidelity to the resurrection *event* calls each person to look to a new future. This is the temporality of the *event*, it is grounded in their experiences in the past but cannot remain there. The future requires ongoing choice and it is only a commitment to *agapē* that will bring them the freedom to make those choices.

We have in the letter a new understanding of *agapē*. Paul makes the statement that there are no longer differences between Jew and Greek, slave and free, male and female. Each person is emancipated from the restrictions of their identity. It is not that identity is unimportant, but the differences forged by identity can and must be overcome in a commitment to *agapē*. *Agapē* demands intersubjective encounters that are pure, unmediated by the restriction of identity. Paul dismantled the Law by putting an end to circumcision and all of the ritual

observances that had flowed from it, for the Law represented slavery to identity. The resurrection *event* that Paul brought to the Galatians represented an invitation for people to commit to the other, in relationships that would constantly renew a sense of the self. *Agapē* is an orientation to learning, to change and to a future that cannot be restricted by identity.

Philippi: an unshakeable commitment to his first European city

Philippi has been described as the city where Christianity began in Europe (Verhoef 2013). Archaeological and textual evidence points to Philippi being a very Roman city with the original Greek speaking population having been colonised by Roman soldiers. Paul's Roman citizenship would have given him free access to a Roman colony such as Philippi (Witherington 1998). Unlike Thessalonica, Galatia and Corinth, 'there is an absence of any archaeological and epigraphic evidence of a Jewish presence' (Murphy-O'Connor 1997, p. 213). The proximity of the city to the Via Egnatia fostered trade and commerce and led to great prosperity for some. Paul benefited from this wealth. He and his fellow-workers were supported by a patron, Lydia, who was a purple dye seller (Acts 16:14-15), a sign of great wealth, and a position that would have given her a wide network across a range of trades (Murphy-O'Connor 1997; Reumann 2008). Philippi became 'a well-organized, generous community, with the energy to support Paul's missionary efforts elsewhere' (Murphy-O'Connor 1997, p. 215).

Paul arrived in Philippi in September 48 CE, after his visit to Galatia. He remained until the Spring of 49, when he was evicted and travelled to Thessalonica (Murphy-O'Connor 1997). He made a brief second visit after August 52 and it is likely that he returned to the region in the winter of 54-55 (Murphy-O'Connor 1997). We have no information about his last visit. The Philippian letters were written in a few months between June and November 53 CE. Our knowledge of Paul's interaction with the community extends from his arrival in September 48 to the writing of letter PC in November 53 CE, so a period of five years. The three letters have very distinct qualities. Letter PA is described as a thank-you letter for gifts received; PB as friendship or family letter; and PC as a letter of warning (Murphy-O'Connor 1997; Reumann 2008; Witherington 2011). All were written from Ephesus, with the second, and possibly the third, written while Paul was imprisoned.

The letters reflect similar themes to the Thessalonian and Galatian letters. Paul reminds the *ekklēsia* of the relationships that existed when he lived with them (Phil 1:8, 4:10, 4:17), including phrases very like those he uses to the Thessalonians, 'you are my joy and my crown' (Phil 4:1), and the striking 'you have a permanent place in my heart' (Phil 1:7). He thanks

them for accepting his message 'the day you first heard it' (Phil 1:5) and continues to emphasise the importance of living as he taught them (Phil 4:9) and as they have learned from each other (3:17). He encourages them to be reflexive and 'pray' for him as he does for them (Phil 1:4, 1:19, 4:6). In the third letter PC, we find language similar to that used with the Galatians when he warns them to beware of the 'cutters' (Phil 3:2), in a reprise of his argument against all that is represented by circumcision. He warns them about suffering (Phil 1:29) but it takes on a new meaning given that at least one letter is written while he is detained.

Letter PB was written while Paul was imprisoned and vulnerable. This prompts his reflexivity about his relationship with the communities:

> My one hope and trust is that I shall never have to admit defeat … but then again if living in this body means doing work which is having good results – I do not know what I would choose. (Phil 1:20-22)

He wrote about the immediate environment:

> My chains, in Christ, have become famous not only all over the Praetorium but everywhere and most of the brothers have taken courage in the Lord from these chains of mine. (Phil 1:13 – 1:14)

He is uncertain about his future but writes that he is willing to face whatever comes if it increases their commitment to the new life of the resurrection:

> If my blood has to be shed as part of your own sacrifice and offering which is your faith I shall still be happy and rejoice with all of you. (Phil 2:17)

Paul's vulnerability, particularly in this second letter, draws from him some memorable insights into the meaning of *agapē*, which are discussed below. Before turning to the *agapē* discussion, however, I want to comment on new learning about the *ekklēsia* from these letters.

Ekklēsia in Philippi

Across the three letters to the Philippians, Paul emphasised the importance of unity in the *ekklēsia*. We read it in letter PB, 'I shall know that you are unanimous in meeting the attack with firm resistance, united by your love' (Phil 1:27) and 'be united in your convictions and united in your love with a common purpose and a common mind' (Phil 2:2). In letter PC, he wrote: 'be united in following my rule of life' (Phil 3:17). There is also reference to a specific example where he asks that Evodia and Syntyche to, 'come to an agreement' with the help of

Sysygus (Phil 4:2-3). He elaborates on what we find in the Thessalonian letters, placing a stronger emphasis on the *ekklēsia* as a place that is separate from the physical surroundings. The *ekklēsia* is a place where people gather but it is composed of structures that extend beyond any physical gathering. The *ekklēsia* existed through living a life of *agapē*.

Paul reminds the Philippians that in the *ekklēsia,* people are to continue to learn with and from each other. They are to remember their life with him: 'My brothers be united in following my rule of life. Take as your models everybody who is already doing this and study them as you used to study us' (Phil 3:17). Paul also brings to them the message that 'My prayer is that your love for each other may increase more and more and never stop improving your knowledge and deepening your perception' (Phil 1:9). Paul is very clear in his teaching that they are engaged in a process of learning that has its foundation in their shared past. That learning continues through his letters, but the Philippians are to look to each other for a future of ongoing learning about how to live this life together.

Paul's imprisonment sharpened his message about their agency. In letter PB we read:

> Whether I come to you and see for myself, or stay at a distance and I only hear about you, I shall know that you are unanimous in meeting the attack with firm resistance. (Phil 1:27)

That statement is followed by:

> Continue to do as I tell you, as you always have; not only as you did when I was there with you but even more now that I am no longer there. (Phil 2:12)

Paul's imprisonment has brought him closer to the reality that he will not always be with them and has him emphasise the shared responsibility for building knowledge about how to live these new practices. The community would only continue beyond his presence if they committed to learning with, and from, each other.

Paul is explicit with the Philippians that the choice that they have made for the *ekklēsia* means that they can expect persecution and suffering. While in prison and in fear for his life, he shares with the Philippians that, 'You and I are together in the same fight as you saw me fighting before and, as you will have heard, I am fighting still' (Phil. 1:30). The communities would have known that the Jesus of Nazareth, proclaimed by Paul, had been crucified by the Romans as a criminal. That Paul claimed to be looking forward to crucifixion (Phil 3:10) must have created apprehension among members of the *ekklēsia*, and yet they continued to belong.

Agapē in Philippi

Paul writes a clear and succinct description of a*gapē* as a commitment to a way of living that was beyond the self and which was open to what might occur in relationship with the other:

> There must be no competition among you, no conceit; but everybody is to be self-effacing. Always consider the other person to be better than yourself, so that nobody thinks of his own interests first but everybody thinks of other people's interests instead. (Phil 2:3-5)

Agapē is a commitment to the other. It can only be lived in relationship and in a social setting.

Paul builds on this description by making explicit to the Philippians the connection between his experience of the resurrection *event* and the life he lived with them. He writes as part of a longer passage on his understanding of the death of Jesus of Nazareth:

> His state was divine yet he did not cling to his equality with God but emptied himself to assume the condition of a slave. And became as men are and being as all men are he was humbler yet even to accepting death, death on a cross. But God raised him high … (Phil 2:6 – 2:9)

The passage is rich in religious language, but it is significant for what it reveals about the qualities of *agapē*. The lesson from the death on the cross is that the subject emptied himself to come in weakness to an encounter. It was in humility and vulnerability, even to the point of death, that the subject could be open to the experience of *agapē*. It reveals that *agapē* is the gift of the other; it comes from outside of the subject. In this instance, the other raises the subject on high. *Agapē* is witnessed, not in some sacrificial atonement by Jesus, but in the commitment of the other to love the subject even in this moment of despair and dejection. It is a creative experience rather than a sacrificial act and new knowledge is generated from the encounter. We begin to understand Paul's experience on the road to Damascus. On that journey, Paul 'was travelling to Damascus and just before he reached the city, there came a light from heaven all around him' (Acts 9:3). Paul is struck down by an outpouring of *agapē* and he acts to receive the *event*. He changed from one life to another, creating something new, something faithful to the knowledge of this *event*.

There is no suggestion that an education encounter that calls on *agapē* requires crucifixion or a physical death. It does not even require a commitment to the story of Jesus of Nazareth. What is universalisable from the narrative is that *agapē* is the gift of the other to the subject who has been abandoned. In an education setting, we might understand this as the student who is without knowledge. The teacher acting from *agapē* brings knowledge to the student.

The student must be open in humility to receive *agapē*. When we combine this with our understanding from the Galatians letter, that one who teaches carries the burden of the other and is changed by the act of teaching, then we begin to see *agapē* as a duality. The teacher both offers *agapē* and is open to receive it. The teacher comes in humility and openness to learn from the knowledge that the student brings. The Corinthian letters provide further insight into the duality of *agapē*.

Paul is at his most reflexive in these letters. He offers an enriched understanding of the resurrection *event* as an experience that goes beyond the incident on the road to Damascus. Paul has changed his past and he continues to develop in each interaction he has with others. He writes firstly of no longer seeking perfection by his own efforts or the perfection that comes from the Law: 'I want only the perfection that comes through faith in Christ' (Phil 3:9). He returns to a metaphor first used with the Galatians:

> Not that I have become perfect yet: I have not yet won, but I am still running, trying to capture the prize for which Christ Jesus captured me. I can assure you brothers, I am far from thinking I have already won. All I can say is that **I forget the past and I strain ahead for what is still to come**. (Phil 3:12-13, emphasis added)

Here is the temporality of *event* as Paul moves from the past to a new future through his ongoing interactions. It is not just waiting for an *event* such as Damascus, but it is the living, 'the running', and the 'straining ahead' for the encounters in the future.

Concluding the narrative of Philippi

By the time Paul writes to the Philippians, he has successfully established *ekklēsia* in four communities and he is working to build an *ekklēsia* in Ephesus. He has written to the Thessalonians and to the Galatians. The Philippians' letters show he has a firm understanding of how the *ekklēsia* exists in the world. While each group gathers in a specific place, it is composed of structures that extend across the geography of the Mediterranean Basin and across years. Paul is engaged in teaching members of the *ekklēsia* to live in fidelity to the resurrection *event*, in encounters that increase their knowledge and their agency.

These three letters to the Philippians provide greater depth to our understanding of the intersubjectivity and reflexivity that Paul initiates in the education encounters. We witness Paul's commitment to openness and vulnerability as an approach to the education encounter. This quality of openness is what all who would teach must bring to the encounter. The education encounter based on *agapē* is a duality where the teacher and the student both look to the other and remain open to learning in that experience.

The letters to the Philippians reinforce *agapē* as a creative act. Looking to the good of the other is not simply a task to be performed, as in helping another person, there is a temporal dimension. I draw on my past and bring that to the present experience, as does the other in the encounter. The act of looking to the other and calling them into an experience is a powerful act, one that has the potential to overcome death, which is not to be confused with corporeal death. In each act of *agapē* I bring new knowledge or new life to the other that has the potential to free them from ignorance or from restrictions. I must also remain open to being changed by the experience. The encounter should change how both people see the future. That structure is not confined by historical time or place but can be universalised.

Paul has initiated a powerful concept in the world. As I worked through this inquiry I found myself contemplating whether contemporary teachers have the agency to harness Paul's ideas for the education encounters in which they are involved. If they are to be changed by every purposeful encounter with every student then surely education is too arduous for an educator. Then I am brought to the realisation that teachers expect students to be transformed by the knowledge that is brought to them in every education encounter. This realisation opened new insights into the education encounter that are explored in more depth in Chapters Six and Seven.

Corinth: city of conflict and contradictions

Corinth was the capital of the senatorial province of Achaia, and along with Rome, Alexandria and Antioch, was one of the four most important cities in the Mediterranean world (Fitzmyer 2008). With two harbours, Cenchreae, having access to trade with Asia, and Lechaeum, which opened to Europe in the west, the Corinthian citizens were exposed to a cosmopolitan outlook. Edsall (2014, p. 58) describes Paul's Corinthian groups as a 'geographically divided, culturally and socially mixed community in the midst of a burgeoning Roman colony with an important ideological and cultural significance'. The community was open to new ideas but the diversity challenged Paul in a way that he had not experienced in other cities.

Paul's interactions with the Corinthians were complex; at least three visits and five letters. Appendix Four provides a chronology of the sequence of letters and visits. Paul's arrival in April 50 CE came immediately after his eviction from Thessalonica and his failure in Athens. He remained there until September 51. He visited for three weeks in July 54, and stayed for a longer third visit in the winter of 55/56 (Murphy-O'Connor 1997). His first letter, now lost, was written in August 52 and his fifth and final in August 55 CE. We have a record of five

years of interactions between Paul and the Corinthians. The existence of two lost letters is corroborated by references in Paul's surviving Corinthian letters. In his second letter, CB, Paul corrects misunderstandings from letter CA: 'When I wrote in my letter … I was not meaning to' (1 Cor 5:9-11). Letter CC, which is also lost, was written in response to an attack on Paul's authority by one of the Corinthians and is referenced in letter CD (2 Cor 2:4).

Issues about Paul's authority as a teacher create a constant tension across the three surviving letters. It was common practice for people to identify with the teacher who was the best orator, or the strongest performer in the public fora (Marrou 1956), and Paul did not present as a charismatic public figure. In his letters, he actively undermined this approach to teaching:

> What I mean are all these slogans that you have, like: 'I am for Paul', 'I am for Apollos', 'I am for Cephas', 'I am for Christ'. Has Christ been parcelled out? Was it Paul that was crucified for you? Were you baptised in the name of Paul? (1 Cor 1:12-13)

Paul turns the Corinthians toward the life that he lived with them, and away from rhetoric:

> When I came to you, it was not with any show of oratory or philosophy, but simply to tell you what God had guaranteed … and in my speeches and the sermons that I gave, there were none of the arguments that belong to philosophy; only a demonstration of the power of the Spirit. (1 Cor 2:1, 2:4)

He made similar references in letters CD and CË (2 Cor 3:5, 4:7, 11:6). His most scathing criticism is in letter CD: 'At least we do not go round offering the word of God for sale, as many other people do (2 Cor 2:17). He emphasised that it was his message, not the form of delivery, that was important: 'I may not be a polished speechmaker, but as for knowledge, that is a different matter; surely we have made this plain, speaking on every subject in front of all of you' (2 Cor 11:16).

It was important to some Corinthians that Paul demonstrate his achievements (2 Cor 10:9-10) but Paul would not engage in the practice. In letter CB we find, 'As scripture says: if anyone wants to boast, let him boast about the Lord' (1 Cor 1:31), which is repeated in Letter CË (2 Cor 10:17), before making this definitive statement to the Corinthians:

> So I shall be very happy to make my weaknesses my special boast so that the power of Christ may stay over me and that is why I am quite content with my weaknesses, and with insults, hardships, persecutions, and the agonies I go through for Christ's sake. For it is when I am weak that I am strong. (2 Cor 12:9-10)

This whole sequence would have 'profoundly shocked his listeners' (Judge 2008f, p. 716) but in his response, 'for it is when I am weak that I am strong', Paul had affirmed the principles of his pedagogy and teaching practice. This is a central idea explored in Chapter Seven, an analysis of Paul's purpose, pedagogy and practice.

The Corinthian letters lack the warmth of his letters to the *ekklēsiai* in Thessalonica and Philippi. There is remoteness even in the letter written five years into the relationship: 'although you do not know us very well yet' (2 Cor 1:14). Paul is functional: '(we) are fellow-workers with you for your happiness' (2 Cor 1:24). There are expressions of pride (2 Cor 7:4, 8:24) and expressions of love (2 Cor 11:11, 12:15), but it seems a moderated affection: 'When I wrote to you in deep distress and anguish of mind, and in tears, it was not to make you feel hurt but to let you know how much love I have for you' (2 Cor 2:4). There were many *ekklēsia* in Corinth (Murphy-O'Connor 1997), and Paul may have been addressing different groups within the same letter, tempering the intimacy that was typical of letters to other *ekklēsia*. Though this is the fourth community established by Paul, each letter represented a new teaching challenge and a new encounter for the people; there was no formula to be followed.

Despite the conflict and the complexities, the Corinthians did learn with Paul and did change their life. The interactions, both his frequent visits and his letters, remind us that he and the Corinthians remained in relationship with one another. They persevered with forming *ekklēsia* in which *agapē* relationships could be lived out. Edsall (2014, p. 101) makes the point that the Corinthians were at least 'committed enough to know' that sex, marriage, relationships and food laws were issues that were part of this new life in the *ekklēsia.* The contest of ideas and the complexity of the relationships between Paul and the Corinthians gives vitality to an experience with these letters.

The letters contain teaching that is familiar from Paul's letters to the other three communities. Paul references their past together (1 Cor 11:1-2) and though not physically present, he is 'spiritually present with them' (1 Cor 5:5), and their relationship continues through his letters (1 Cor 16:21). He invites reflexivity on their actions through prayer (2 Cor 13:7) and he urges them to copy him (1 Cor 4:6). He maintains his position that circumcision has no meaning (1 Cor 7:18-19), but that debate does not have the prominence it had in Galatia. In these Corinthian letters we witness the complexity of living across the two worlds of *ekklēsia* and civic society and, as a result, we learn more about the structures of the *ekklēsia*.

Ekklēsia in Corinth

The Corinthians were divided (1 Cor 1:10, 6:1) and confused about some of Paul's teachings, and they asked for help (1 Cor 7:1). The letters are an account of how Paul sought to teach the Corinthians to make the transition from their old life to the new resurrected life of living in *agapē*. He expresses his annoyance when they do not live these relationships: 'when you all come together as a community, there are separate factions among you' (1 Cor 11:18 and similarly at 1 Cor 4:6-7). He reinforces a boundary between the *ekklēsia* and the external community: 'It is not my business to pass judgement on those outside. Of those who are inside, you can surely be the judges' (1 Cor 5:12). Paul emphasises the common purpose of the *ekklēsia*, where their actions 'must always be for the common good' (1 Cor 14:26). He introduces the metaphor of the body to teach the Corinthians that they can retain their diversity without losing a sense of unity: 'Just as a human body, though it is made up of many parts, is a single unit because all these parts, though many, make one body, so it is with Christ' (1 Cor 12:12 followed by his elaboration of the metaphor). Members of the *ekklēsia* have different understandings about how they are to live in new relationships (1 Cor 5:1-13, 7:1-40), how they should act when they were together (1 Cor 11:2 – 12:11), and differences about food (1 Cor 8:1-13, 10:14- 33). I have used two passages on food to illustrate Paul's approach to educating the Corinthians and promoting unity in the *ekklēsia*, as follows.

The Gentile members of the Corinthian *ekklēsia* would have been expected to participate in many religious and civic festivals where animals were sacrificed, food shared at communal tables and the spoils distributed in the community. The Jews, for whom this food was unacceptable, had an established tradition of being able to exclude themselves from these events. However, food from these festivals was appearing on the table when the *ekklēsia* gathered. The community was struggling to overcome differences in food rituals that had separated Jews and Gentiles for centuries. They sought clarity from Paul, who responded with guidance rather than a definitive ruling:

> About eating food sacrificed to idols: we know that idols do not really exist in the world and that there is no god but the One … Some people, however, do not have this knowledge. There are some who have been so long used to idols that they eat this food as though it really had been sacrificed to the idol, and their conscience, being weak, is defiled by it. Food, of course, cannot bring us in touch with God: we lose nothing if we refuse to eat, we gain nothing if we eat. Only be careful that you do not make use of this freedom in a way that proves a pitfall for the weak … In this way your knowledge could become the ruin of someone weak, of a brother for whom Christ died. (1 Cor 8: 4-11)

Paul introduced the idea that the sharing of food was not just a celebratory meal; it was part of the *agapic* practices of the *ekklēsia.* In sharing a table, people were to consider the other. He did not provide definitive rules about food but prompted the Corinthians to remember that the *ekklēsia* was a social system in which equality of all who belonged was a core value and an ethic for living. In responding to the dilemma, Paul asked the Corinthians to exercise judgement, calling on them to limit their freedom, in the interest of the other.

The conclusion to that teaching on food is a powerful statement. For Paul, freedom was not a remote virtue to be discussed in philosophical terms; he taught that freedom was to be exercised within *agapē* relationships. Freedom was to be exercised with thoughts for the other; it was not an unrestrained right. His statement that knowledge was not to be used as 'the ruin of someone weak' was equally powerful. A person was not to exploit another through the use of knowledge nor were they to withhold knowledge from another. The conflict may have been about food in Corinth in the first century CE, but the lessons are universal and offer guidance for educators in the modern world.

Food sacrificed to idols was not the only dispute about food. Paul introduced to the *ekklēsia* the social practice of gathering together. The Corinthians combined this with a meal. Much to Paul's frustration, they continued their existing traditions in which food was used to signify a difference in status (Winter 2001). Paul was prompted to write:

> Since when the time comes to eat, everyone is in such a hurry to start his own supper that one person goes hungry while another is getting drunk. Surely you have homes for eating and drinking in … (and) … not to make poor people embarrassed? What am I to say to you? Congratulate you? I cannot congratulate you on this. (1 Cor. 11:21-22)

Paul had assumed that in a community centred on *agapē*, the social practices he had introduced would support the structures of the *ekklēsia*. Instead, food continued to reinforce the disparity between members. Paul corrects, or re-teaches, the Corinthians: 'my dear brothers, when you meet for the meal, wait for one another. Anyone who is hungry should eat at home' (1 Cor 11:33-34). This is a community in transformation from one life to another. Paul used his letters to continue to teach and have the Corinthians modify their social practices to reflect the structure that they were designed to sustain.

The Corinthians had responded to Paul's call to live in fidelity to the resurrection *event*. With Paul they committed to an *ekklēsia* in which the structures reflected a life of *agapē* relationships. What the Corinthians discovered was that accepting the *event* interrupted the

routinised behaviours of their life. The substance of Paul's message to the Corinthians was that *agapē* was the constant re-living of the resurrection *event* and required of them ongoing adaptation to the natural and social world in response to the *event*. The learning for an educator in the modern world is not about the rules and rituals of food but about the teacher bringing clarity of purpose to the education encounter and the integrity and validity of that purpose. The education encounter is focused on the agency of the student to learn and to change in response to an *event* in their life.

Enabling agency and allowing for freedom in the education encounter is challenging for the teacher. We find Paul wavering between definitive instructions to the Corinthians and enabling them the freedom to respond to their experiences as people who have committed to *agapē*. Edsall (2014) observes that 1 Corinthians is unusual for the amount of new teaching in Paul's instructional passages. In letter CB, Paul issued instructions on marriage, sex, virginity, circumcision, morality, legal practices, consumption of food within meetings, idolatry, worship including the role of women, and the hierarchy of spiritual gifts. Paul defined material arrangements for the members of the *ekklēsia*. However, we also witness Paul asking members of the Corinthian *ekklēsia* to exercise judgement: 'This is a suggestion not a rule' (1 Cor 7:6), with similar expressions elsewhere (1 Cor 7:12, 7:25, 2 Cor 8:8). He allows for the agency of the Corinthians, and leaves open the freedom of their response. As I noted above, such freedom is to be exercised with the good of the other in mind; that is what *agapē* calls from each person. Living across the *ekklēsia* and civic society generated complex ethical dilemmas; Paul promoted judgement to resolve these issues. This was a difficult transition for people whose lives had been governed by strict laws and rigorous social stratification.

Paul made constant reference to what happened when they were together (e.g. 'Brothers, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, the gospel that you received and in which you are firmly established' (1 Cor 15:1)). He was relying on the audience knowing him and, on the relationship previously established with them. It is an explicit recognition of the intersubjective encounter; the Corinthians had been changed by their relationship with Paul and he was reminding them of that. Paul described his own approach in these words: 'by the grace God gave me, I succeeded as an architect and laid the foundations, on which someone else is doing the building. Everyone doing the building must work carefully' (1 Cor 3:10). Paul uses his letter to link the Corinthians to his original teaching while leaving the people with the responsibility of continuing to learn how to live the new life.

Paul also asks the communities to consider themselves as belonging to a transnational *ekklēsia*, something that is beyond their immediate physical location. A monetary collection becomes a link between the Corinthians and the *ekklēsia* spread across the Mediterranean Basin. The collection is an act of *agapē;* 'in front of all of the churches, give them a proof of your love' (2 Cor 8:24 and similarly at 2 Cor 8:8). Paul reminds them that through this action they are bonded with all of those who have committed to *agapē*: 'what happens to be your surplus now against their present need, and one day they may have something to spare that will supply your own need' (2 Cor 8:14). People were united in fidelity to the resurrection *event* expressed as *agapē*, which was realised in this social practice of contributing to the material good of another. The collection is a physical manifestation of Paul's commitment to structures that would bring unity to the *ekklēsiai* and hence, he writes, 'what I teach in all of the churches' (1 Cor 4:17 and 7:17). The implementation of the transnational collection allows us to witness the three dimensions of narrative in Paul's teaching. His communication in the letters is localised to the Corinthians, 'I boast about you to the Macedonians, telling them Achaia has been ready since last year' (2 Cor 9:2). There is very deliberate linking of their past experience, 'you were the first, a year ago, not only in taking action but in deciding to' (2 Cor 8:11), through to the present, 'each one of you should give what he has decided in his own mind' (2 Cor 9:7) and the future 'you will always have all you need for yourselves in every possible circumstance' (2 Cor 9:8). The action is not isolated to the Corinthians but has a wider impact:

> By offering this service, you show them what you are, and that makes them give glory to God for the way you accept and profess the gospel of Christ, and for your sympathetic generosity to them and to all. (2 Cor 9:13)

Paul teaches that in this one social practice the Corinthians reveal something about themselves, 'who you are', and it prompts actions by others, 'makes them give glory'. In these education encounters, the *ekklēsia* exists beyond the physical space; it becomes the structures for living not just an *event* that happens or a geographic space.

Agapē in Corinth

Letter CB could well be described as the *agapē* narrative. Paul uses the early parts of the letter to remind the Corinthians from whence they had come: they were 'common and contemptible' (1 Cor 1:26-28); they were infants not ready for solid food (1 Cor 3:1-3); they were ignorant of their relationships with God (1 Cor 3:16); and they were the wrong sort of people who have now been 'washed clean and sanctified' (1 Cor 6:9-11). Paul has brought to the community 'a wisdom that none of the masters of this age have ever known' (1 Cor 2:8). He planted and Apollos watered, 'but God made things grow' (1 Cr 3:6-7); 'the spirit of God

was living among you' (1 Cor 3:16). What Paul has brought to the Corinthians is important because 'the world as we know it is passing away' (1 Cor 7:31).

Paul established the primacy of *agapē*: 'If I have all the eloquence of men or of angels, but speak without love, I am simply a gong booming or a cymbal clashing' (1 Cor 13:1). Eloquence, rhetoric, prophecy, philosophical knowledge, suffering of any form endured without purpose, the self-denial of the Cynics and Stoics, all of whom would have been present in Corinth as rivals to Paul, have no value if the person has not accepted the importance of *agapē*. He begins a powerful and explicit connection between *agapē* and knowledge: 'If I … understand all the mysteries there are, and knowing everything, … but am without love, then I am nothing at all' (1 Cor 13:1).

He established that *agapē* is enduring: 'Love is always patient and kind … it is always ready to excuse, to trust, to hope, and to endure whatever comes. Love does not come to an end' (1 Cor 13:4-8). In contrast, the skills and knowledge taught by humans are imperfect and impermanent, 'the time will come when they must fail; or the gift of languages, it will not continue for ever; and knowledge - for this, too, the time will come when it must fail' (1 Cor 13:8-10). It is only love that delights in the truth (1 Cor 13:6), that leads to perfection and all imperfect things disappear (1 Cor 1310). *Agapē* that is expressed with the other creates a new relationship and new knowledge comes into being. To grow in *agapē* is to grow in knowledge, and thus a creative act.

Paul explained why the Corinthians were to continue to increase in their understanding of *agapē*. We grow, from immaturity to maturity, not through imperfect knowledge, but through *agapē*, which leads us to come face to face with our own selves as fully as can be known. Paul introduced a metaphor for *agapē*, the reflection in the mirror; it is in our relationship with others that we find a true reflection of our own self. I cite this section in full:

> When I was a child, I used to talk like a child, and think like a child, and argue like a child, but now I am a man, all childish ways are put behind me. Now we are seeing a dim reflection in a mirror; but then we shall be seeing face to face. The knowledge that I have now is imperfect; but then I shall know as fully as I am known. In short, there are three things that last: faith, hope and love; and the greatest of these is love. You must want love more than anything else; but still hope for the spiritual gifts as well. (1 Cor 13:11-14:1)

Through the metaphor of the child, Paul creates a link to his earlier observation that the Corinthians were infants to be fed on milk. He describes the change from their previous

existence as childlike to the new knowledge of *agapē,* which will bring them to adulthood. When they live in *agapē* they will see the adult in the mirror. In this metaphor we find the temporal in Paul's teaching; *agapē* is not a fixed virtue but one that emerges in their encounters with each other. *Agapē* holds up a mirror to each person's growth and change, they move from a dim reflection to 'seeing face to face'. There is an orientation to the future when they cast aside imperfect knowledge and become 'as fully as I am known'.

Having lived in *agapē* relationships with the Corinthians and now, through the letter, extended their knowledge of *agapē,* Paul provides quite sharp reminders of how much they still have to learn. In their conflicts, in their poor judgements about food and relationships, they have continued to be like children and not adults (1 Cor 14:20); they are to 'come to their senses' (1 Cor 15:34) and not ask 'stupid questions' (1 Cor 15:36). Paul has told them he will come back to see them to adjust the other matters (1 Cor 11:34), in the meantime they are to 'be awake to all the dangers … (and) let everything be done in love' (1 Cor 16:13-14).

Concluding the narrative of Corinth

Paul arrived in a city governed by hierarchical rules and social conventions but rich with social and economic diversity. There was great wealth for some, but for others, 'the primary goals of human existence should be survival, comfort and success' (Murphy-O'Connor 1997, p. 312). Paul introduced the resurrection *event* and showed how living in *agapē* was a response to that *event*. He insisted that people transform their relationships and live for the other. Paul makes clear that the other is both their Jewish neighbour, with whom they had never related, and a person living in remote Judaea. The Corinthians realise how their daily life and routines have been interrupted. Paul taught that living in *agapē*, would bring them to full knowledge of themselves and create the freedom and agency to respond to an *event*.

There was initial confusion for the Corinthians about whether this meant the material arrangements of life, such as the need to eat, or whether it was to be lived out in their relationships. For Paul there was no difference, to live in *agapē* meant to look to the good of the other, whether that was material needs (i.e., the collection), or in limiting their freedom for the good of the other. The real learning was how their actions for the other brought them to a new understanding of themselves, seeing themselves face to face in the mirror. This required of the Corinthians both intersubjectivity and reflexivity. The Corinthian letters provide a narrative of a community in transition from an old life to a new way of living. They have changed from who they were before Paul arrived and are now different. Paul has them focus on who they can become if they look to the future. The growth in knowledge and the change comes not from Paul but from living in *agapē*.

Conclusion

The chapter has been a *retelling* of Paul's narrative framed through the three dimensions of narrative inquiry. The resurrection *event* changed Paul's life. He reconstructed his past based on that *event* and committed to a new future living in *agapē* in the *ekklēsiai*. Paul interacted with people in their homes and at work. He brought purpose and a pedagogy to the experiences and thus created education encounters. He lived *agapē* relationships in each community and had people learn with, and from him, and with, and from, each other. What he taught became a living power among them and people changed. People came to knowledge of how to live in love through intersubjectivity and reflexivity; this was a radical new intervention by Paul, which I argue is universalisable.

The *ekklēsia* is a universal place

Paul formed an *ekklēsia* in each community and had people gather together. We learn from the transnational collection that the *ekklēsia* was not to be understood as a physical place. It was a way of living and relating to other people that generated a new sense of self; people became 'new creatures' (Gal 6:15). As new creatures who lived in *agapē*, their agency increased, enabling them to respond to the call to live a resurrected life. We can understand *agapē* as both inward looking, calling each person to reflexivity on their own actions, and outward looking, calling them to look to the good of the other, setting right the other in a spirit of gentleness and strengthening one another. *Agapē* can only be lived in relationship and, therefore, in a social setting. Paul established *ekklēsia* in each of the four cities and regions covered in this inquiry, and thus I contend that the *ekklēsia* can be understood as a universal place, and worthy of further inquiry for what contemporary educators might learn. In Chapter Six I explore the *ekklēsiai* as places of emancipation and sites of social learning.

Agapē is a universal structure

In Galatians 3:28 we have powerful teaching by Paul that to live in *agapē* was to engage with the other in a pure encounter unmediated by the restriction of identity. Identity expressed as economic hierarchy and social stratification, as the restriction of gender, or division through religious belief, had the capacity to quash a person's agency to respond to an *event*. *Agapē* was the gift of the other and required each person to look to the other and be open to receive from the other. I have described *agapē* as a duality. *Agapē* necessitated reflexivity and intersubjectivity; it required an openness to change. Paul gave witness to this in his own approach to teaching when making the claim that when he was weak he was strong. As the teacher, he was open to learn from the people of the *ekklēsia*. Paul's initiation of *agapē* as a universal structure is the subject of further inquiry in Chapter Seven.

Agapē and the universality of *event*

For the people of the *ekklēsia* to experience *agapē* was to experience an *event*. In their encounters with Paul, people had their daily routines and their experience of life disrupted. Those who were reflexive about their encounter with Paul could not return to the previous life they lived. They were called to live a life of new intersubjective relationships with others. Paul lived *agapē* as his response to the resurrection *event*. He taught people how to live in *agapē* relationships and thus how to respond to *eventa*l encounters. Through *agapē,* people of the *ekklēsia* developed the agency to respond to new knowledge, to respond to change, even to accepting suffering. In *agapē* we find the temporal dimension of Paul's teaching; each person was to consider their life prior to *agapē* as the past, something that had now gone before them. Their future was to be realised in living in fidelity to the *event*. Paul taught them that living in *agapē* would bring them to full knowledge of themselves, expressed in his metaphor of the mirror, and create the freedom and agency to respond to an *event*. Intersubjectivity in their relationships meant that they would see change in others and in their relationships with others, they would see a reflection of how they too had changed. Paul described and lived *agapē* as the truth of the resurrection *event* and as I have noted from Badiou (2003) a truth is true always and for everyone. Thus the change in people that arose from living in *agapē* relationships was timeless and has universal application.

Finally, I come to an observation from Paul's narrative that is challenging my own practice. He wrote to the Corinthians that he needed 'no letters of recommendation either to you or from you, because you are yourselves our letter, written in our hearts, that anybody can see and read' (2 Cor 3:1-2). I have described this teaching as an expression of the philosophy of pragmatism. We are accountable for our actions to the social group with whom we interact, for they are witness to what we do and who we are. As a teacher educator it is no longer acceptable to me to transmit knowledge about education without any comprehension of the subsequent experience of the teacher. I am challenged to find the structures that will be validated by the teachers with whom I work. Without that validation I am not living an experience of *agapē.*

In Chapter Five that follows I discuss the resurrection *event* in Badiou (2003), and *event*, emergence and ideation in Mead (2002); it provides an important theoretical base for appreciating the temporality in Paul's experience of the *event*. Following that I investigate the *ekklēsia* as communities of emancipation and sites of social learning and Paul's pedagogy and practice as an expression of *agapē* in Chapters Six and Seven. Finally, in Chapter Eight, I draw the analysis together into my contention that Paul enacted a pedagogy of the *event*.

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Chapter Five: *Event*

A personal narrative

It would be noteworthy if I could relate the moment that lightning struck and I was knocked from my metaphorical horse to find a cohesive direction for this inquiry. What a great story I would have had if I had mirrored the *event* in Paul's life, and through that found a clear direction for the inquiry. The story is far less theatrical and yet more faithful to the narrative of Paul's work as an educator. To look to the Damascus incident as the *event*, was the mistake that I made early in the inquiry. The truth of the resurrection *event* is in how Paul acted in fidelity to the *event* in his relationships with the members of the *ekklēsia*. I have set out below an example of one path that I followed in the inquiry, before describing the position I reached as I concluded this research text.

The photo below is of a Turkish soldier carrying the body of an infant asylum seeker, Aylan Kurdi, who drowned while his family was in pursuit of asylum. It is a shocking visual representation of the consequences of conflicts in the Middle East and the harsh response to refugees in some European countries. While not an image of a scene in Australia, it represents everything I have come to despise about the Australian government's repressive refugee policies, implemented by both progressive and conservative parties, over the last 15-20 years. Australia has enacted a 'Pacific Solution' with all of the frightening echoes of World War II Germany that that term conveys. Asylum seeker policies have been on my mind throughout this research. I wanted the inquiry to show how to change attitudes and beliefs, as I understood Paul had done. I found solace in believing that this research into how to transform attitudes through education was my contribution to a changed society.

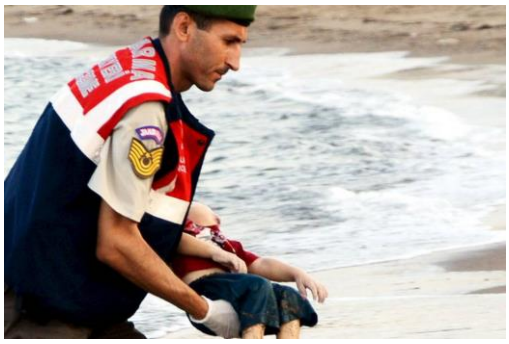

Photo: The body of Aylan Kurdi being carried by a Turkish soldier. (ABC 2015 photographer unknown)

I wanted this incident and this photo to be the Damascus *event* of 2015; one that would lead the world to more humane policies. What unfolded following the publication of this photo was a temporary adjustment to some government policies, but attitudes and values remained the same, or arguably hardened against refugees and asylum seekers across the western world. Either this was not an *event* or, as has become clear to me, I had not understood the real meaning of *event*.

At the time this photo was published, I was still asking the question, 'How do I modify people's attitudes and values through the education encounter?' When I look at that question now I recognise that it emerges from a position where the teacher controls the outcomes of the education encounter. I was entrenched in practices of teacher control. I was looking to *event* as something that would stimulate the change that I wanted in the world that I was experiencing. I was hoping for the lightning strike.

I struggled to come to terms with the meaning of *event* for education. From Badiou's (2003) elucidation of Paul's experience on the road to Damascus I had a sense of a significant occurrence or of something that created change, but no language with which to explain this in educational terms. I needed to find the language that could name the practice being investigated. I was still to learn from Badiou that for an *event* to come into existence, a person, or persons, needed to act in fidelity to the *event*. I had to learn from Paul that new knowledge grows from the relationships in which we are engaged, where those relationships are built on *agapē*. Biesta (2013) had described the weakness in the education encounter, but I had not reconciled that with Paul's letters.

Three things helped move my experience. Firstly, I was encouraged to engage with Mead (1934, 2002) and his theories of ideation, intersubjectivity and emergence. Mead provided a link between Badiou and the education encounter, and new language to describe that encounter. I also revisited narrative inquiry, returning to my methodology and to the letters to find answers. There were two consequences of that re-engagement. I began to see Thessalonians and Philippians everywhere in my daily work. I saw Galatians in schools; teachers turning away from the pure encounter and looking back to rules and regulations for security. I saw Corinthians, caught between the possibilities of their imagination and the restrictions of the environment in which they were teaching. The experience of the letters began to find a place in my own experience. I realised that the Damascus incident, while essential to Paul's experience of the resurrection *event*, and for Badiou (2003), a universal experience, was not experienced directly by anyone other than Paul. Each person in each *ekklēsia* experienced that *event* in the relationship with Paul, how he lived and what he

taught. They did not experience the lightning strike, nor fall off a horse. They experienced *agapē* and that was the *event* in their life. The final realisation was that I belonged to an *ekklēsia*; we met every two months and talked about teaching, learning, relationships and Paul. I reflected on the relationships that existed in my team of supervisors and found the 'fear and trembling' that is Paul's expression of reflexivity and, at least in part, an example of the weakness of education of which Biesta (2013) writes. This group of which I was a member was living the very encounters that were the subject of the inquiry. With those three realisations I had moved closer to an understanding of the *event*, its place in the education encounter and in my practice.

Introduction

In the main Introduction to this research text I indicated that my discussion of Badiou's term, *event,* would be limited to an exploration of the resurrection *event* in the life of Paul of Tarsus (2003, 2009). I reiterate that point here. I have not sought to develop a critique of Badiou's (2005) wider theory of *event* and I draw in other material from Badiou on the *event* only where it helps me elucidate the resurrection *event* in Paul's life. There are limitations in applying Badiou's theory to an education setting. I have overcome these limitations with reference to Mead (1934, 2002) and his theories on intersubjectivity, emergence and ideation, which provide the substance for his theorising of *event* as a transformation. Building this theoretical base for *event* provides an important foundation for the analysis of Paul's narrative as an educator and ultimately underpins the discussion of a pedagogy of the *event*.

Paul experienced an incident when journeying to Damascus, rupturing his life. The narrative is widely known through the dramatised account in Acts:

> Suddenly, while he was travelling to Damascus and just before he reached the city, there came a light from heaven all round him. He fell to the ground, and then he heard a voice. (Acts 9:3-4)

This incident marked the time from which Paul transformed his life. He wrote to the Galatians about the person he had been prior to the Damascus incident:

> You must have heard of my career as a practising Jew, how merciless I was in persecuting the Church of God, how much damage I did to it. (Gal 1:14)

For an incident of such magnitude, Paul related very little of the detail in his letters. He referred to the incident in letter CË to the Corinthians (2 Cor 12:2-4), and in his letter to the Galatians (Gal 1:11-12). We can reasonably assume that he was explicit about it when living in the communities, so it was unnecessary for him to repeat the detail in his letters.

Following the incident, Paul travelled widely across the Mediterranean Basin, 'from Jerusalem to Illyricum' (Rom 15:19), to spread knowledge of his experience of the resurrection. He argued that resurrection was possible for all. This was revolutionary in the first century CE, 'the concept of an individual dying and rising again, in the flesh, into a life everlasting was extremely rare in the ancient world and practically non-existent in Judaism' (Aslan 2013, p. 165). No Roman religion preached resurrection for all believers (Balsdon 1969, p. 191). However, Paul now claimed that it required only belief in the *event* and a commitment to live a new life, a life of *agapē*, to experience resurrection.

Badiou and *event*

For Badiou the world is structured in mathematical terms, 'everything is mathematizable: everything is logical' (Badiou & Tarby 2013, p. 139). An *event* is an 'irruption within this scene of a set of things' (Badiou & Tarby 2013, p. 142). Being is the infinity of multiplicities and an *event* is that which exceeds the structures of Being. An *event* disrupts, or emancipates a person from the predictability, the restrictions and the structures that compose existence. An *event* is the break between an old life and a new. In this case, the resurrection *event* declares the truth that 'one of us has been excepted from death' (Badiou 2009, p. 36) and if it is a truth, then all can be excepted.

An *event* is not understood as a single incident. It is not simply an occurrence with historical contingency. Paul's experience on the road to Damascus is 'not enough to inscribe the *event* within the world, for the only Being of the event is being declared' (Badiou 2009, p. 37). An *event* comes into being when a person acts and makes a change. For an *event* to become real, for it to become a truth, action is required by a person or a group of people. Badiou describes this response as fidelity to the *event*, in which there is 'a sustained investigation of the situation, under the imperative of the *event* itself; it is an immanent and continuing break' (Badiou cited in Strhan 2010, p. 236). Action arising from this *event* has a particular character imbued by the event itself:

> An event is not by itself the creation of a reality; it is the creation of a possibility, it opens up a possibility. It indicates to us that a possibility exists that has been ignored. The event is, in a certain way, merely a proposition. It proposes something to us. Everything will depend on the way in which the possibility proposed by the event is grasped, elaborated, incorporated and set out in the world.
> (Badiou & Tarby 2013, p. 9)

There is both an occurrence and a response, and both are needed for an *event* to become a truth procedure.

While Badiou (2003) would not have the resurrection *event* contingent on the historical occurrence, his explanation of the resurrection *event* is situated in Paul's description of the experience. Badiou (2003) accepts that the resurrection *event* is mediated through Paul's own experience. That Paul was a persecutor of Christians in that historical time and place is part of the *evental* experience; that is the life from which Paul made an immanent break. We can continue this line of thought by considering the implications for the world had Paul not acted. How different the world would be if Paul had simply climbed back on his horse and

continued into Damascus unaffected by the incident that had spooked his horse. In Badiou's (2003) understanding of the resurrection *event*, if Paul had not responded to the incident then the resurrection *event* would not have come into existence, the communities would not have been formed and certainly his letters would not have been written. There would have been no subject. Whither Christianity and western civilisation?

The concept to be communicated here is that *event* is not restricted to the historical incident that may have prompted it. The truth procedure from the resurrection *event* is that a new ontological belief came into the world. A new possibility was created that death could be exceeded. Paul translated his experience into a new way of living in the material world. Badiou (2003) explains the universality of Paul's experience, firstly, as an orientation to the other, and so *agapē*. Secondly, being subject to the resurrection *event* is being open to pure encounter with the other, and the other is without identity, so not restricted by historical descriptions, such as Jew, Greek etc. In this way, Badiou can make the claim for Paul as the foundation of universalism through the *event*, 'Jesus is resurrected' (2003, p. 4), and it is declared that 'life, affirmative life, was restored and refounded for all' (2003, p. 61). The *event* is therefore situated in the reality of people's lives as they live in relationship with others.

In the previous chapter I referred to the concept of pure encounter. I want to explore that in more detail, as it is important in the education experience. Badiou describes the resurrection *event* as grace, taken from Paul's use of the Greek, *kharis*; 'grace presents itself as pure giveness' (2003, p. 63). The resurrection *event* in Badiou's reading offers two paths that a person may choose. The first is 'the subjective path of the flesh (*sarx*) whose real is death' (Badiou 2003, p. 75). In this first choice, Law and work govern a person. This is what Paul opposes. Instead he offers, 'the path of the spirit (*pneuma*) whose real is life' (Badiou 2003, p. 75). To choose the second path is to choose 'faith and grace'. Badiou (2003, p. 66) is not talking here about 'faith and grace' in any formal religious sense, rather 'grace is pure and simple encounter'. In becoming a subject of the *event*, one is choosing to be outside of the Law and 'being under grace' (Badiou 2003, p. 63). To be a subject of grace means that each encounter with another occurs unmediated by laws or rules or hierarchy, or even gender, just pure and simple interaction with the other. In that expression of grace we come to an understanding of Gal 3:28, that there is no longer Greek or Jew, male or female, slave or free. We meet the other as they are, not as a representative of their identity. This was an extraordinary idea that re-shaped relationships for those people who joined the *ekklēsia*.

One stumbling block for many in Badiou's (2003) construction of the resurrection *event* is his assertion of the resurrection as fable. Badiou finds it 'rigorously impossible to believe in the

resurrection of the crucified' (2003, p. 5). However, he acknowledges that for Paul, the resurrection was real and, more importantly, that Paul had acted on that belief, and thus brought the *event* of the resurrection into existence. Badiou can hold this position because he applies a particular understanding to the death that precedes the resurrection. For Badiou (2003, p. 70), death counts for nothing, it 'functions as a condition of immanence' and serves to 'construct the evental site insofar as it brings about that resurrection (which cannot be inferred from it)'. Badiou's position is more readily understood when we know that he describes death as a 'form of thinking' (2009, p. 33). Žižek provides a helpful insight into Badiou's meaning for death:

> Life and death, spirit and flesh, designate two subjective stances, two ways to live one's life … this has nothing to do with biological life and death but rather provides the coordinates of the two fundamental 'existential attitudes'. (Žižek 2010b, p. 93)

Paul's death is on the side of flesh and the law and holds no interest for Badiou. What is of interest is that Paul held that faith in the knowledge of the resurrection would transform people's lives, releasing people from the death of the restrictions of their existing life.

Badiou (2003) describes resurrection in the modern world as an escape from the death imposed by capitalism. The resurrection *event* is the possibility for those in capitalist nations to escape the increasing fragmentation of identity. For Badiou we experience death through consumerism as we allow ourselves to be constantly divided by capitalism into more and more refined units of specialised consumption; we die to the truth of ourselves. Thus might we understand that Badiou can declare the resurrection as a fable and yet identify it as an *event* that ruptures the real and becomes truth.

Badiou (2013) applies the resurrection *event* to contemporary French politics. In a discussion with Ward Blanton about his play *The Incident at Antioch*, Badiou described four groups in contemporary France who have the potential to come together: the educated youth from the schools and universities; the youth from the *banlieues* (or poor suburbs); the ordinary workers who are neither absolutely poor nor rich; and immigrant workers, including those without documents. He laments the inability of the four groups to come together for change, suggesting that among other obstructions, the state has intervened to prevent collaboration between the groups. He expresses his thinking in a memorable conclusion to the discussion:

> Four is an event. Four is the number of an event. And three is the number of new forms of organization. One is nothing, movement and revolt. Two is the beginning of politics. Three is the beginning of new forms of organization. And four is change. (Badiou 2013, p. 150)

This numerical account of building to four as an *event* is quite striking. He overcomes the restrictions of identity of the four groups by bringing them into his numerical formula of political change. Badiou ponders what might bring the undocumented immigrant workers together with the Parisian youths in the *banlieues* who engage in 'a sort of violent revolt without any continuity' (2013, p. 148). He concludes his answer to the question with, 'so we can hope' (Badiou 2013, p. 148). We can infer that he is hoping an *event* will connect the four groups. Perhaps his hope is that the groups will act in fidelity to the event of 1968, referenced earlier in this text, but that is not the direction of the interview.

The anecdote also highlights a limitation of a philosophical approach to the *event* for an educator. In Badiou's theory:

> Waiting is pointless, for it is of the essence of the *event* not to be preceded by any sign, and to catch us unawares with its grace, regardless of our vigilance; an *event* comes like a thief in the night. (2003, p. 111)

As a philosopher, Badiou's purpose is investigating the truth of the human condition; he waits, observes and informs. As an educator I have an interest in how change is brought about in the human condition. My interest is in how the resurrection *event* might be experienced in the lives of people in the modern world, and secondly, how educators might draw on the resurrection *event* to bring about transformation in this contemporary world. Mead's philosophy of the *event* (2002) brings us closer to a pedagogy for educators.

Mead and *event*

The primary texts from which my exploration of Mead's work on *event* proceeds are the collection of his lecture notes and additional manuscripts from the 1930 Carus lectures (Mead 2002), as well as the interpretation of those notes by Joas (1997). In these lectures Mead drew together his experience with, and reliance on, the natural sciences, particularly evolutionary theory, with developments in the physical sciences, notably Einstein's Theory of Relativity and Minkowski's theory of space-time. Drawing on his own theory of intersubjectivity, represented in the edited collection *Mind, Self and Society* (Mead 1934), Mead came to a philosophy of the present. In the following discussion of Mead on *event* I have focused on his theorising of emergence, the sociality of *event,* and the self-reflective person.

In Mead's theory, emergence occurs in the real world for 'reality that transcends the present must exhibit itself in the present' (2002, p. 42). That experience in the present allows for a reconstruction of the past and reimagining of the future. It is characterised by 'its becoming

and its disappearing' (Mead 2002, p. 35). Emergence is the appearance of something new in the present, which leads us to create a new past and future, at the very same time that it passes from the present. Mead explains this in terms of the world of nature:

> Once the novel emerges in nature, we set about rationalizing it, that is, we undertake to show that it, or at least the conditions that determine its appearance can be found in the past that lay behind it. (2002, p. 46)

This is the influence of evolutionary theory on Mead (Joas 1997). Influenced by this theory he argues that 'the emergent when it appears is always found to follow from the past, but before it appears it does not, by definition, follow from the past' (Mead 2002, p. 36). The emergent cannot be predicted from an examination of the past, it simply arrives. In that I find congruence with Badiou's *event* (2003). However, I also note that for Mead, the past is then reconstructed in light of the new present experience. Here is a difference with Badiou, for whom the *event* is a break with the past and is without continuity.

Mead's breakthrough in this frame of reference is that there is no past 'in-itself', there is no 'irrevocable past' (2002, p. 41). While the past will have truly occurred in the 'geometry of Minkowski space-time', if the circumstances of the past become fixed presentations then 'they lose any value they may have in interpreting our own present and determining our futures' (Mead 2002, p. 41). Mead uses the image of multiple presents sliding into one another, 'each with a past which is referable to itself, each past taking up into itself those back of it, and in some degree reconstructing them from its own standpoint' (2002, p. 41). Having come to this conception of the past, Mead (2002, p. 108) adopts a view of history in which humans are active agents, constantly, intelligently 'searching for the means of making it (the world) better' rather than being subject to a future, one in which the past and present are merely stages in a process toward some form of pre-determined salvation.

In Mead's theory, 'ideas' are part of the communication process and 'sure evidence of a substantial mind' (2002, p. 97). A person is able to organise his or her responses to stimulus rather than simply reacting. The idea of the object becomes the object and a human person is capable of responding to the object with an organised response. In this ideational process, conscious organisms react to their own responses to these ideas or objects:

> We get hold of the conditions of future conduct as these are found in the organized responses we have formed, and so construct our pasts in anticipation of the future. The individual who can thus get hold of them can further organize them through the selection of stimulations which call them out and can thus build up his plan of action. (Mead 2002, p. 97)

To illustrate this concept, I will refer to the idea of falling in love. If I were to fall in love with a girl, I'll name her 'Jane', my response would be to reorganise my past and future around that experience. Time would be structured around that occurrence, as in, before and after I fell in love with Jane. I would reconstruct the history of my life as having brought me to the point of meeting and falling in love with her, and I could imagine no future without Jane. It is not that previous relationships would cease to exist as a result of the event of falling newly in love, but I choose to see that past as shaping the person that I had become when I met Jane. I plan my future with Jane, just as the moment of falling in love disappears from the present. In Badiou's language I act in fidelity to the *event* of falling in love, while in Mead's language I organise the stimulations and build a plan of action. I make the point here that when the Thessalonians and others met Paul, something akin to falling in love occurred for them. As a result of the experience with Paul they changed their actions, reconstructed their past and looked to a new future. I find in those examples the process of ideation, which is the necessity of being able to organise responses to stimulation (i.e. the realisation that something taking place in the present has a past and impacts on future actions).

In Mead's theory of intersubjectivity (1934, 2002), there is an explanation of how this process of ideation happens. For Mead we all begin as subject, the 'I' in his description of the self. We can never know the 'I' in the present, 'the "I" can only contemplate itself through recourse to past actions' (Joas 1997, p. 109). The 'I' is 'the immediate response of an individual to others. It is the incalculable, unpredictable, and creative aspect of the self' (Ritzer 2011, p. 366). With development through social experiences, as we move from childhood to adulthood, we develop a sense of ourselves as object, which Mead (1934, 2002) refers to as the 'me'. He uses the concept of 'me' to explain the conversion of external experiences to inner experiences. I build the 'me' from my social interactions with others, before the 'I' is formed. From others I learn the rules of the game, where the game might represent family, club, society or indeed a recreational game. Mead explains the concept of the 'generalised other' in a well-known metaphor about a child playing baseball:

> The child must not only take the role of the other, as he does in the play but he must assume the various roles of all the participants in the game, and govern his own action accordingly … their organized reactions to him he has imbedded in his own playing of different positions, and this organized reaction becomes what I have called the 'generalized' other that accompanies and controls his conduct. (Mead 2002, p. 191)

The rules that I have learned as the object 'me', over time, become the internalised 'I'.

The generalised other is an explanation of how we learn to live in a group, a community or society (i.e. we learn what is expected of us in this situation regardless of what the 'I' might call from us). Mead makes two observations that are important to this research. Firstly, the generalised other provides a person with a sense of self, indeed the 'self can exist only if he assumes the roles of others' (Mead 2002, p. 190). The 'I' is constantly adjusted to accommodate the 'me' that is formed by social experiences. Secondly, Mead (2002, p. 190) notes that 'the individual who is stimulating others to response is at the same time arousing in himself the tendencies to the same reactions'. So one who ventures to new actions will not only draw a response from others but will themselves be impacted by the social interaction. The object, 'me', experiences social interactions with people of the social group and there is constant reconstruction of the self as the 'me' alters the 'I'. In his discussion, Mead (2002) then proposed that the 'I' appears as a social object, reflecting the social group to which I belong, or have belonged. Thus 'the nature of the individual is in varying degrees the expression of the natures of other members of the system or society' (Mead 2002, p. 98). It is from this concept that we can understand the importance of encountering difference, plurality (Biesta 2013), unpredictability (MacIntyre 2011) or as I have preferred, *event*, to enable growth to happen. If the expression of ourselves is drawn only from the known and familiar then it follows that there can be no growth and learning does not occur.

I offer a brief example relevant to this research text. The resurrection of all was a new concept for people of the Mediterranean Basin in the first century CE. Resurrection was beyond their social experience and outside of the experience of the 'I'. Paul changed this; he succeeded in creating a new generalised other in the *ekklēsia*. He did this by living in their presence a life of *agapē* in which the good of the other was his interest. He spoke and wrote about *agapē* as his response to the resurrection *event*, writing to the Philippians: 'My brothers be united in following my rule of life. Take as your models everybody who is already doing this and study them as you used to study us' (Phil 3:17). People who joined the *ekklēsia* developed a sense of the self as a person who could live a new life for the other and therefore be a person who could experience a resurrected life. They changed their actions to reflect the new generalised other. In that example we can find Mead's approach to reflexivity as, 'the turning back of experience of the individual on himself' (1934, p. 134). In each community Paul succeeds in shifting the sense of self. The *ekklēsia* became a social group in which the generalised other was one who lived a life of *agapē.*

The narrative of Paul as educator describes his creation of structures and social practices to support people who join the *ekklēsia,* to be faithful to the *event*. In making a choice for Giddens' (1984) theory of structuration to analyse the *ekklēsia*, I found qualified support in

Joas, who despite his criticism of Giddens for effectively ignoring Mead and pragmatism, nonetheless wrote:

> Giddens's 'theory of structuration' comes very close to Mead's thinking in some respects, as in Giddens's notion of intentionality as the capacity for self-reflective control of ongoing behavior, his distinction between discursive and practical consciousness, and in his interest in temporality and historicity. (Joas 1997, p. xviii)

Giddens (1984, p. 3) describes human action and cognition as a *durée*, 'a continuous flow of conduct'. Life is bound up with routine, 'most daily practices are not directly motivated. Routinized practices are the prime expression of the duality of structure in respect of the continuity of social life' (Giddens 1984, p. 282). We do things without conscious thought, until we are prompted to reflexivity (i.e. the monitoring of our actions and the actions of others). This is the power of the *event*, to prompt reflexivity, and therefore the potential for change.

A person must be able to recognise that reality is not reduced to instants but that 'earlier stages must be conditions of later phases' (Mead 2002, p. 62). Joas (1997, p. 192) captures this aspect of Mead's theory: 'a self-reflective organism is capable of experiencing the present and reconstructing the past while testing alternative future possibilities in the present and constructing a plan of action'. This becomes a critical element in my analysis of Paul's work with the *ekklēsia*. The members of the community experienced the resurrection *event* through Paul's living of *agapē,* which shaped a new generalised other. People participated in the life of the *ekklēsia* with a new experience of 'me', leading to a new sense of 'I', and thus creating a new sense of self. It has been described thus:

> Taking the role of the other is what Mead uses to describe thinking as a kind of 'inner conversation'. It is a 'reflective intelligence' that comes with being able to see the world from another's perspective – it is the internalization by the individual of social processes of experience and behaviour. (da Silva 2007, p. 4)

This inner conversation shapes the sense of self. This self-consciousness, or the ability to see oneself as object, is a feature that distinguishes humans from animals. For the reflective organism, the sense of self constantly evolves through ongoing social encounters.

For Mead, 'emergence is an expression of sociality' (2002, p. 93), where sociality is 'the capacity of being several things at once' (2002, p. 75). He located the generalised other within a wider definition of society. I quote him at length on this:

> A society is a systematic order of individuals in which each has a more or less differentiated activity. The structure is always there … and it is in varying degrees

> reflected in each individual. But, as I have already stated, it can get into the separate individual only in so far as he can take the parts of others while he is taking his own part. It is due to the structural organization of society that the individual, in successively taking the roles of others in some organized activity, finds himself selecting what is common in their interrelated acts, and so has assumed what I have called the role of the generalized other. (Mead 2002, p. 106)

Mead's theory is helpful in analysing the sociality of Paul's interactions with the communities and how the transformation occurred for those who chose the *ekklēsia*; it informs my discussion on a pedagogy of the *event.*

Mead (2002) introduces what he calls the passage between the three systems of past, present and future; this passage is *event*. The person's sense of self is transformed as the present reconstructs their past and their idea of the future. Mead (2002, p. 100) accepts the passage between past, present and future 'as the character of reality'. For the conscious organism, each passage from old to new represents a new encounter and further, 'what renders one event distinguishable from another is a becoming which affects the inner nature of the event' (Mead 2002, p. 49). An *event* is a process that brings about change in the subject's view of their past and their imagining of the future. Mead would have 'what **becomes** as the event' (2002, p. 51 emphasis added). I am who I become as a result of my *eventa*l encounters with others. This introduction of temporality to *event* is a helpful nuance on Badiou's theorising of *event* (2003). What Mead's theory offers is the *event* not as a break but a transformation, as the *event* seeks passage from present into past and present into future. Mead finds the emergent lies in the passage from old to new and therefore:

> An object can be a member of two divergent systems only in passage, in which its nature in one system leads to the transformation which its passing into another system carries with it. In the passage itself it can be both. (Mead 2002, p. 98)

To be clear about terminology: I have followed Badiou (2003) and prefer the term *event* to describe the appearance of something new in the world, which Mead (2002) refers to as emergence. I draw on Mead's theory of ideation to argue that an *event,* when brought into existence by a response that changes practice and increases agency, can be explained as the passage from the present experience to a reconstruction of the past and planning for the future. In analysing Paul's education encounters, I have preferred Mead's language of passage creating change or transformation in actions rather than Badiou's immanent break with the past.

Conclusion

The Damascus incident opened the possibility for Paul to change his life. The experience emancipated him from the life he was living, or in Mead's (2002) language, his experience transcended the present and allowed him to reconstruct his past and plan for a new future. That is the skeleton of *event*. From this I want to highlight four key points, as they form the foundations for the discussion and analysis in the three chapters that follow.

Event requires a response

We learn from Badiou (2003) that a person needs to respond to an incident to bring an *event* into existence. The Damascus incident was critical in Paul's life, but it was his decision to live in *agapē* and to form *ekklēsia,* in which others could live in *agapē*, that brought the resurrection *event* into being. Mead (2002) helps us to understand the process of transformation. In the self-reflective person, new experiences shape the 'me', leading to a new sense of 'I' and a new sense of self; the past is reconstructed and a new future is planned. Transformation and change in the self cannot occur without reflexivity; his concept of ideation is that the reflexive person is able to develop an organised response to their experiences in the natural and social world. This was likely to have been a radical new concept in Paul's time, and its impact should not be underestimated in the present. We are always subject to external forces; an *event* arrives without warning or expectation, but each person can make a choice how to respond to an *event*, and whether it comes into existence in their sense of self. However, as is set out below, this is a qualified choice, for we exist in relationship with others.

The sociality of *event*

The *event* is brought into existence in a social setting. The narrative of the agent, their past, present and view of the future, their location in the social world, their existing relationships and understanding of who they are, is brought to the experience of the *event* and will shape their response. It is our experience with others that shapes our sense of self, the intersubjectivity in our interactions, that forms the generalised other. In Paul's narrative, he brings the resurrection *event* to the four communities by living in *agapē*. They experience *agapē* in the context of the *ekklēsia* and so the *event* is experienced recursively in their relationships with one another. I view the education encounter from the same perspective; learning is a social experience. Thus an experience of *event* that is brought to the education encounter, or for the education encounter to become an *event,* calls for a response from both teacher and student. One of the implications of accepting the *event* into education, as I will discuss in the analysis chapters, is the importance of the teacher being open to reflexivity and

change, lest they limit the reflexivity and change among students. The accountability to one another for the actions we choose in an encounter is the substance of pragmatism.

The pragmatism of *event*

Event is not restricted to the historical time and place of its occurrence. Badiou has argued for the universality of the resurrection *event* and it having brought a new ontology, or new truth into the world: that of the possibility of new life. The expression of this universal *event* was the daily experience of living in *agapē* in relationship with others. In this understanding of *event*, we recognise that each person has different agency as they respond to an *event,* and the *event* will have a different passage for each individual. Each member of the *ekklēsia* experienced *agapē* differently, but they remained accountable to one another for their actions. The *ekklēsia* became places where the generalised other was living in *agapē* and learning with, and from, others. These were the rules that each person who joined the *ekklēsia* would learn, and which would shape their sense of self as they experienced *agapē* relationships. Paul introduced social practices that were designed to bring about the freedom for each person to respond to the resurrection *event*; the freedom to pursue the possibility of new life. They did not have an unfettered freedom to act, but were to demonstrate a commitment to the structures of the *ekklēsia*. I will argue this is a model for the contemporary classroom.

Event is open to new narratives

Mead (2002) informs us of the possibility of reconstructing the past. The past is not a past in-itself; it is not fixed. Thus a person is not locked in to their identity. An *event*, which prompts reflexivity, allows a person to reconstruct a new narrative for him or herself. In concrete terms, a student who has the narrative, 'I am not good at Mathematics', can reconstruct that narrative in response to an *event*. Therein lies the complexity for an educator who approaches the education encounter mindful of the possibility of the *event*. A student may experience an *event* in any location at any time; 'it arrives like a thief in the night' (1 Thess 5:2). The challenge for an educator is to know the narrative of the student, and to what *events* they are currently being faithful, and be open to that student changing that narrative. This is the importance of Badiou's (2003) reading of the pure encounter. Each person must be able to come to the encounter without the restrictions of identity. In that encounter is the possibility for a student, and teacher, to change in response to new knowledge, and to construct a new narrative for him or herself.

The conditions by which new narratives can be created are the substance of the three analysis chapters that follow. We learn from Paul, from Badiou (2003) and from Mead (1934, 2002) that it is the response to the *event,* in relationship with others, which brings the *event*

into existence. Paul knew that he could not live the *event* with every person, every day; he was travelling to new communities. He created the *ekklēsia* in which people lived in *agapē*, and looked to the good of the other. In the same way a teacher cannot create the *event*, for the *event* is experienced and held by the student, but they must be constantly awake to the possibility of the *event* in the present. They must create the conditions and relationships in which the *event* might be recognised and in which students respond and bring the *event* into existence. The first of the three analysis chapters explores the social system that Paul created in forming the *ekklēsia*.

Chapter Six: *Ekklēsia* - unique education communities

A personal narrative

One of the most frustrating periods in my experience as an educator was working with a Year 8 class in a country school in the early 1990s. It was a difficult experience at the time, and it had been preserved in my memory as a failure in what was otherwise a rewarding teaching career that spanned 11 years and four schools. In a surprise to me, the discomfort of that memory has been alleviated by this inquiry. As I have worked through a narrative inquiry process with Paul's letters, I have come to frame the narrative very differently. I now think about it in terms of the personal and social dimension of experience, and in light of the dimension of place. In investigating Paul's formation of the *ekklēsia*, in four different communities, I have begun to understand what I could, and should, have done differently with that group of students in that place. In the narrative I now have for myself it has become less of a shortfall in who I am as a person (i.e. I believed there was something lacking in me as a human being), and more a deficiency in my knowledge. The message is really quite simple; if I had changed the place then I could have changed the relationships and changed the encounter.

My curriculum focus with that Year 8 group was the rich history of the Middle Ages in Europe, which I taught using all of the models of teaching and instructional techniques that I had developed and refined in my hitherto flourishing career. Despite all of these efforts, I failed to create any connection with the ontological or epistemological experience of the 13 and 14-year-old sons and daughters of dairy farmers who made up the class in that regional Catholic secondary school. As a result, these students did not enter into any form of meaningful relationship with the history curriculum, or with me. I am sure, if they remember the experience at all, individually or collectively, it is with little affection.

Our shared experience occurred in an overcrowded portable classroom with second-hand desks and chairs and intermittently functioning climate control facilities. For forty minutes on three occasions per week I entered that space and applied my pedagogical repertoire to the 33 young minds, such as was permitted by that confined space. The portable nature of the classrooms is a good metaphor for the experience. These classes were a temporary distraction to which I had to attend. They diverted me from the real teaching, which, at that time, I considered was preparing senior students to achieve the university entry score that

would secure their future. For the Year 8 students, my history classes were transitory encounters with little connection to the experience of their lives.

Other teachers successfully engaged with this group and experienced none of the behavioural complexities that I encountered. As I think back now, I know that I had no interest in connecting with this group of students in that classroom. I had no desire to enter into their world or to create a common world of experience in that classroom so that they would engage with the curriculum that I was charged to instruct. I assumed that my positional authority as an experienced teacher and school leader would suffice and carry me through the allocated time with the group. What I now believe is that if I had changed the place where the encounters occurred, it would have changed how I viewed my relationship with this group of students.

Of all the groups of students that I taught across 11 years of teaching adolescents, it is the experience with this group that has come back to me most often as I have worked through this inquiry into Paul's letters. I have come to terms with my lack of humility with the group, my lack of knowledge, and the lack of any attempt on my part to create a genuine dialogue. It was, perhaps, my Athens moment: *Does this parrot know what he's talking about? - He sounds like a propagandist for some outlandish medieval god.*

Introduction

In this chapter I argue that the structures implemented by Paul in the *ekklēsia,* with a group of Jews and Gentiles in the first century CE, can be universalised to 21st century education settings and increase the agency of all who are involved in those encounters. Consistent with the narrative inquiry methodology, this chapter integrates the relevant literature with my experience of the field texts. I review the literature on *ekklēsia* in which they are described as unique groups for the time and place (Meeks 2003), as scholastic communities (Judge 2008d) or learning communities (Smith 2012), and subversive groups formed as an alternative to the imperial cult of Caesar (Horsley 1997b, 2000b). The review of that literature establishes the *ekklēsia* as education communities that were unique in their time and place. I draw on contemporary education thinkers (Biesta 2006, 2010, 2013, 2017; Dewey 1975, 1997, 1998, 2011; Freire 1985a, 1985b, 1996) to support my analysis of the *ekklēsia* as communities of emancipation and sites of social learning. The conclusion of the chapter invites contemporary educators to consider the *ekklēsia* as an education community to inform their own practice.

The structures of the *ekklēsia* included the equality of all who joined the group, each person being freed from the restrictions of identity, and a commitment to the other, in both learning and living, represented as living in *agapē* relationships. These structures were supported by social practices 'reproduced chronically across space and time' to create a social system (Giddens 1984, p. xxi) in which people transformed their lives. Paul was engaged in education as more than an epistemological process. His interest was in how people are in the world. On that, we learn more from Kruger's investigation of social learning in school communities:

> The argument is not to conceive learning as social practice against the idea of learning as an individual appropriation … (but) to recognise that learning has an ontological as well as an epistemological and technical character. Learning rescued from epistemological-only conceptions, and invested with social significance expresses the agential power of learners to change the social structures in which they participate. (Kruger 2013, p. 11)

Here is recognition that education designed to realise a person's full humanity, or achieve freedom, or as in Paul's teaching, come to a new life, includes knowledge about how this is realised in the practical world in which the subject lives. Such knowledge opens the learner to greater agency to modify his or her environment. Paul acknowledged the practical world in which people lived but believed that in living and learning together with a shared ontology, new knowledge, or epistemology, would be generated.

The literature on *ekklēsia*

The literature on *ekklēsia* is conclusive; they were unique communities. There is not the same consensus that education was constitutive of the communities, but those who do argue for education as being core to the communities, including Judge (in Harrison 2008) and Smith (2012), agree that the education encounters were innovative in that time and place. This inquiry is seeking to understand what was new, and what is universalisable about the *ekklēsia* as education communities.

Meeks and the *ekklēsia*

Meeks undertook a functional analysis of the *ekklēsia* to understand 'the social forms, the social environment, the customary cultural assumptions embedded in that environment, and the peculiar subculture being invented by some of those groups' (2003, p. ix). He explored dimensions of the *ekklēsia* as those who belonged in the group, and those external to the group, might have understood them. This involved consideration of the boundaries of the group, the language of belonging and separation, the use of rituals and special beliefs that distinguished the *ekklēsia* from the surrounding community. Meeks (2003, p. 74) concludes on the basis of his analysis that the *ekklēsia* represented a 'unique organisational structure'.

The Pauline *ekklēsia* maintained 'strong boundaries to define themselves over (and) against that world' (Meeks 2003, p. 169). The threshold for being welcomed into the *ekklēsia* was a commitment to Paul's resurrection narrative. Members were welcomed from all strata of society regardless of social or economic status, race, religion, gender or cultural background. Despite this diversity, Meeks (2003, p. 74) noted the strong sense of solidarity in the group: 'these groups enjoyed an unusual degree of intimacy, high levels of interaction among members, and a very strong sense of internal cohesion'. In a review of the Thessalonian letters, he identifies the use of a language of belonging (1 Thess 1:8-9); the use of family or kinship language (1 Thess 2:7-8); the unique social relationship with each other described as '*communitas*' (1 Thess 3:12 & 4:1) and a ritual of entry to the group, baptism (Meeks 2003, pp. 84-94). These characteristics set the *ekklēsia* apart from similar social groups.

Voluntary associations proliferated in Graeco-Roman society. An association might be formed around a trade, similar to a workers' guild; attached to a religious cult; formed for funerary benefits or any other interests. Meeks (2003) recognises some similarities between some voluntary associations and the *ekklēsia* but emphasises their difference. A participant might belong to many different associations, whereas the *ekklēsia* created social practices that were designed to replace loyalty to other groups. The *ekklēsia* included a focus on the

development of ethical principles (i.e. how a person was to live their whole life), which was not part of the brief of other associations. For Meeks (2003) the voluntary associations tended toward greater homogeneity, having been formed around a common social interest. He finds some similarity with the model of the synagogue; both Jews and the *ekklēsia* met in private houses and had a similar structure to their meetings. Both had a connection to a wider movement than just the local group that met. However, the synagogue had a formal organisation, which was not found in the *ekklēsia.* Meeks (2003, p. 81), also writes that, 'the role of women in the Pauline movement is much greater and much more nearly equal to that of men than in contemporary Judaism'. Finally there were core differences in how rituals were understood, practiced and accepted (e.g. circumcision).

Philosophical schools such as Plato's Academy, and groups such as the Pythagoreans and the Epicureans, dominated Graeco-Roman education. Meeks (2003) finds some similarities between these philosophical schools and groups, notably the Epicureans, and the *ekklēsia.* However, he dismisses them as a model for understanding the *ekklēsia,* because he does not accept that there was a strong scholarly and academic element in the Pauline movement (Meeks 2003, p. 84). Stowers varies with Meeks on the philosophical schools, finding 'seven areas where the philosophical schools and Pauline communities possess similar but not identical features' (Stowers cited in Smith 2012, p. 8), but also concluded that they were not the same.

Meeks writes that the *ekklēsia* attracted people whose status was 'inconsistent' (2003, p. 73). He acknowledges the limitations of the data available on the social and economic status of members of the *ekklēsia* but argues there is sufficient to make the claim that:

> The most active and prominent members of Paul's circle (including Paul himself) are people of high status inconsistency … they are upwardly mobile, their achieved status is higher than their attributed status. (Meeks 2003, p. 73)

People were attracted to the sense of belonging and intimacy that came with membership of the *ekklēsia.* Meeks speculates that the people who joined the *ekklēsia,* because of this status inconsistency, were more open to new ideas and change. This attitude may have arisen from 'anxiety (and) loneliness in a society in which social position was important and usually rigid' or it may have come from 'some daring, some self-confidence, some willingness to break out of the ordinary social structures' (Meeks 2003, p. 190).

Twenty-five years after the initial publication of his book, in a tribute to his ground-breaking study, Meeks (2009) holds to his original conclusion that the *ekklēsia* were unique social groupings and there is no single ancient model with which to compare them.

Horsley, the *ekklēsia* and the imperial cult of Caesar

Horsley (1997b) criticises Meeks' functionalist approach and the depoliticisation of the *ekklēsia*. His own work is based on a political analysis and has led him to the view that Paul was building a group that would challenge 'Roman rule and the Jerusalem priestly aristocracy' (Horsley 1997b, p. 1). For Horsley, power is conceived in relational terms. He investigated how 'Roman imperial power relations were constituted by the combination of emperor cult and patronage networks' (Horsley 1997b, p. 13). He then identified the practices of the *ekklēsia* that challenged those networks.

Horsley analyses Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians (1997b, pp. 242-52) and comes to the conclusion that the *ekklēsiai* was a network of political cells, a view that is shared by others (Elliott 2000; Wright, NT 2000). These cells were maintained by people of some wealth in each city, including Stephanas, Gaius, Lydia, Phoebe, Prisca and Aquila, and were linked through the travelling of a core group led by Paul, and including Timothy, Titus, Silvanus, and perhaps Apollos. The *ekklēsia* were established within the broader society but were to work toward separation from it. Horsley argues that as a Jew, Paul understood that the Jewish community conducted 'their own internal affairs semiautonomously insofar as possible by permission of the Roman authorities' (1997b, p. 246). Paul insisted that the *ekklēsia* 'run its own affairs' as a 'complete declaration of independence and autonomy … from imperial governments or their local clients' (Horsley 1997b, p. 246).

Horsley (1997b) targets Paul's dismissal of the Gentile gods (1 Cor 8:4-5) as a significant challenge to the wider society. Paul would have known that the 'religious dimension of ancient life and institutions was usually inseparable from others, such as the political, economic, and ethnic' (Horsley 1997b, p. 7). Horsley (1997b, p. 248), argues that Paul's response to questions from the Corinthians about food offered to idols 'was not an issue of ethics, but of the integrity and survival of the Corinthians' assembly as an exclusive alternative community to the dominant society and its social networks'. Schüssler Fiorenza (2000, p. 44), writes that Paul 'was seeking a way of survival for his communities exposed to the death-dealing powers of Roman imperialism'. Wright (2000, p. 182), goes further suggesting that the *ekklēsia* were 'subversive little groups when seen from Caesar's point of view'. For Horsley (1997b, p. 251), the financial 'collection' becomes 'an international political-economic dimension diametrically opposed to the tributary political economy of

the empire'. Paul pushed the Corinthians to separate themselves from the cultic rituals of civic society: 'You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons. You cannot take your share at the table of the Lord and at the table of demons' (1 Cor 10:21). These cult groups were generally manipulated by the Roman authorities (Price 1997). Paul was insisting on 'political-religious solidarity over against the dominant society', which meant that members of the *ekklēsia* were required to cut themselves off from the 'very means by which their previously essential social-economic relations were maintained' (Horsley 1997a, p. 249). In this construction of the *ekklēsia,* Paul introduced structures designed to challenge Roman hegemony.

I accept that a narrative of the *ekklēsia* as a political movement can be constructed from the Corinthian letters. However, it is difficult to sustain a narrative that Paul was challenging the imperial cult of Caesar across all four communities. There is a significant difference in Paul's language between the letters to the Corinthians and the Thessalonians. Paul wrote to the Thessalonians:

> Make a point of living quietly, attending to your own business and earning your living, just as we told you to, so that you are seen to be respectable by those outside the Church, though you do not have to depend on them. (1 Thess 4:11-12)

He was aware that his actions were disturbing the local authorities; after all he had been evicted from Thessalonica and Philippi and would be imprisoned in Ephesus. These local authorities had some autonomy from Rome, and therefore, as I argued in Chapter Four, Paul's actions were not a wider challenge to the imperial cult of Caesar. The evidence from the letters to the Thessalonians, Philippians and Galatians points to Paul seeking change in social practices that would allow people of the *ekklēsia* to experience *agapē.* Any perceived threat to the wider Roman polity was an unintended consequence (Giddens 1984) of Paul's teaching about living for the other. The *ekklēsia* were environments in which people changed their routinised behaviours, but when viewed through the narrative dimension of place, there is insufficient evidence to support a political motive in three of the communities. It could be argued that, given the Corinthian letters were the last to be written, Paul's attitude changed over time and he became more overtly political later in his life.

The inference of Horsley's (1997a, 1997b) analysis of the Corinthian *ekklēsia* is that Paul was engaged in a process of political education. However, Horsley does not enter into an analysis of Paul's pedagogy. In my reading, I found Judge (in Harrison 2008) to be the first to analyse Paul's approach to the education encounter.

Judge, Smith and the *ekklēsia* as scholastic and learning communities

Judge came to the letters of Paul as a classics scholar. His primary interests were the social world of the Roman Empire in the period of Augustus and the integration of classical and biblical studies (Harrison 2008). For Judge, the Pauline texts were representations from one group within a wider social milieu, to be considered alongside a range of other classical texts, inscriptions and epigraphic evidence from the Augustan period. Judge (in Harrison 2008) treats the letters as historical documents rather than as religious texts. In his analysis, Judge (2008h) determines that the *ekklēsia* did not represent a new religion to rival Judaism, or a new cult group. They were a new form of community that challenged the existing Hellenic, Roman and Jewish cultures of education and learning, and changed the way that people engaged with learning. Judge (2008d) offers scholastic communities as his term to describe the *ekklēsia*.

Paul sought renewal for people within a reconstructed community that was orientated to the 'common good' (Judge 2008c, p. 615). Judge argued that the *ekklēsia* were established by Paul to deal with matters of ethics and behaviours, in contrast to the cultic gatherings about which he made the observation that no 'fresh mode of community life was ever built around ancient cults' (Judge 2008c, p. 598). He identified five characteristics of the *ekklēsia* that were determinative of their existence as an education community:

1. A movement of ideas driven by argument and interpretation of texts (Paul's letters).
2. A future orientation, which Judge deemed to be intellectually, radically, different from the Graeco-Roman philosophical schools.
3. A fundamental reconstruction of community life.
4. A renewal for each person, which was to be exercised for the common good.
5. The beginning of a new transnational society that undercut the foundation of the public community. (Judge 2008c, p. 615)

Judge (2008c), concluded that the *ekklēsia* were not the same as the philosophical schools who promoted the acquisition of knowledge or adherence to a doctrine such as Stoicism or Epicureanism. Paul implemented new social practices to promote and support a new way of living and engaged in education encounters to bring about the change in how people lived. Importantly, the new way of life would continue to evolve through intersubjective encounters; it was not fixed to a doctrinal way of living. This was a new approach to education.

I note that Meeks passed over Judge's thesis, setting aside the latter's conclusions as 'bold and impressionistic', suggesting that he 'rejects far too quickly the cultic associations as an analogy to the Pauline groups' (Meeks 2003, p. 84). Meeks' difference with Judge turns on whether the scholarly, academic and rhetorical elements were constitutive of the movement. Meeks (2003), acknowledges that Paul did carry out teaching activities but does not agree that was an essential experience for the people of the *ekklēsia*.

Smith (2012) reviewed Judge's work on the *ekklēsia* as scholastic communities. She finds herself in agreement with Judge but comes to prefer the term, 'learning communities' (Smith 2012, p. 1). In Smith's view the word, scholastic, has connotations of medieval scholasticism. It emphasises, she argues, the intellectual, the rational and the bookish, obscuring the full range of educational activities carried out in the *ekklēsia,* including activities of embodied learning, observation, reflection and modelling of behaviours (Smith 2012). Smith developed a lexical tool to analyse the teaching language in four Pauline letters. She builds her definition of teaching from three dictionary definitions:

> Impart(ing) a message from an addresser to an addressee, where the purpose and/or result of the act is to cause the addressee to gain knowledge, understanding, a skill, attitude or belief or to transform thought, belief or conduct. (Smith 2012, p. 43)

I find discord between Smith's definition of teaching that would see education as a transaction between teacher and student, where the teacher imparts knowledge or skills, and her promotion of the term learning communities, in which she recognises embodied learning, modelling of behaviours etc. However, I accept that the definition suits her purpose of developing a lexical tool for vocabulary analysis.

Smith (2012, p. 390) acknowledges that her description of a learning community is 'counter-intuitive' to her focus on teaching activities. She justifies the choice by arguing that the term recognises that in the community 'more experienced learners taught less experienced learners' and teachers also continued to learn, as 'addressees of God's teaching activities' (Smith 2012, p. 391). For Smith, 'the purpose of the educational environment was not that people would **teach** but that all would **learn** and be transformed in belief and conduct' (2012, p. 391 original emphasis). In those observations, Smith has identified what is new about Paul's approach to education. In the *ekklēsia* people learn with, and from, each other, including the teacher who is a learner in the community. She also identifies the purpose of the learning as being the change to a new way of living, a transformation in belief and conduct. One area where I depart from Smith is in her belief that 'all believing individuals and

communities are addressees of God's own teaching activity, since, as the source and revealer of all Christian content he is the first addresser' (Smith 2012, p. 390). In Smith's world, knowledge exists separate to the human experience of the people involved. Knowledge is revealed to them by an external source, in a manner which, from my perspective, compromises the integrity of the material world.

The work of Judge (in Harrison 2008) and Smith (2012) establishes a firm foundation for describing the *ekklēsia* as education communities. I have found myself in broad agreement with Judge's assessment of the education encounters in the *ekklēsia*. The dissimilarity in methodological approaches accounts for differences in findings. Judge is a historian and classics scholar interested in the operation of the *ekklēsia* in its historical time and place. As a narrative inquirer, I have emphasised the temporal in the *ekklēsia*, looking for the universal lessons in Paul's work that can be applied by educators in the modern world. I acknowledge Judge's body of work (in Harrison 2008) as an important influence on my reading of the letters.

Conclusions from the literature on *ekklēsia*

Scholars across all strands of the literature agree that the *ekklēsia* were unique social groups. The *ekklēsia* were unlike other social groups that existed in the Mediterranean Basin in the first century CE. Paul had created something new. This affirms the importance of beginning with Paul's letters as primary source material for any inquiry into the *ekklēsia*. The letters describe the emergence of a new form of community. There is agreement that membership of the group included the use of rituals and the implementation of structures that were unique to the community. One of the strongest features identified is the use of language to define the group. Members of the *ekklēsia* used language to define the boundaries of the community and within the community to define who and how they would relate. The use of language as a boundary created a structure that was transnational and universalisable. It is worthy of a side note that from that transnational structure, the Catholic Church developed, though it was in my view, an unintended consequence of the social practices introduced by Paul.

The literature acknowledges that teaching was present in the *ekklēsia,* though only Smith (2012) and Judge (2008c) argue that it was constitutive of the groups. These scholars contend that people who joined the *ekklēsia* changed their lives because of the intervention and agency of Paul. They learned a new way of living. Horsley (1997a, 1997b) joins Judge and Smith in arguing that the *ekklēsia* was a place of renewal, or transformation of the subject, in a community context, though there is an overt political element in Horsley's analysis.

In the following section I seek to extend on the literature on the *ekklēsia* as education communities. In analysing the narrative of Paul as an educator, as set out in Chapter Four, I will argue that Paul created the *ekklēsia* as communities of emancipation and sites of social learning. Consistent with the narrative inquiry methodology, I incorporate further review of the literature into that analysis.

The *ekklēsia* as communities of emancipation

I begin this section with a review of select literature on emancipation in education, including the work of Dewey (1975, 1997, 1998, 2011), Biesta (2006, 2010, 2013, 2017), and Freire (1985a, 1985b, 1996). This is followed by a discussion of the social practices that Paul implemented to support a community in which people were to be emancipated from the restrictions of their identity.

Prior to joining an *ekklēsia,* people had adopted social practices that structured their lives, including working, eating, sleeping and living in relationships. Paul understood that people found comfort in the practical nature of repeated social practices. He introduced new social practices on his initial visits when he formed the *ekklēsia,* and reinforced those practices in his letters. I discuss four social practices implemented by people across the *ekklēsiai*:

1. They greeted each other with a holy kiss.
2. They used the relational term of 'brother'.
3. They focused internally on the community, not external gods.
4. They contributed to a transnational monetary collection.

A fifth practice that I describe as, people gathered together, is not discussed as a stand-alone practice, but a practice necessary to the other four. Paul implemented these social practices deliberately. He understood that having social practices repeated recursively would support people learning how to live the new structures of the *ekklēsia*. In the discussion, I draw on Giddens' structuration theory, where structure is 'recursively implicated' in social systems that 'reproduce relations between actors or collectivities organized as regular social practices' (1984, p. 25). I have linked the social practices of the holy kiss and the use of the word brother to a discussion on emancipation, and the transnational collection and internal focus on each other to a discussion of social learning. It is an artificial divide that would not have been present in the lived experience of the *ekklēsia,* but it has facilitated greater clarity in writing about the practices.

The literature on emancipation in education

Dewey (2011, p. 7), describes the communication process as one in which a person 'shares in what another has thought and felt and in so far, meagerly or amply, has his own attitude modified. Nor is the one who communicates it left unaffected'. For this enlarged experience to be an education encounter, there must be a purpose that is orientated to the freedom of the subject. This is not freedom as an end in itself, but freedom that enables growth and new experience. It begins with an outward or bodily freedom. The truly free education encourages the student to observe the environment in which they live and to make sound judgements about acting on their own desires. For Dewey (1997, p. 64), the ideal aim of education was 'the creation of power of self-control … ordered by intelligence' which was to be exercised in relationship with others. We can understand self-control as the freedom to enter into education as an intersubjective encounter and intelligence, as the agency to make decisions about responding to the experience.

Well established in a near democratic America, Dewey (2011) presented democratic education as the opportunity for all to develop their distinctive capabilities and assumed that people would be afforded the opportunity to have these capabilities recognised and acted upon in society. Shyman (2011, p. 1036), observes that underpinning Dewey's approach was the belief that 'education should consistently counter the divisive and separating effects of class membership, religious sectarianism, and ethnic and cultural pluralism'. I make these two observations to reinforce the point of view oft repeated in this research text that the aim of emancipation in the education encounter is not to deny difference, but to ensure that difference does not lead to division or exclusion. Rather, what needs to be recognised is that an encounter with difference leads to change and growth.

In discussing freedom in education, Biesta (2010, 2013) commences with Kant (1724-1804). He argues that Kant's breakthrough was to argue that the individual could achieve freedom, or autonomy, through education. Through education the subject as 'a self-motivated and self-directed' person could become fully autonomous and capable of exercising their agency (Biesta 2010, p. 76). Kant established the principle of moving from immaturity, signified by reliance on the other, including the church and state, to maturity, where people exercised the courage of independent thought derived from reason and rationality. It is Biesta's interpretation of Kant, that education was not a contingent historical possibility, 'but firmly rooted in the telos of the human being (and so) modern education is founded on a particular truth about the destiny of the human being' (Biesta 2010, p. 77). This new possibility for education, elevated it beyond training and inculcation (e.g. instruction in religious

dogma), and linked it to freedom for the individual within the society in which they were situated.

Kant's views on education have attracted significant criticism. While arguing for Kant having established the notion of freedom in education, Biesta (2010), criticises Kant's presumption of a normative state of being, which by definition precludes some people; children are seen as prerational and therefore not human and potentially outside of education. Biesta is also critical of an education process where the subject is socialised into the existing society and so maturity is a qualified freedom within the normative views developed by rational society (Biesta 2010). Others object to Kant's 'unqualified promotion' of epistemology (Hogan 1995, p. 145) and the 'individualistic presuppositions of (his) moral theory' (Honneth 2005, p. 11). Kant attaches rationality to the individual. This individualism is what is challenged by Nietzsche, Freud, Foucault and Habermas, and in the context of this research text, Biesta (2006) drawing on Dewey and Mead. The substantive objection arises from the neglect by Kant of social interaction and the role of communication in the development of the rational self. One cannot think oneself into becoming a rational being.

Biesta takes up the challenge to present a coherent position on the emancipatory potential of education within modern humanism by posing two concepts, 'coming into presence' and 'uniqueness' (2010, p. 81). He explains the first with reference to Hannah Arendt, who argues that freedom is the 'actions' taken by humans that 'calls something into being that did not exist before' (Arendt cited in Biesta 2010, p. 82). In this coming into being, freedom becomes a public rather than a private experience. Freedom does not exist without a public domain in which the action takes place, and is not true freedom without others being free to respond to our action. For Biesta (2013), coming into presence is the way in which the individual engages in a dynamic relationship with others in the world. One can only come into presence in the company of others and where there is the freedom for the individual and the other to be changed by those interactions, negating any possibility of a pre-determined destiny for human beings (Biesta 2013). What is important about this observation is that it recognises the agency of all. In the example of Paul, the *ekklēsia* is formed in partnership with his fellow-workers, but each person who joined became an active agent in the ongoing development of the *ekklēsia.* The *ekklēsia* evolved with the agency of those who joined it. We find this in Paul's own words to the Thessalonians:

> Make more and more progress in the kind of life that you are meant to live: the life that God wants, as you learnt from us, and as you are already living it (1 Thess 4:1)

and

> You observed the sort of life we lived when we were with you, which was for your instruction, and you were led to become imitators of us. (1 Thess 1:5-6)

People were changed by their interactions with the other, and so we understand the interactions as intersubjective encounters.

Biesta (2013) writes of the importance of the subject coming into being as the unique person that only they can be. It is not about being different from another, but being unique in the presence of another. It is not a role that I play, or a function that I perform, it is not the social 'me', but it is who I am in relation to another in the moment when I am called to be me. Biesta contends that we come into the world through our interactions with others but 'the ways in which others take up my beginnings are radically beyond my control' (2013, p. 143). Here, I draw the reader back to my earlier discussion about growth and change for the subject arising from the encounter with difference. Biesta explores the idea of the subject not as an 'essence or identity' but through an *event* which is relational (2013, p. 143). An *event* is an interruption to the order of the world; an experience of difference that occurs in relationship with others. It helps to return to Paul. It is not lightning on the road to Damascus that brings the *event* into existence; it is Paul transforming himself into the person who lives in *agapē*, calling on the other to respond to this new relationship. Paul's encounter with the unpredictability of the *event* changed his sense of self, we see a new 'I', unmediated by his previous identity as a persecutor of Christians. The *event* interrupts routinised behaviours, creating a new freedom to respond, and opening the possibility for transformation, emphasising the importance of allowing each person to come into the world as the unique person they are, free of the restrictions of identity.

Operating in a context where oppressive governments, manipulated by oligarchies, controlled education and life, Freire (1996), argued for social and economic transformation for the oppressed. The poor were denied the means to live a dignified life and the freedom to speak of their condition. Freire believed that it was through education that people were opened to language that promoted reflection on their immediate situation, and to the possibility of a changed future. For Freire, teachers have a responsibility to open the pathways to language and therefore to allow for the power of language:

> To analyse dialogue as a human phenomenon, we discover something which is the essence of dialogue itself: the word … within the word we find two dimensions, reflection and action, in such radical interaction that if one is sacrificed – even in part

> – the other immediately suffers. There is no true word that is not at the same time praxis. Thus to speak a true word is to transform the world. (Freire 1996, p. 68)

It is the purpose of education to develop language with students so that they are free to name their experience and to act.

Freire (1996) understood the social world as being constructed through deliberative human actions. Thus the unequal distribution of wealth that he witnessed was the outcome of the actions of a select group of people who controlled power. His response was a commitment to radical political struggle that was to be expressed in praxis; language backed by thoughtful action (Freire 1996). In his concept of praxis we find the concept of reflexivity. A person was to take action after reflection on the existing situation, their own actions and the actions of the other. When Freire writes, as in the quote above, about transforming the world through a true word, he means that a person has the language to describe what is happening to them now and to describe a desired future. Freire (1996) emphasises dialogic education because it enables reflexivity and is the pathway to praxis.

This commitment to praxis was a commitment to knowledge as a generative concept. Freire (1996, p. 53) railed against 'the "banking" concept of education' in which students would simply be filled with knowledge. There is no reflection and no active language in being a container to be filled by a teacher, who controlled the knowledge and the decisions on who could access that knowledge. In rejecting notions of authority and the banking concept of education, Freire acknowledges that 'people teach each other mediated by the world' (1996, p. 61). Teaching is not transmission from teacher to student but an encounter between the two in which the teacher must bring something special to that encounter. The teacher brings his or her own mediated experiences and an understanding of how to reflect on relationships in the environment. What the teacher brings to the encounter must not be defined by a hierarchical identity of teacher. For Freire (1996, p. 61), 'the teacher is no longer merely the one-who-teaches, but one who is himself taught in dialogue with the students, who in turn while being taught also teach'. In genuine education encounters, participants name their world and through dialogue 'achieve their significance as human beings' (Freire 1996, p. 69).

Biesta and Stengel (2016) highlight an important area of Freire's conscientisation. Freire makes it is clear that the oppressed must seek liberation not only for themselves, but also for their oppressors. Biesta and Stengel use this analysis in a broader conversation about the role of teacher as revolutionary leader in Freire's work, one who instigates the 'transformational action-reflection that characterizes the human way of being in the world and with the

world, that is praxis' (Biesta & Stengel 2016 n.p.). The liberation of the oppressor creates an interesting perspective on Paul's work in the *ekklēsia*. As I will come to describe below, the master of a household who joined the *ekklēsia* had to leave behind his or her identity as the slave owner and engage with the household from a position of equality in a commitment to *agapē*. Was this an example of a community in which the oppressed and the oppressor were liberated? We could describe Paul as Freire's revolutionary leader, whose actions instigated liberation for the oppressed and the oppressor.

That brings me to the point of offering a summary of emancipation in education. An emancipatory education encounter will be a pure encounter that enables a person to come into presence as the unique being that they are. The education encounter should name the restrictions, past and present, on a person's agency and, in so naming, allow them to reconstruct the past and reimagine the future. It will be an intersubjective encounter, in which the people involved come to a new understanding of themselves and others through reflexivity.

Emancipation in the *ekklēsia*

To belong to the *ekklēsia,* people were required to meet together, and they did so in households and workshops, repeating the initial pattern that Paul established on his visits. There is no obvious instruction issued in Paul's letters but it is clearly inferred through such statements as, 'when you all come together as a community' (1 Cor 11.18) and 'my orders, in the Lord's name, are this letter is to be read to all brothers' (1 Thess 5:27). The people were to gather together; it did not require a dedicated building such as a temple or synagogue (Alexander 1994).

When the *ekklēsia* gathered, the members applied social practices that distinguished the group from the wider society. These social practices supported the structures that Paul had implemented on his first visit. These structures emancipated the members of the *ekklēsia* to live in *agapē*. In this section I analyse the holy kiss and the use of the word brother.

The holy kiss

Within the *ekklēsia* members were required to 'greet one another with the holy kiss' (1 Cor 16:20, 2 Cor 13:11-12, 1 Thess 5:26). A ritual kiss was not unknown in this period. It was used 'upon initiation into a mystery cult' (Furnish 1985, p. 582), thus signaling acceptance into the group and a common bond with all others in that group. Cults, the voluntary groups and the work-based associations or clubs that formed for specific purposes, would typically have comprised people of equal status prior to entry (Meeks 2003). Where status was

unequal, the greeting would reflect this. It was proper to kiss a hand of a superior, or in the case of the Emperor, the hem of his robe (MacMullen 1988). The *ekklēsia* comprised mixed groups of varying social classes and ethnic and religious backgrounds (Malherbe 2011) and yet there does not appear to have been any differentiation in the type of holy kiss that was offered. Those from a Jewish heritage, who for centuries had been separated from Gentile society by their strict food and purity rituals and observance of the Sabbath were, upon entering the *ekklesial* space, to greet Gentiles as equals, and vice versa. In the *ekklēsia* the holy kiss represented equality and represented a dramatic shift in the routine of life.

Where an entire household joined an *ekklēsia,* this social practice meant that the master of the house, the owner of the slaves in that household, was required, within the space that was the *ekklēsia,* to greet each of his or her slaves, male and female, with a kiss. This represented equality between them. This was a remarkable shift in the social and economic hierarchy of the society; the master of the household discarded his or her identity as owner and greeted the other, in a pure encounter, represented by the holy kiss. The action occurs unmediated by their respective identities; in that place they are joined by a commitment to living for the other. That single gesture would have represented a different experience for each person in the encounter. The master experienced it differently to the slave and yet the structure was the same for both. It signified the understanding that all who entered the place were joined by a common commitment to *agapē,* whether they were master or slave, and they accepted the responsibility to learn with, and from, each other as equals.

The holy kiss represented a radical change in social actions; it was the physical manifestation of *agapē*. It was recognition that people entered the *ekklēsia* free of the restrictions of their previous identity, simply committed to a resurrected life. The holy kiss was a social practice that represented and reinforced this common understanding that 'there are no more distinctions between Jew and Greek, slave and free, male and female' (Gal 3:28). It was a disruption of the practices that they lived outside of the *ekklēsia*; it became a new routinised behaviour reproduced across every *ekklēsia*. The practice enabled people's agency, leading them to take further action in the interests of others.

In Chapter Four, in the narrative of Paul as educator, I argued that Paul shifted people's perception of themselves. They changed their relationships with each other and they changed the perception of their past and their plans for the future. The holy kiss was a social practice that embodied and reinforced this change. I am drawn to Paul's comment to the Galatians, in what is a clear expression of what we would now understand as the philosophy of

pragmatism, 'The man who practises these precepts finds life through practising them' (Gal 3:12).

The language of brother

In his letters Paul used the word brother to describe those who had joined the *ekklēsia.* He did not identify his followers as Christians. He used and encouraged the non-specific word brother, although we now acknowledge its gendered meaning. On occasions, Paul did use the word, sister, when specifically referring to a female member of the *ekklēsia*, but it was not adopted as a greeting across the *ekklēsiai* (see the discussion in Fitzmyer 2008). In adopting a generic word, Paul offered an alternative to any language of identity, such as Jew or Gentile, and to words that described a social rank.

Implicitly, Paul made the use of the word, brother, a social practice of the *ekklēsia*. While there is no instruction in the letters to use it, the references are so ubiquitous that we can assume it was part of the experience when living in each community. Paul used it to identify with those who belong: 'My brothers, be united in following my rule of life' (Phil 3:17). Paul used it to describe him and his fellow-workers: 'All the brothers who are here with me' (Gal 1:1). It is used generically by Paul to distinguish those who belong to the *ekklēsia*: 'Brothers, if one of you misbehaves, the more spiritual of you who set him right should do so in a spirit of gentleness' (Gal 6:1-2). Finally, he used the term brother to show unity across the transnational *ekklēsia*: 'this is what you are doing with all the brothers throughout the whole of Macedonia' (1 Thess 4:10).

Paul used this common word, with a new meaning, to describe all who were united by belief in the possibility of new life. As with the holy kiss, people would have experienced this language on a daily basis when they interacted as members of the *ekklēsia*. It would have become routinised in their interactions with others. Giddens identifies the importance of this type of practice:

> the routinized character of the paths along which people move … does not just happen. It is made to happen by the modes of reflexive monitoring of action which individuals sustain in circumstances of co-presence. (1984, p. 64)

The introduction of brother was a deliberate attempt by Paul to have people reflect on the meaning of the new relationships in the *ekklēsia*. Each time a person was called to use the word in the presence of another or was named as brother by a member of the *ekklēsia,* there would have been a 'reflexive monitoring' of its meaning. In Mead's language (2002, p.

106), in calling brother to a member of the *ekklēsia,* the person was 'selecting what is common in their interrelated acts and so assumes what I have called the role of the generalized other'. When a person recognised the other in their field of social response, when they had the capacity to see themselves as part of the structural organisation of the community, then they demonstrated what was required for 'passage from one attitude to another' (Mead 2002, p. 106). When a person was called *brother*, it carried meaning about the social behaviours that were expected of that person.

Drawing together the discussion on emancipation in the *ekklēsia*

In Chapter Four, I established that Paul formed the *ekklēsia* as unique education communities. Here people changed their lives to live in *agapē,* in response to the resurrection *event* and the hope of a new life. What I have set out here is an analysis of the *ekklēsia* as a community of emancipation in which people were freed from the restrictions of identity to engage in pure education encounters. We learn from the literature on emancipation that when people have the freedom to respond to difference and unpredictability (i.e. *evental* encounters with another), their agency increases and change and growth can occur. The structures of the *ekklēsia* enable this growth in agency. The encounters in the *ekklēsia* were reinforced by social practices such as the holy kiss and the use of brother, signifying that all who entered the place were joined by a common commitment to *agapē.* In recognising the other as an equal, the conditions were created for passage from one way of being in the world to a new way of being. Through practices initiated by Paul, people's agency increased, their view of the past changed and they came to a new plan for the future.

In the following section I explore social learning as another property of the social system of the *ekklēsia*. At the end of the discussion on the *ekklēsia* as a site of social learning, in Table 6.1, I provide a summary of the evidence for the *ekklēsia* as a place of emancipation and a site of social learning.

The *ekklēsia* as sites of social learning

In the letters to each of the four communities, Paul reinforced the need to keep learning about *agapē* as he had lived with them. Paul established the importance of the group learning with, and from, each other in what I have described as social learning. I commence this section with a review of the literature on social learning.

The literature on social learning

I have drawn on Mead's (1934, 2002) concepts of emergence, ideation and intersubjectivity to theorise what occurs in the education encounter. Having explored his views in earlier chapters, particularly in Chapter Five when exploring *event*, I will not re-investigate those theories here. However, there are three aspects of his theorising that I wish to highlight, as they anticipate the discussion of the literature. In Mead's theory, the individual comes to know themselves only through relationships; the social self is formed through interactions with others. For each person the 'I' is developed through their intersubjective relationships. Secondly, social learning requires a process of reflection to give meaning to the lived experience; what I have described as reflexivity. Finally, social learning often exists outside of formal structures and thus I have linked it to Biesta's (2010, 2013) concept of freedom and subjectification, rather than socialisation, into existing structures of society

Biesta (2013), in exploring the communication process, emphasises the need for a process of reflection by each person to distinguish the thing or gesture itself from its meaning. Biesta captures the importance of this idea when writing about Dewey's philosophy:

> The meaning of the world is, after all, not located in the things and events themselves, but in the social practices in which things, gestures, sounds and events play a role. We could therefore say that because the meaning only exists **in** social practices, it is, in a sense, located **in-between** those who constitute the social practices through their interaction. This is why communication is not about the transportation of information from point A to point B, but all about participation. (Biesta 2013, p. 31 original emphasis)

In a genuine education experience, the subject reflects on their interactions, modifies their internal conversation and chooses future actions. Biesta's (2013) observation highlights the problem with transmission. There is no safe transportation of information from A to B. The social self of a person is formed through intersubjective encounters with others, but these encounters are neither predictable nor controllable. Meaning is derived from participation in the communication process. Biesta (2013) makes much of this idea to support his contention on the weakness of education. The teacher is one contributor to a dialogic process and cannot control the learning of the student. The student must be free to respond to the communication

In the context of poverty and oppression in Brazil, Freire (1996, p. 62), advocated for students and teachers to engage in the education encounter as 'co-investigators'. The

intent of the communication is to 'transform the (oppressive) structure' (Freire 1996, p. 55). In a reiteration of the earlier discussion on the teacher as revolutionary leader, I note his comment:

> The humanist revolutionary educator cannot wait for this position to materialize. From the outset her efforts must coincide with those of the students to engage in critical thinking and the quest for mutual humanization. Her efforts must be imbued with a profound trust in people and their creative power. To achieve this they must be partners of the students in their relations with them. (Freire 1996, p. 55)

What we find in Freire's position for education is the importance of a relationship in which all persons come to see the position of the other as one who is active in a process of change. This indissolubility of action and thought, or praxis, is the foundation for Freire's (1996) critical pedagogy and conscientisation. Thought is informed by reflexivity about the current reality, with a view to taking action to construct a different future, and that action is in 'communion with others' (Freire 1996, p. 43).

I find commonality between Freire's (1996) language, and Mead (2002) on the *event*, where he describes a person acting with others to reimagine the future. Freire does not write about *event,* but would have teacher and student acting in response to their shared reflections on their current situation. He would have them work in partnership and change the current situation in pursuit of mutual 'humanization' (Freire 1996, p. 66). In such a community, the teacher trusts the creative power of the student, in a process very like supporting a student acting in fidelity to an *event*.

Honneth (2005), also influenced by Mead, offers an important contribution to an understanding of the intersubjective encounter. Honneth (2005, p. 137), recognises that people have emotional and bodily responses to 'a violation of our normative expectations'. It is language that resonates with the language of disruption used to describe an *event*. The essential point from Honneth (2005) is that disruption that changes our mode of operating within a community requires more than a change in cognitive function; it requires an experience that reaches into the affective or emotional part of our being. We can say that learning and change are beyond a cognitive experience, it is a social experience. For example, Paul introduces new encounters in which people have the experience of *agapē* relationships. This was more than modeling behaviour. People experienced the encounter with Paul and his fellow-workers as an affective and emotional experience, and it changed their sense of self; they were intersubjective encounters.

Finally, in this section, I come to the theory of communities of practice (Lave, J. & Wenger 1991). Communities of practice, when constituted as genuine communities, are self-learning. They can, and often do, exist outside of any form of authorisation. There is evidence that communities of practice have fostered political action (Lave, J. & Wenger 1991). My own introduction to communities of practice was through a medical practitioner of South African background, who described his experience with black communities forming communities of practice to subvert the oppressive apartheid regime. I often recall that conversation when I work with schools who establish communities of practice to socialise teachers into the preferred way of operating in a particular school context. I wonder whether the school leadership has genuinely understood the model, or are simply using the terminology as an alternative description for working in teams.

Wenger (2000) describes three core elements of Communities of Practice:

1. Members have a shared collective sense of what their community is about and they hold each other accountable to that joint enterprise
2. Members interact with each other in relationships of mutuality
3. Members have a shared repertoire of communal resources, e.g. language, routines sensibilities, artefacts etc.

There are obvious connection points between that definition and the narrative I have constructed of Paul's work with the *ekklēsia*. Paul did not impose a fixed structure on the *ekklēsia.* People who came to the *ekklēsia* shared the possibility of a resurrected life that was to be achieved by living in *agapē*, a form of mutuality. They had a shared repertoire of social practices and language; I have already discussed the holy kiss and the use of brother.

Lave (1996) opens a different path of investigation with her paper covering the training of apprentice tailors in Liberia. Her paper reinforces the position with which I opened the discussion on *ekklēsia*, that 'learning has an ontological as well as an epistemological and technical character' (Kruger 2013, p. 11). In Lave's study, the apprentice tailors are learning the skills for making pairs of ready to wear trousers. They were also learning about,

> relations among the major social identities and divisions in Liberian society … they were learning to make a life, to make a living, to make clothes, to grow old enough, and mature enough, to become master tailors, and to see the truth of the respect due to masters of their trade. (Lave, J 1996, p. 151)

Lave (1996, p. 156) makes the point that social learning invites the question of 'how is the objective world socially constituted, as human beings are socially produced, in practice?'. A study of the *ekklēsia* offers one response to Lave's rhetorical question. The *ekklēsia* were not authorised by any of the civic authorities of Graeco-Roman society; they existed outside of the formal structures of the polity. Paul brought his experience of the resurrection *event* to the *ekklēsia* and recreated the *event* by living in *agapē* with people in the four communities. The *ekklēsia* became new social groups and through those groups people were 'socially produced' (Lave 1996, p. 156) as new beings. There was a change in the constitution of the social world.

Lave's description of the training of tailors in Liberia has some similarity with what we know of practices of the *insula.* It raises a question of whether Paul was implementing a model for teaching that already existed in the *insula* and among the tradespeople with whom he worked. There is not the space to enter into a detailed discussion here, but Judge's analysis, in which he argues that the *ekklēsia* was a movement of ideas 'driven by argument and the interpretation of texts' and aiming for a 'fundamental reconstruction of community life' (Judge 2008c, p. 615), does counter an argument that Paul copied an existing model of education. Further, in this inquiry, I have established that Paul intended to change the ethics, values and beliefs by which people lived. There is a clear difference between Paul's approach and the apprenticeship model described by Lave; the latter being a model which emphasises socialisation into existing practices.

I have referenced the literature on communities of practice because it enhances our understanding of the social learning dimension of the *ekklēsia.* The literature reinforces my position that the *ekklēsia* was a place of social learning rather than a place that promoted individualised education. Lave (1996, p. 149) describes the latter as education in which, 'disinherited and disenfranchised individuals … are dis-abled'. In Graeco-Roman society such dis-ablement was a product of identity. The *ekklēsia* freed people from the restrictions of identity. However, I do note that it is premature to label the *ekklēsia* as a community of practice; we do not yet have sufficient detail about the *ekklēsia* as an education community to make that claim. This research text seeks to add to the knowledge.

I define social learning as intersubjective encounters that increase the agency among the people who form the group, community or society, allowing them to act for an agreed purpose. Communication around an event or a shared purpose is an essential element of social learning, but communication that leads to transformation relies on the freedom, or

emancipation, of those who are involved in an encounter. The communication can also be understood as an internal conversation with the generalised other. Social learning is not reliant on the presence of a teacher, though a teacher's role is to promote the encounter as a genuine education experience.

Social learning in the *ekklēsia*

After Paul left each community, people continued to gather in houses and workshops and this is where his letters would have been read and discussed. Whether in person, or through his letters, Paul considered himself present with the community. He made a point of telling the Corinthians, 'When you are assembled together in the name of the Lord Jesus I am spiritually present with you' (1 Cor 5:4). In the language of narrative, Paul had created a place where unique social interactions were promoted. Belonging to the *ekklēsia* meant a commitment to living new relationships that were built on a new understanding of the self. These relationships were founded on intersubjectivity and reflexivity and meant that each person was to learn with, and from, the other members of the *ekklēsia*. They were to reconceptualise the past and reimagine their future as one who lived in *agapē*. Paul introduced social practices to support these structures. In the previous section I referred to the holy kiss and the use of brother to discuss the *ekklēsia* as a place of emancipation; here I explore the monetary collection and the replacement of gods with *agapē* relationships.

Not gods but each other

Each city, each group of people, in Graeco-Roman society had their own gods to whom they sacrificed and for whom they attended rituals. As Stowers (2011a, p. 228) notes, 'reciprocity with the gods was embedded in the practical skills for coping with life that were evoked by the situations and contexts that these ancient polytheists encountered'. The typical Graeco-Roman experience of gods is described by Wilkinson (1975, p. 28): 'Roman state religion had no element of passion or any idea that an individual could be possessed by a divinity. It was essentially a matter of placating unknown powers'. For Judaism, one was accepted into the religion through birth and family allegiance (Chadwick 1967). Among the Jewish community, biblical law laid down the rules for behaviour and the function of education was to learn these rules and the practices that supported them (Lawton & Gordon 2002). For Paul, the social practices associated with religious activities were inconsistent with a commitment to a resurrected life. He sought to eliminate the social practices connected with old ways of living.

Paul created communities that came together to learn how to live in *agapē*. There were no rituals of sacrifice, and no bodily rituals such as male circumcision as a requirement for entry to the *ekklēsia.* In the Corinthian letters he resisted any practices related to food that

would have created division in the *ekklēsia*. He introduced new social practices that involved interaction with others who had committed to a resurrected life, such as the holy kiss and the use of brother. The new social practices could be repeated in any place and time.

Agapē, which was the purpose of forming the *ekklēsia*, was a social practice that promoted a relational approach to living, not one dependent on appeasing gods, or living according to a set of rules. Paul expressed his disdain for the Law as a guide for living. When writing to the Galatians, he stated, 'we acknowledge that what makes a man righteous is not obedience to the Law … no one can be justified by keeping the Law' (Gal 2:16). Similarly, to the Corinthians, he derides the wisdom of the philosophers, when compared to his own commitment to a life of *agapē*: 'I shall destroy the wisdom of the wise and bring to nothing all the learning of the learned. Where are the philosophers now? … Do you see now how God has shown up the foolishness of human wisdom?' (1 Cor 1:19-20). Paul brings the focus of the people to the relationships of the *ekklēsia* and away from external gods and the Law.

Paul's explanation of *agapē* received its most complete treatment in the Corinthian letters. In letter CB, Paul ascribes *agapē* with a reflexive and temporal quality when he describes the growth from childhood to adult; a change that is mirrored for us in the response of others (1 Cor 13:11-12). Each person was to look in the mirror to see his or her interactions with other members of the *ekklēsia*. Paul invited them to reflect on whether they have moved on from the childish behaviour that characterised their life before they had knowledge of the resurrection *event* and the experience of *agapē*. They were to grow and change and they would know that this change had occurred as they came to know themselves in relationship with others. *Agapē* demanded reflexivity of each person. The more a person lived a life oriented to the other, the more they would grow in knowledge of self, and see their own behaviour imaged in the behaviour of others. Joas interpreting Mead, describes the effect of relational social practices, such as *agapē*; it is 'a re-shaping of social life, which must be so organized that free self-determination of all is both possible and necessary' (Joas 1997, p. 35).

Paul introduced this new way of relating into the everyday lives of people, their homes and workshops. For Paul, following the resurrection *event,* the world was no longer waiting for the Law and Wisdom to be revealed by philosophers and scribes. Knowledge would be revealed in the interactions within the pedagogic space of the *ekklēsia*.

The collection

In Chapter Four I related the narrative of Paul collecting money from each of the communities for the brothers of Jerusalem. In just one of several references to the Corinthians Paul wrote:

> I am sending the brothers all the same, to make sure … in advance that the gift you promised is all ready, and that it all comes as a gift out of your generosity and not by being extorted from you. (2 Cor 9:1-5)

There are several similar references to the collection in the field texts (2 Cor 8:1-15; 1 Cor 16:1-4; Gal 2:9-10); and in Paul's other authentic letters (e.g. Romans 15:25-32). The collection gave expression to Paul's focus on educating members of the *ekklēsia* for a new type of social relationship in which they looked to the good of the other. *Agapē* involved a choice to act in concert with others. The collection was a social practice that represented that belief. In taking an objective action, contributing to a collection, with a particular purpose in mind, in this case support for others, a person was joined with all of those who shared that same commitment. The act of contributing was a deliberate and physical action that was a manifestation of their shared commitment. Paul was linking people across geographical spaces through a common core belief that the opportunity for new life was not something restricted by ethnicity, social class or even location. This social practice reinforced the idea that the *ekklēsia* was not a physical place but a way of living that transcended geographic boundaries.

This is not the only reading of the collection. It has been given a stronger political dimension by Horsley (1997b) and Wan:

> The collection symbolized an emerging universalizing society that came with its own economic principles and bases for structuring life in that society … it was a symbol of resistance and subversion and it was at heart an anti-imperial and anti-hegemonic protest. (Wan 2000, p. 196)

This more political view of the collection reinforces the transnational character of the *ekklēsia.* The collection was a practice that unified the group who gathered the funds with the group who received the funds, against the established Roman tributary system. Freire (1985a, p. 153), reminds us of the educative function of a practice such as the collection, where objective actions are in dialectical unity with the subject, as the 'relationship between subject and object, consciousness and reality, thought and being, theory and practice'.

The *ekklēsia* were communities without buildings or hierarchical administration. They did not require money, ritual or permission from an authorised person for one to live in *agapē* with another. In the social practice of the collection, a transnational practice, Paul really invited that question, famously posed elsewhere, 'who is my brother'? (Matt 12:48). Paul would have each member of the *ekklēsia* come to the answer, that 'my brother' was all who committed to *agapē*. My brother was not to be defined as those who were like me (e.g. not identified as Corinthians, or Galatians, or formerly Gentiles, or slaves). It could not even be defined as those who were geographically close to me. The social practice of the collection moved the *ekklēsia* into a universal organisation. It was also the manifestation of a structure, a commitment to the good of the other, which is universalisable.

Drawing together the discussion on the *ekklēsia* as a site of social learning

Paul created communities in which relational and social encounters were valued above all else. He rejected Greek Wisdom and the Jewish Law for they did not promote transformation; rather knowledge was viewed as something that existed separate to the self. For knowledge to be meaningful, it needed to be incorporated into, and change, a person's sense of self.

Paul came to the *ekklēsia* with a pedagogy of openness to change. He expected people to change their lives. He promoted *agapē* relationships that were based on intersubjectivity and reflexivity from which new knowledge and new understanding of the self were constitutive. The *eventa*l experience of living in *agapē* required an orientation to the future. Paul promoted an understanding of themselves as people who were in relationship with a transnational community, one that was as a universal community, committed to living a new life.

In Table 6.1 below I have drawn together a summary of the evidence from Paul's letters to support my argument that the *ekklēsia* were sites of social learning and communities of emancipation. Following the table, I commence a discussion on what lessons contemporary educators might take from Paul's formation of the *ekklēsia* as education communities.

Table 6.1: The *ekklēsia* as communities of emancipation and sites of social learning

What is the experience?	What is the evidence from Paul's letters?
The *ekklēsia* as sites of social learning	
1. People gather in the *ekklēsia* to learn how to live a new life, one that increases their own agency	The group are required to continue to learn together, explicitly stated in Paul's very first letter to the Thessalonians (1 Thess 4:1) and to the Philippians: 'My brothers be united in following my rule of life. Take as your models everybody who is already doing this and study them as you used to study us' (Phil 3:17).
2. The purpose of the *ekklēsia* is the fundamental reconstruction of community life based on *agapē* relationships	To the Galatians, he writes, 'what matters is for him to become an altogether new creature' (Gal 6:15). To the Philippians he writes that love means putting the needs of the other before your own (Phil 2:1-5). Paul has more difficulty with the complex Corinthians but even here he sets out a measure for this new life (2 Cor 6:6-8). Rituals such as circumcision and sacrifice to the gods mean nothing in this new life.
3. The gathering together is an intersubjective encounter in which all come to a new understanding of themselves.	He writes to the Philippians that they learn and grow from their own experiences, not as a result of instruction from him (Phil 2:12). This is most clearly expressed when he describes *agapē* to the Corinthians and uses the metaphor of the mirror.
4. Intersubjective encounters call on reflexivity of all who participate	Paul writes to each group, reminding them that they have learned from him how to live this new life and that they are 'already living it' (1 Thess 4:1). It does require a deepening of their knowledge and perception (Phil 1:9-10). He is reflexive in the midst of his anger at the Galatians and he reminds them that they must examine their own conduct and make new choices about their actions (Gal 6:4 and 4:9).
5. Members of the *ekklēsia* look to the group for the formation of ethics, values and beliefs	Paul establishes the *ekklēsia* and then moves on to new communities. He writes to each *ekklēsia*, makes return visits and sends emissaries, such as Timothy, but importantly, as he tells the Thessalonians, what he teaches is now a living power among them (1 Thess 2:13). This is evident in his earliest letters to the Thessalonians (1 Thess 4:1; 4:9-10 and 5:11). The Philippians are reminded to learn from Paul and from everybody who is already living this new life (Phil 3:17).
6. The *ekklēsia* are part of a transnational group of people committed to a common purpose	This is evident in the Thessalonian correspondence but finds expression in the social practice of the collection, 'I boast about you to the Macedonians, telling them, Achaia has been ready since last year. So your zeal has been a spur to many more' (2 Cor 9:2). Each *ekklēsia* is to participate in the collection for the poor of Jerusalem.

The *ekklēsia* as places of emancipation	
1. Each person is released from the restrictions of their identity	Galatians 3:28, in which Jew and Greek, slave and free, male and female are to come together as one, had never been experienced in Graeco-Roman or Jewish society. It is manifest in the social practice of the holy kiss.
2. Each person becomes a unique person and engages the other in pure encounter	All are welcome into the group who are willing to live in *agapē* relationships. We find pure encounter in Philippians: 'your love for each other may increase more and more and never stop improving your knowledge and deepening your perception so that you can always recognise what is best' (Phil 1:9-10), and in 1 Corinthians 13.
3. People are given the language to name their oppression and are encouraged to be reflexive	The social practice of calling each other brother leads to reflexivity about the relationships in which they live. It removes social and economic status and gives permission to reflect on behaviour outside the *ekklēsia* and what it means to live in *agapē* internally. So to the Corinthians Paul writes, 'It is not my business to pass judgement on those outside. Of those who are inside, you can surely be the judges' (1 Cor 5:12).
4. The *ekklēsia* offers emancipation from past, and present restraints and is open to the future	Paul praises the communities for their constancy in the face of suffering; 'This present experience will fade away' (2 Thess 1:3-5). To the Philippians he writes, 'remembering how you have helped to spread the Good News from the day you first heard it right up to the present. I am quite certain that the One who began this good work in you will see that it is finished when the Day of Christ Jesus comes' (Phil 1:5-6).
5. Agency increases as people come to a new understanding of themselves as free of the Law and Wisdom	To the Corinthians he derides the Greek philosophers and to the Galatians he dismisses the Law, before he writes, 'if one of you misbehaves, the more spiritual of you who set him right should do so in a spirit of gentleness' (Gal 6:1).

The *ekklēsia* for contemporary educators

The formation of *ekklēsia* in four communities from 46 CE to 50 CE was brought about through Paul's agency. However, the *ekklēsia* were sustained and continued to operate for many years after Paul's initial visit and beyond his death. Their ongoing existence cannot be attributed solely to Paul's agency. The *ekklēsia* was a social system that was valued by people in those communities and so it continued. The people who joined the *ekklēsia,* valued *agapē* as a new way of life, and found that membership of the *ekklēsia* increased their own agency. In this section I argue that the structures of the *ekklēsia* also have value for contemporary educators and can be universalised for modern education settings. I begin with social learning.

Social learning

The *ekklēsia* was more than a spatial concept. We know that the *ekklēsia* met in a house or a workshop, but we do not know what signified the beginning of the social practices, such as the holy kiss and use of brother. Was it the doorway or threshold of the building? If so, what happened when the movement was reversed, when people returned to the other world? For the master of a household, when, if ever, did they stop treating slaves with this notion of equality? At what point did the relationship cease to be master and slave? These are unknowns, but we do know that Paul created a place in which people were open to change and to learning about living a new life. In the *ekklēsia,* social practices were implemented and recursively practiced to encourage people to reflect on their current experience, and be open to the transformation of their past and future. That is the universality of the *ekklēsia*, not the social practices themselves, but the structures that they supported. People committed to living in new relationships and to learning over time about living a new life. Paul described what he brought to the *ekklēsia* as a living power among them. The four walls of the house or *insula* did not confine the *ekklēsia,* it had a personal and social, and temporal dimension.

The *ekklēsia* had a shared and meaningful purpose that extended beyond the time and place in which people gathered. That purpose was to live a new life of *agapē*, where they looked to the good of the other. That purpose was meaningful for all involved in the *ekklēsia* and so extended beyond the time and place of the experience. While the education encounter begins in a physical space, there must be a meeting between the people involved, the physical space should not constrain the purpose. In the *ekklēsia,* people did not live *agapē* only when they gathered, but it was to become part of who they were. If I return to my recollection of those 13-year-old students trapped in my History class in 1992; I did not believe that Medieval

history would transform their lives, nor did I create a place in which they, or I, came with a shared purpose. I arrived in that classroom to fulfil a duty and, while I do not recollect the specifics, I have no doubt that my language and gestures reflected that attitude. I brought no real agency to the experience, nor did I allow the group to build their own agency. My practice in that History class was to position myself as a person who came with the authority and identity of a teacher and with fixed textbook knowledge that I intended to transmit. I did not create structures or social practices that encouraged a commitment to a common purpose. The students showed disdain for my authority as a teacher and the knowledge that I brought. Having assumed the identity of teacher and all of the social practices that accompanied that identity at the time, I knew of no other avenue to create a meaningful relationship with the students.

The *ekklēsia* was an education community in which the personal and social were prominent. Paul, as teacher, was changed by the encounters, and his own agency was increased in the experience with others. Paul came to the *ekklēsia* as a learner, as one who was constantly reflexive. To illustrate this point, I quote below a lengthy passage from a letter to the Philippians written from the prison in Ephesus:

> My one hope and trust is that I shall never have to admit defeat, but that now as always I shall have the courage for Christ to be glorified in my body, whether by my life or by my death. Life to me, of course, is Christ, but then death would bring me something more; but then again, if living in this body means doing work which is having good results. I do not know what I should choose. I am caught in this dilemma: I want to be gone and be with Christ, which would be very much the better, but for me to stay alive in this body is a more urgent need for your sake. This weighs with me so much that I feel sure I shall survive and stay with you all, and help you to progress in the faith and even increase your joy in it. (Phil 1:20-25)

The Philippians have already learned much about living this new life; they have progressed in the faith but there is more to learn. But the real message of Paul's words is his reflexivity about his own learning; he reflects on his own actions and his struggles to come to terms with what is required of him. There is humility and openness in this reflexivity. He acknowledges there is more for him to learn in relationship with the group. Through his ongoing experience with the Philippians, his own agency will increase, he chooses to continue to live 'in this body' because it will have good results and will meet their needs.

Paul is engaged in an intersubjective education encounter. Even as the teacher in the *ekklēsia* he must demonstrate how he is learning. The way that the teacher lives and acts will be

evidence that the teacher him or herself has been transformed by the truth, and thus the learner will be more open to learn. Here there is congruence with Biesta (2013) who argues that there must be evidence shown to the learner that the teacher has had his or her experience changed. The teacher positions him or herself as a transformed learner, open to further transformation. The teacher comes into presence and creates an environment in which transformation is also possible for each student. Creating an *ekklēsia* as a community in which all are reflexive and open to learning with, and from, each other begins with the teacher. The teacher brings agency and judgement and engages in reflexivity. The agency of the teacher is exercised in bringing the students to learn with, and from, each other. In Paul's words to the Galatians, the learners are to set each other right, in a spirit of gentleness.

Finally, there is a temporality to the social learning of the *ekklēsia*. Paul brings the idea that new knowledge is constantly created in their relationships with each other. Knowledge was not static and confined to the past, but was generative and future orientated. Conceptualising knowledge in this way enabled people to respond to the *event* in their life. All new experiences for people in the *ekklēsia* were mediated through *agapē* relationships with the other. The validation of that knowledge came not from Paul, with his authority as teacher, but with the members of the *ekklēsia* accepting new ethics, beliefs and values that changed the future; a response consistent with *agapē*. In Chapter Four I noted Paul's comment to the Corinthians that he needed 'no letter of recommendation, because you are yourselves our letter, written in our hearts, that anybody can see and read … on the tablets of your living hearts' (2 Cor 3:2-3). The *ekklēsia* was not a community where external knowledge was imposed; rather knowledge was given new meaning 'on the tablets of your living hearts'.

The social practices and structures of the *ekklēsia* arose from a commitment to *eventa*l encounters, initially Paul's experience of the resurrection *event*, but over time in the daily encounters of difference with the diversity of people in the *ekklēsia*. Where these encounters with the other recognised difference, but were not constrained by identity, then transformation of the self became possible. This is a universalisable quality of the education encounters in the *ekklēsia*.

Emancipation from the restrictions of identity

Membership of the *ekklēsia* was open to all who accepted the possibility of new life, whatever their social standing and with whatever agency they possessed. We know that many who joined the *ekklēsia* were 'weak in social power and status' (Martin 2009, p. 118), while others, such as Stephanas, as the head of a household (1 Cor 1:16), would have had significant social and economic power. The social practices of the *ekklēsia* required Stephanas to greet his

slaves with the holy kiss and address them as brother, signs of equality within that group. It cannot have been in Stephanas' social and economic interests, within the patronage relationships of Graeco-Roman society, to join the *ekklēsia.* Paul's success with the *ekklēsia* was to create an environment to which people from diverse experiences of life wanted to belong. In the *ekklēsia* they were emancipated from the rigid social hierarchies in which they lived and where they could learn with, and from, each other.

Paul created an environment in which members of the group were accountable to each other for progressing the learning of each person. Learning was in the control of each person and could be progressed through his or her relationships with the other. This is the *ekklēsia* as a site for social learning, in which the agency of all was increased. Here I return to Biesta's language (2013) to write that people could come into presence in the *ekklēsia* in the way that only a unique person can, and not simply as a representative identity; not a representative of age, class, gender, ethnicity and so on. This is the significance of Paul's statement to the Galatians; that there was no longer male or female, slave or free, Jew or Gentile. There were only people who had committed to *agapē* as they had learned from Paul and as they had continued to learn from each other and those who had not. Each encounter with the other was a pure encounter, unmediated by the restriction of identity. So Stephanas greets his slaves with the holy kiss and learns with, and from, them as a brother. The slave who Stephanas greets is not limited in his or her learning by their identity as a slave; Stephanas is not limited in his learning by his identity as head of the household. We can speculate that Stephanas was prepared to make a choice not in his own social or economic interest because his experience of the *event* awakened him to the reward of engaging in pure encounters unmediated by his identity. He became, in Paul's words to the Galatians, a new creature.

Honneth (2005), who draws on Mead and early Hegel, poses a theory of recognition that I find helpful in understanding why people may have chosen the *ekklēsia*. He constructs a theory that has the subject seeking out communities directed toward 'the intersubjective recognition of dimensions of human individuality' (Honneth 2005, p. 17). A person will join a community where the particular nature of one's urges is 'fundamentally recognised and affirmed (and) can allow one to develop the degree of self confidence that renders one capable of participating in political will formation' (Honneth 2005, p. 38). The key principle on which Honneth builds this new social theory is one on which Mead and Hegel agree:

> The reproduction of social life is governed by the imperative of mutual recognition, because one can develop a practical relation-to-self only when one has learned to

> view oneself, from the normative perspective of one's partners in interaction, as their social addressee. (Honneth 2005, p. 93)

If we apply this to the *ekklēsia,* then people who experienced love, respect, solidarity, growing self-confidence and self-esteem in their experience with Paul, would have been open to his teaching. This is the challenge of the *ekklēsia* for the contemporary educator. Paul created an environment where people wanted to belong and to learn, even if this meant, as it did for Stephanas, foregoing significant advantages of identity.

Emancipation from identity raises challenges for the contemporary teacher, who comes to the education encounter clothed in the identity of teacher. This identity arises within the education setting by the social practices of a school (e.g. there is typically a staffroom set aside exclusively for teachers); and by society, which requires teachers to have a regulated qualification and, increasingly, registration with a centralised public authority. Biesta (2013), responds to this challenge, drawing on Levinas, Kierkegaard and Caputo to argue that a teacher does not draw authority from this identity, nor does the teacher link objective truth to it. Rather, truth is understood as subjective, or existential, and comes into being in the relationship between the teacher and learner. Such a relationship cannot rest on an authoritarian approach in which the subjectivity of the student is denied. A contemporary educator who seeks to mirror the *ekklēsia* must be able to relate as teacher to student, and promote student to student relationships that are not restricted by the identity they bring, or the roles that they perform, but carry a commitment to the growth of the agency of the other.

There is nothing comfortable for a contemporary teacher about seeking to mirror the experience of the *ekklēsia*. The demands on teachers in modern societies are already overwhelming. Contemporary teachers are positioned as the person who controls the learning of the individuals. They are invested with responsibility to bring every worthy individual to his or her personal best. This is an individualistic philosophy on teaching captured by Lave:

> Theories of learning prescribe ideals and paths to excellence and identify the kinds of individuals (by no means all) who should arrive … (and) … becomes grounds for labelling others sub-normal. (1996, p. 149)

That is not the model of the *ekklēsia*. Firstly, there is no distinction of worthiness; all who commit to *agapē* can join the community. Secondly the teacher cannot be the agent with sole responsibility for the learning of people in a group. Teachers might reasonably be held to account for how they develop an environment in which all are freed from the restrictions

of identity to learn, but the learning is a shared experience of all who are part of the community. The paradox of the *ekklēsia* is that in giving up the authority to control the learning, the agency of the students develops, and the authority of the teacher increases.

As discussed in Chapter Four, in *retelling* the narrative of Paul as educator, I find that he invests the members of the *ekklēsia* with the agency to learn together, and then he moves to a new group. He maintains a relationship but not authoritarian control. To return to the example of Stephanas, it is my argument that he cedes the power of his identity, not to his slaves or to Paul, but to the structures of the *ekklēsia*. He commits to the meaningful purpose of living a new life by living in *agapē*. For the contemporary teacher, the challenge is to participate in the education community believing that the education encounter can be a transformative experience for every person who enters the place. That relies on creating a space in which all are freed from the restrictions of identity, which in practical terms might be understood as how a teacher creates an inclusive classroom. In such a space, a contemporary educator will allow each student to come into presence, to increase their agency, to transform their experiences and be open to a future of learning and change.

I am drawn to the role of narrative in people's lives as 'a portal through which a person enters the world and by which his or her experience of the world is interpreted and made personally meaningful' (Connelly & Clandinin 2006, p. 477). Paul constructed a narrative of his own life and his own experiences for the people of the *ekklēsia*. People experienced his narrative when he was living with them, and his letters, as *eventa*l encounters. There were enough shared experiences when he lived in the community for members of those communities to reinterpret their past through the lens of this *eventa*l encounter. They readjusted their narrative of themselves to one that included membership of the *ekklēsia* and living in *agapē*.

Paul entered each community and formed *agapē* relationships. *Agapē* was a lived practice that was creative and generative in each encounter with another. It became the mirror through which people came to see what was possible and who they could become. Its very nature required social learning and pure encounter that was only possible when people approached the experience without the restrictions of identity. The creative and generative qualities of *agapē* and openness to the *event*, maintained a future focus in the *ekklēsia*. These structures of emancipation, openness to new life and reflexivity can be universalised. These are the structures, or what Badiou (2003) calls the truths, that apply to all people, in all places across all time. It is not the social practice of the holy kiss that is universalisable, but

the emancipation from the restrictions of identity and a commitment to the good of the other. This need not be restricted by historical place or time.

Conclusion

Paul formed the *ekklēsia* based on rules and resources, implemented through social practices, that were repeated recursively across space and time, in a diversity of contexts. The *ekklēsia* was a social system that required people to commit to a life where all were considered equal and all were emancipated from the restrictions of identity. It called on people to commit to a new ontology, resurrection for all, which was lived in the material world as *agapē*. Each person in the *ekklēsia* committed to setting right the other in a spirit of gentleness, in a commitment to social learning. I want to emphasise four points form the discussion in this chapter.

The *ekklēsia* were education communities

The literature on the *ekklēsia,* makes clear that they were unique communities in their time and place. One response to that uniqueness is a call to educators and researchers to look to Paul's letters as the primary source material on *agapē* and *ekklēsia.* Having stepped out of the shadows of biblical scholars to experience the letters, I have found much of value for my experience as an educator in Judge (in Harrison 2008) and, following him, Smith (2012). I have described the *ekklēsia* as education communities with an ontological and epistemological purpose, and with education as constitutive of the groups. I have drawn on the insights of contemporary education thinkers, integrated with my own experience as an educator, to argue for the *ekklēsia* as communities of emancipation and sites of social learning. There are rich lessons for contemporary educators in the formation and operation of the *ekklēsia* as education communities.

In the *ekklēsia* people were emancipated from the restrictions of identity

In the place that was the *ekklēsia,* Paul promoted the emancipation of all from their past and emancipation from a future pre-determined by their social and economic status. Their gender, social and economic class, their birthright or family of origin, would no longer determine their purpose in life nor with whom they could interact and from whom they could receive support. The identitarian politics of society was broken down in the *ekklēsia* in favour of a commitment to a new life of *agapē*. Within the *ekklēsia,* engagement with the other was governed by the responsibility to 'consider the other person to be better than myself and by the right to have those people think of my interests instead' (Phil 2:3-5), and not by the certainty of the Law or of the fixed virtues of the philosophers. *Agapē,* which characterised the *ekklēsia*, called on people to engage in new relationships that were built on pure

encounter, unmediated by the restrictions of identity. Such relationships generated new knowledge about how to live and were creative and open to change. This is the power and risk of the *ekklēsia* as an education community; it was constantly open to new possibilities. Paul openly rejected the fixed knowledge and virtues of Graeco-Roman society and the Law of Judaic society in favour of the new knowledge generated from dynamic relationships. This is a future-orientated approach to education, one that is open to new knowledge, new experience, learning and change.

People encountered freedom in the relationships of the *ekklēsia*

People who chose the *ekklēsia* made a choice for the future, one that was not necessarily in their economic or social self-interest in the present. Paul offered them membership of a group that, unlike Judaism and various Greek mystery cults, had no status in the communities. He asked them to choose a new way of life that was outside of the normative boundaries of the communities in which they lived. They were to curb their own desires and choose unity with the group ahead of their own material interests. I have drawn on Honneth (2005) to provide one possible insight into why people may have joined such a group. I have also offered Biesta's theorising of the subject, not as an 'essence or identity' (2013, p. 143) but through an *event* which is relational as another understanding of this choice. In the unpredictability of the reactions of those around them in the *ekklēsia,* people found the possibility of freedom and transformation. They found something richer for themselves in allowing each person to come into the world as a unique person. Through reflexivity on their experiences of the *ekklēsia,* people came to a new understanding of themselves in relationship with others. This is a pedagogy of the *event* that is explored in Chapter Eight.

People in the *ekklēsia* learned from *eventa*l encounters

The challenge for a contemporary teacher can be described in terms of the three dimensions of narrative inquiry (place, personal and social, and temporal). To learn from the analysis of the *ekklēsia* is to recognise that they must create a place in which all are freed from the restrictions of identity and social learning is prioritised. This requires great reflexivity on the part of the teacher and an openness to change arising from each intersubjective encounter. As the teacher, they bring their agency to shape an environment in which students are open to change their lives in relationship with others. The environment is open to the temporal, which is the possibility for each student to reconstruct their past and look to a renewed future based on what they have learned. It is purposeful learning when a person's narrative is interrupted and through reflexivity they come to a new understanding of themselves. My contention is that such an interruption can be described as an *event*, and in the example of Paul, the *event* was expressed in his new relationships with people, experienced as *agapē*. A

teacher in the contemporary world must find the intersection between their own narrative and that of each student, so that they can recognise when an *event* interrupts the narrative of each student. Where that occurs in a community that is supportive of change, for it is changed actions in fidelity to the *event* that bring the *event* into existence, then the student and teacher will both learn.

I now turn to a consideration of Paul's purpose, pedagogy and teaching practice. A*gapē* was fundamental to Paul's approach to teaching. It was only in the *ekklēsia* that *agapē* could flourish. The next chapter explores the unique contribution that an educator, seeking to learn from Paul, might make to the education encounter.

Chapter Seven: *Agapē* as purpose, pedagogy and practice

A personal narrative

My undergraduate education degree was completed at a youthful Australian university in the north-western suburbs of Sydney in the early 1980s. The university's motto, drawn from Chaucer's prologue to the Canterbury Tales, 'And gladly teche', was truly reflected in the pride it took in its innovative teacher education program. We were taught by practising secondary school teachers, seconded to the university, who demonstrated from their own lived experience how to open the privileged world of knowledge to all of the students we would encounter in a teaching career. We commenced second year with, The Educational Process, a unit based on Joyce and Weil's, *Models of Teaching* (1980 2nd edition), a complex tome, now in its eighth edition, that described processes for teaching students. We were assured that achieving mastery of these models would guarantee our success as teachers.

Following that degree, I secured a teaching position in my home town in regional Australia. I returned to a familiar place and to people I knew, and who knew me. So familiar was the place that the first history lesson I taught, to a group of Year 9 students, was in the very classroom in which I had been a Year 9 student, just eight years prior. It was a classroom still glowing in the canary yellow that my 14-year-old peers and I had painted one Saturday afternoon under the guidance of a caring teacher. I re-entered that room, in 1984, with the authority of a teacher and with the agency invested in me from an education degree.

That teaching role came with relationships that were born of place. My teaching was enhanced by my familiarity with the people in that community and their prior experience of my family and me. Many students were near neighbours, or the younger brothers and sisters of my own peers. If I did not know the student on that first day, it was likely that I knew his or her parents or grandparents. I was operating within a closed culture that I knew and understood well and in which I was very comfortable being an active contributor.

I have no recollection of implementing any of the models from the teaching textbook in my early teaching career. In a most unscholarly way, through lived experience, I learned that relationships were what mattered. In a small Catholic secondary school in a regional town, a commitment to coach the school football team, the basketball team, play cricket at lunchtime as yard supervisor, and be involved in the school musical production, garnered the approval of students, parents and colleagues and compensated for technical inadequacies in the classroom.

Such was my own youth and naiveté at the time of completing my initial degree, and perhaps a weakness in the degree itself, that I could not at any stage of my school teaching career have articulated a philosophical framework to describe what I was doing. I knew little of pedagogical theory. Even Dewey was surprisingly underrepresented in my undergraduate degree, in an institution that considered itself a centre of progressive teacher education. I looked over a more recent edition of the textbook that formed the backbone of the second year of that degree to find an underwhelming assessment of Dewey, noting only that he gave rise to 'the broad and powerful model of teaching known as group investigation' (Joyce, Weil & Calhoun 2000, p. 40). For those who attended Catholic schools and then became teachers in the system, and here I am broadening beyond my own personal experience, they were encouraged to identify and succeed as Catholics and commit to creating pathways for more of the faithful. My experience of Catholic schools was that Catholicism, its rituals, practices and moral guidelines, were prioritised over pedagogy and teacher practice.

Having reflected upon, and now recorded, a narrative of that phase of my work as an educator, I find myself in an intriguing position. Working in teacher education I have been fortunate to have spent many years researching, investigating, and experimenting with pedagogy and teacher practice, including this inquiry. I am challenged by the question of 'What knowledge would I now share about teaching with teachers who are part of the professional and personal networks with which I am connected?' What I have learned from this inquiry is that education encounters flourish in a place in which there is a meaningful purpose shared by all who belong. Secondly, within such a community, relationships that are built on *agapē* enable each person to choose emancipation and to come into presence. The irony is not lost on me that for all of my research, all of my investigation, and all of my growth as an educator, I find myself offering a view of teaching that seems to mirror my first years of school teaching, where I chose relationships within a relatively closed but purposeful community. Were it just confirmation that I had it all worked out back then, that would indeed feel a little bleak. However, I am confident that I have come to a re-interpretation, a re-imagining of the relationships that exist within the education encounter, that might lead to that encounter being more purposeful, and the educator's skills and knowledge being transferable.

An analysis of the *ekklēsia* has refreshed my ideas about the creation of a learning community and the role of the teacher in that community. In this chapter, in an analysis of Paul's pedagogy and teaching practice, I find new approaches to how the teacher exercises agency within an education community. There is a distinctive shift away from teacher control of the education

encounter to how the teacher appears to the other in that encounter. *Agapē* emphasises the intersubjective encounter and the reflexivity of the student and teacher; I have learned that education is not just relationship, but relationships that allow for emancipation of the other. While all teachers would argue that they seek to create a community for learning, what I have learned from Paul is that a learning community calls on the teacher to be present in a new way. The teacher must be open to the possibility of the *event* in the life of the student(s), and thus must always be open to the future and not limited by the past. The real message of the resurrection *event* is that *agapē* relationships are constantly open to the possibility of new life, and that is what the teacher should bring to the education encounter.

Introduction

In this chapter I analyse Paul's purpose, pedagogy and teaching practice. Paul intervened in the lives of people; his interventions increased people's agency and led to an increase in agency for others within the *ekklēsia*. It is that sequence of interventions, described as an education encounter, which I explore in this chapter. I argue that what is revealed is universalisable for contemporary educators. I begin the chapter with a review of the literature on *agapē*. That review shows that *agapē* is original to Paul, he distinguished it from other forms of love, notably, *erōs,* and defined *agapē* for the community. I make the argument that *agapē* can be understood in terms of intersubjectivity (Mead 1934, 2002), and reflexivity (Giddens 1984) and that it can be taught. In this chapter I argue that *agapē* is a pragmatic pedagogy, that relies on a particular reflexive quality in the teacher. I then suggest that Paul's letters are an example of teaching as an intersubjective encounter. Resulting from Paul's interventions, members of the *ekklēsia* in the four communities created new knowledge about living in *agapē*, and developed a new way of living together. Paul's teaching freed them to act and modify their own lives. Paul initiated *agapē* but it was implemented recursively across the *ekklēsia* and each person became a teacher for the other.

Paul brings a new purpose and pedagogy to education in this time and place, and implements new teaching practices. I draw on contemporary education literature (Biesta 2006, 2010, 2013, 2017; Freire 1985a, 1985b, 1996; Noddings 2010, 2011, 2013) to explain Paul's approach and to find the lessons for modern educators in Paul's pedagogy and practice. Before setting out on those discussions, I want to review my analysis so far. Following the Damascus incident, Paul introduced a new ontological belief into the world that resurrection to a new life was possible. Some who interacted with Paul committed to this ontology, accepted new structures for living, changed their routinised behaviours and adopted new social practices. These *ekklēsia* developed as unique communities because they had a unique purpose that emerged from Paul's experience of the resurrection *event* and his agency. The purpose of the *ekklēsia* was to live, and learn how to live, in *agapē*. The evidence from Paul's letters is that joining the *ekklēsia* and living in *agapē* brought about a transformation in the lives of people. People learned how to live this new life; they changed. They came to a new understanding of themselves, their relationships within the *ekklēsia* and with wider society.

The literature on *agapē*

The literature makes clear that *agapē* is Paul's creation (May 2012; Nygren 1953; Spicq 1965; Wright, R 2009). The word is used on 37 occasions in the ten field texts and on 75 occasions

across all letters attributed to Paul (Spicq 1965). When Paul writes of love it is almost always *agapē* (Furnish 1972). By comparison, it is used infrequently in the synoptic Gospels (Mathew, Mark and Luke), appearing only twice at Matthew 14:12 and Luke 11:42 (Nygren 1953; Spicq 1963). Usage of *agapē* outside of Christian literature prior to Paul was rare and is generally understood to have had a different meaning to that which Paul ascribed to it (Nygren 1953; Spicq 1995). Furnish (1972), provides a summary of the use of *agapē* in the Septaugint, the Greek translation of the Old Testament. He notes 20 occurrences of the word and almost always it refers to 'the conjugal love between man and woman', and in the Wisdom literature to 'the relationship between God and his elect people' (Furnish 1972, pp. 220-1). Paul had taken an uncommon word and infused it with a new meaning, using it to describe a new way for people to be in relationship with one another.

There is a stream of literature that places *agapē* within the four conceptions of love in Greek literature: *storgē*, *philia*, *erōs*, and *agapē* (Fromm 1995; Iorio & Campello 2013; Kierkegaard 1962; Lewis 1960; May 2012). *Agapē* is distinguished from the Greek, *philia*, described as friendship, affection, a kindly attitude and good will, and *storgē,* defined as that which describes the love between family members (Furnish 1972; Spicq 1965). It is the differentiation between *agapē* and *erōs* that is important in this analysis of Paul's letters.

Nygren's treatise (1953), in which he argues that *erōs* and *agapē* were opposed motifs of the Hellenic-Roman era, is cited as a classic text on *agapē* (Furnish 1972; Harris 1978; Outka 1972). Nygren(1953) identifies *erōs* with Plato and Hellenic philosophy, and *agapē* with Paul. He writes that, *'erōs* is a yearning desire, aroused by the attractive qualities of the object' (1953, p. viii). He argues that Plato elevated *erōs* from just sensual love to that which 'sets the soul free from fetters of sense and raises it to the supersensible, heavenly world' (Nygren 1953, p. 51). Nygren (1953) associates *erōs* with the Judaic concept of *nomos*, arguing that in seeking to fulfil the Law, the individual is in fact seeking fulfilment of their own need. He separates the cultic religions and Judaism, for which *erōs* is the motif, and Christianity, for which *agapē* is the motif. Nygren's opposing motifs theory has been criticised (Furnish 1972; Harris 1978; May 2012; Outka 1972), however, positioning *erōs* and *agapē* as opposites has helped me to clarify the characteristics of *agapē*.

There are unfortunate consequences in *agapē* being translated into English as the word, love. Western society has been influenced by the Romantic movement and love is inextricably intertwined with the concept of a sacred union and romantic attachment between two people (Iorio & Campello 2013; May 2012). In that latter context, love is associated with passion and

desire, and appears to us as *erōs*. These qualities of love have no place in education. Hogan is one who is unequivocal in rejecting *erōs* in education:

> Erōs, even a purified erōs … always chooses the object of its desire to the exclusion of others … whereas … the unerotic nature of relationships of learning lies in the commitment that the teacher must make to one and all. (2010, p. 10)

So when educators write about love in education (Freire 1996; Hogan 2010; Noddings 2013), and in my own experience when speaking about love in education, there can be great discomfort among readers and listeners. This is caused by the infusion of *erōs*, with its suggestion of passion and desire, into the word love. Paul has little interest in *erōs* in his teaching; he was committed to *agapē*.

There is a second stream of literature on *agapē* developed through a theological lens (Buber 1959; Bultmann 1951, 1958; Furnish 1972; Nygren 1953; Outka 1972; Spicq 1963, 1965). In this second group, a*gapē* is linked to the two Judeo-Christian commandments, 'to love god with your whole heart and soul and strength' (Deuteronomy 5:6) and 'love your neighbour as yourself' (Leviticus 19:18). There is a significant intersection between the two streams of literature and the categorisation should not be considered as absolute.

For Spicq (1965, p. 334), *agapē* is used by Paul to mean 'complete union with one's neighbour' or 'complete union with God'. Furnish (1972), comes to a similar position, describing love as a command, though I note that he is writing about love across the New Testament literature and not exclusively Paul's use of *agapē.* In this world, love is something initiated by God that compels the believer to love the other and so 'the Christian life is no settled state but a vocation, a being called, a being claimed' (Furnish 1972, p. 201). To believe in God, one is compelled to love of God and of neighbour. Furnish, drawing on Ramsey, writes about Christian love as needing to be expressed and exhibited 'in societal **rules of practice**, in law, and in social institutions' (Ramsey in Furnish 1972, p. 203 original emphasis). What is intriguing about these views on *agapē* is that Paul, who the literature suggests created *agapē*, rarely uses the two commandments in his letters. He writes infrequently about love for God and does not, in any of his letters, convey the commandment to love God as it is expressed in Deuteronomy (Furnish 1972). Nor does Paul write of love for enemies (Furnish 1972), which is how the commandment to love your neighbour is sometimes phrased. Only once, do we read the explicit, 'Love your neighbour as yourself' (Gal 5:14). It can be argued that these writers have applied a theological and hermeneutical interpretation to Paul's use of *agapē*, based on their

reading of Gospels, written decades after Paul's letters. This is legitimate within that Christian tradition but is an interpretation that is outside of the boundaries of this materialist inquiry.

Spicq (1965, p. 88), describes Paul's approach to *agapē* as a love that 'commands or compels one to act' and further interprets Philippians (1:9-11) as saying that the richness of *agapē* is such that 'one can never love enough' (Spicq 1965, p. 328). This sense of giving unconditionally to the other as an act of Christian love has raised questions about *agapē* and self-sacrifice. Outka (1972), discusses this question of whether loving the other is so self-sacrificing that it diminishes the self. His thesis is that regard for the other and regard for the self are not alternatives but in fact complementary to each other. He has three ideas that are valuable for reaching an understanding of *agapē* in education encounters. Firstly, the agent's own private interests will be realised through a life of 'other regard'; these interests are 'healthy self-integration, personal identity and centeredness and similar versions of self-realization' (Outka 1972, p. 290). Second is his suggestion that there are people in every society who value the creation of a community in which 'otherness' is furthered over private benefit. Whatever 'the extent of material loss and personal cost to the agent, the life of love will come to be experienced by its exemplars as its own reward' (Outka 1972, p. 290). His third offering is that as human beings we have an obligation to maintain self-regard, we cannot simply be a means to an end, we have value as unique individuals in the world. Outka acknowledges that living in *agapē* leads to conflict between the needs of the agent and the other, but leaves this conflict as an open question. For Outka (1972), the conflict is the point at which the agent is required to engage in ethical decision-making, which is his primary interest.

The discussion from Outka brings me to another developing stream of literature on *agapē*. Harris (1978), explores whether *agapē* can be universalised as a moral principle from which all can make ethical decisions. His universalisable definition of *agapē* is:

> Everyone ought to do what is for the good of others and ought not to be concerned with his own good, except where such action is inconsistent with the requirement of universalization. (Harris 1978, p. 29)

Harris prepares his reader for this definition by building a case for universalisation which, by definition, restricts the self-sacrifice that one can make, even when it is done for the good of the other. He cautions that complete self-sacrifice, without self-regard, is no longer *agapē* but a form of egoism (Harris 1978, p. 27) and concludes that *agapē* is a principle that is universalisable, and with qualifications, can 'achieve greater plausibility, consistency and compatibility with a fundamental requirement of morality' (Harris 1978, p. 30).

Honneth (2005), whose ideas on recognition I have referenced earlier in this text, exercises greater caution in the universalisability of *agapē* in civil society. He differentiates *agapē* from his own approach to solidarity in groups drawn from a shared set of accomplishments. He was asked in an interview whether one can act *agapically* in civil society (Iorio & Campello 2013). Honneth responded by suggesting that *agapē* is at home in a family where it arises from feelings of affection, and in doing so casts doubt on its application in wider society:

> I am not loving my child or my wife or whoever else because of his or her contributions but … because of the specific way in which this singular person is realizing his or her own individuality, but also realizing their own intellectual capacities. (Honneth in Iorio & Campello 2013, p. 251)

There is common ground between this position held by Honneth and that which I have reached in this inquiry. In defining *agapē* from my experience with Paul's letters, I make the observation that *agapē* is lived in a community of people who recognise that they are joined by this expression of *agapē.* To the extent that any community, be it family, an education community or wider society, agrees to be joined by *agapē* then it is a universalisable experience. Honneth (in Iorio & Campello 2013) attends to the idea of self-limitation. His argument, originating from Hegel, is that giving for the other creates a sense of freedom. He is careful to observe that it is a particular form of freedom that arises from a mutual relationship of loving (Honneth in Iorio & Campello 2013).

A review of the literature brings me closer to describing the characteristics of *agapē* as I understand Paul used the word. Before moving to that definition, I want to review what I have already written about *agapē* in this research text.

Paul defines the otherness of *agapē* when he is writing to the Philippians, in a passage that I have previously referenced: 'Always consider the other person to be better than yourself, So that nobody thinks of his own interests first but everybody thinks of other people's interests instead' (Phil 2:3-4). Living in *agapē* required each person in the *ekklēsia* to put aside self-interest and to act for the good of the other. *Agapē* is the gift of the other; it is not something that a subject can demand. It is freely given by the other; but each person is called to extend *agapē* to the other. I have described this as the duality of *agapē*. A person is to remain open to *agapē*, whilst constantly seeking to extend *agapē* to the other. It requires both an inward, or personal reorientation, and a change in outward perspective, or social relations. In making that

observation, I also note the alignment with the personal and social dimension in the model of narrative inquiry.

In the Corinthian correspondence we find a rich description from Paul about the meaning of *agapē*. In chapter thirteen of letter CB, Paul emphasises three important aspects of *agapē*. Firstly, it can only be lived with others in encounters that can be described as intersubjective; each person comes to the encounter and is open to change through that encounter. Secondly, it calls on each person in the interaction to be reflexive; to monitor their own actions and that of others. It is reflexivity that leads to change in routinised behaviours. *Agapē* holds up a mirror to a person's growth and how they change. Finally, *agapē* leads to knowledge. It is a creative and generative act. There is a temporal dimension to *agapē*.

The characteristics of *agapē*

The following five characteristics of *agapē* draw on the literature and my reading of Paul's letters to the four communities:

1. *Agapē* is lived in a community that is created for people to live in *agapē*. Within that community, all commit to intersubjective encounters that lead to the growth of the other. *Agapē* is not a generic, 'love your neighbour' or 'love your enemy', it exists in a community defined by those relationships. In his letter to the Galatians, Paul insists that people choose; they can have the resurrected life or the alternative put to them by the false teachers. They can have circumcision or *agapē*. There was no compromise position in which they could live in *agapē* with the false teachers as their neighbour. *Agapē* requires choices be made and those choices can be difficult.
2. *Agapē* has a quality of otherness. It is expressed to the other and is expressed without desire, without anticipation, and without expectation of reciprocity. It is the opposite to *erōs*. While translated as love, *agapē* is not to be understood as the love between two subjects. It may be expressed between two people but it has meaning only within a community where people have chosen to live in *agapē.* Within that community, every person is led to be reflexive about their relationships with others. *Agapē* seeks not only to look to the good of the other but also to set right the other (i.e. to bring about change in the other). It is an intersubjective encounter; one in which the generalised other becomes one who lives in *agapē*. Each person learns, that is the expectation for a member of the community.
3. *Agapē* is learned in living *agapē;* it must be experienced. A person becomes capable of *agapē* relationships through encounters with others and in that experience the agency

of each person is increased. There is no law to describe *agapē*, nor a ritual, nor sacrifice to bring it into existence, but rather people are to learn how to live this new life with, and from, each other, in the very experience of living.

4. *Agapē* is expressed to the other without restriction of identity; it is 'indifferent to value' (Nygren 1953, p. 78). We find this in that classic Galatians expression, 'no more distinctions between Jew and Greek, slave and free, male and female, but all are one in Christ Jesus' (Gal 3:28). This takes *agapē* beyond the realm of family, where relationships signify an identity: parent, child, brother, sister. *Agapē* is to be lived without the restrictions of identity. It is pure encounter unmediated by identity.
5. *Agapē* is creative and generative and not self-sacrificing. Each encounter with another generates new experience from which people learn if they remain reflexive. A true commitment to *agapē* requires openness to new knowledge in each relationship. *Agapē* involves a commitment to teach, or as Paul writes, to 'keep strengthening one another, as you do already' (1 Thess 5:11).

The inquiry has led me to the position where I will argue that *agapē* represents Paul's purpose, his pedagogy, and is infused through his teaching practice. Before coming to that discussion, I want to establish my position on purpose, pedagogy and practice in the education encounter, with reference to the educators, Dewey (1975, 1997, 1998, 2011), Biesta (2006, 2010, 2013, 2017), Freire (1985a, 1985b, 1996) and Noddings (2010, 2011, 2013).

The literature on purpose, pedagogy and practice

Purpose is inherent in Dewey's philosophy of education. It involves continuity, or recognition of past and anticipation of future experiences, in the engagement with another. In his treatise on democracy and education, Dewey (2011), argued that the education was always social:

> Education (is) a process of renewal of the meanings of experience through transmission, partly incidental to the ordinary companionship of intercourse of adults and youth, and partly deliberately instituted to effect social continuity (2011, p. 176)

He found in democracy the best model for living in social cooperation:

> Social groups which are intentionally progressive, and which aim at a greater variety of mutually shared interests in distinction from those which aim simply at the preservation of established customs … were found to be democratic in quality, because of the greater freedom allowed the constituent members, and the conscious need of securing in individuals a consciously socialized interest (Dewey 2011, p. 176)

Bernstein (2010), extends this interpretation of Dewey's work, highlighting his comments on democracy as an ethical way of life reflected in the customs, norms, attitudes, sentiments and aspirations that characterise the people who live in that community. The purpose of education is the enhancement of the agency of all involved to live in social cooperation.

While accepting Dewey's broad purpose for education, I am drawn to Biesta's (2010, 2013) refinement of purpose in the education encounter. As I have previously noted, he argues for three interrelated purposes in education: qualification, socialisation and subjectification. His declared interest is in 'subjectification', not as something offered to one person by another, but as something to be 'seized by those who start from the assumption of equality' (Biesta 2013, p. 140). Teachers do not direct or grant emancipation, but by their actions, they open the dialogue and create the environment in which it becomes possible. Emancipation is not granted to the subject, for the subject enters the education encounter as an equal to the teacher. The subject is enabled by the education encounter to seize emancipation.

Biesta and transcendence in teaching

Biesta (2013), drawing on the works of Levinas and Kierkegaard, takes up the idea of transcendence, and introduces it as essential to the act of teaching. He does not argue for transcendence from a divine perspective, though he does not exclude the possibility of this, but rather he refers to transcendence as that which is beyond the realm of the known or the possible. The teacher 'brings something new to the educational situation, something that was not already there' (Biesta 2013, p. 44). The transcendent is that which the teacher reveals to the student that is beyond their cognition and comprehension, new knowledge that is outside of what the student knows. If the subject responds to this new knowledge, then it creates the possibility of learning, or in Biesta's language, 'calling being into life' (2013, p. 139). What is inherent in Biesta's approach is the freedom of the subject to choose his or her own response to new knowledge. Because it is unknown and radically new, the teacher cannot, and should not, determine the outcome of the experience for the student. For Biesta (2017), it is not that teaching causes learning, it does not, but the teacher opens the possibility for learning to occur.

For Biesta (2013, p. 53), 'the teacher's power to teach is a weak existential power, a power that relies on interaction and encounter'. Hence, he refers to 'receiving the gift of teaching' (2013, p. 52), not as something experienced by the teacher in some sense of a calling to a vocation, but as something that is held in the power of the student. From the perspective of the student, a teacher is 'someone (who) has indeed revealed something to us and that therefore we have been taught' (Biesta 2013, p. 54). The gift of teaching resides with the subject who '**give(s)**

authority to the teaching we receive' (Biesta 2013, p. 55 original emphasis). Biesta has continued to develop this idea and has written more recently that perhaps, 'the human being is not an animal who can learn, but rather a being who can be taught and can receive (a) teaching' (Biesta 2017, p. 4). For me, Paul expresses this very idea to the Corinthians when he writes, in words that I have referenced earlier in the text, 'you are yourselves our letter, written in our hearts, that anybody can see and read … on the tablets of your living hearts' (2 Cor 3:2-3).

Biesta (2010) makes an important point about the unique role of the teacher. For teachers, their uniqueness is evident in the moments when they stop speaking as a representative voice, 'with the voice afforded by our society, our culture, our profession' and speak with the voice that can only be themselves and not be replaced by another (Biesta 2010, p. 88). The teacher must find a way to come to the encounter without using the identity of a teacher to control the communication. Here is the core of Biesta's (2010, 2013) emancipation in the encounter; education relies on a particular type of relationship between teacher and student and a particular understanding of communication in teaching.

Communication is an open and shared process that is creative and generative. As this is a dialogic communication, there is a space between the sender and receiver. Thus there is no 'safe transportation of bits of information from one location to another' (Biesta 2013, p. 35). Biesta qualifies Dewey's theory of communication arguing that not only can we not foresee all the possibilities of how the other will respond to our communication, but further, if we preclude the unpredictable response 'we are not engaging in a process that on Dewey's definition would count as real communication and real participation' (Biesta 2013, p. 45).

There is recognition that the education encounter happens in a place and time, but it is not contingent to that place or moment. It requires a temporal understanding of the experience of the student. The student brings their own past to the experience and will adjust their view of their future based on their experience in the present. In this understanding of the person, the teacher cannot and should not attempt to control the students' learning. This does not diminish the power of the teacher or the significance of his or her contribution, rather it places great demands on the skill of the teacher to bring sound judgement to their knowledge of the experience of the students. The teacher brings to the encounter something that is beyond the experience of the student but links it to that experience. If the teacher succeeds, then the experience may alter the internal conversation of the student and open them to growth in experience, and a growth in experience is learning.

Freire and the teacher as learner

I have discussed Freire's objection to the banking model of education earlier in this text. In Freire's theory (1970), effective education that brings freedom to the student and teacher begins with language. Freire (1970), brings dialogue into a direct relationship with love, and using language similar to that used by Paul, in letter CB to the Corinthians, he writes:

> Dialogue cannot exist, however, in the absence of profound love for the world and for people. The naming of the world, which is an act of creation and re-creation, is not possible if it is not infused with love. Love is at the same time the foundation of dialogue and dialogue itself. (Freire 1970, p. 70)

A relationship based on love involves a commitment by both parties to be open to change in the interests of the other, so the education encounter is one in which the teacher 'must be partners of the students in their relations with them' (Freire 1970, p. 56). In the words of others, the Freirean teacher emerges as a fellow inquirer, 'as subject with other subjects, rather than as a subject depositing his knowledge into objects' (Biesta & Stengel 2016 n.p.). In that partnership model, the teacher has a specific and demanding role.

Freire identified the four virtues needed by a teacher:

1. Humility - the ability to understand the pain of others, the feeling of others, for this leads to genuine dialogue.
2. Patience - to know how to make a life together with students.
3. Tolerance - meeting the needs of each student as individuals, including the antagonist.
4. Love - an affirmative love which accepts all students and pushes us to go beyond.

(Freire 1985b)

In this description Freire accepts love and the humility of the teacher as essential to the education encounter. In a post Enlightenment world, where reason, rationality and science dominate, beginning a discussion on education with a suggestion that love is the foundation of education and education itself, is challenging. That has been my experience in discussing *agapē* or love in Paul's letters. I have found comfort in Freire having also explored this territory.

Noddings and the ethic of care

Noddings (2011, 2013), places great emphasis on the active role of the cared-for, or the student in the relationship, and on the role of the carer, or teacher, in the relationship. She introduces care theory to her relational pedagogy:

> I have to respond to the cared-for who addresses me in a special way and asks me for something concrete and, perhaps, even unique. Thus what I as a carer do for one person may not satisfy another**. I take my cues not from a stable principle but from the living other whom I encounter.** (2011, p. 426 emphasis added)

The relationship is dialogic; the carer and the cared-for must be active in the encounter and each encounter is unique to the individuals who are involved. There is not a generic teacher-student relationship. These relationships are initiated not through a plan or principle or a model of teaching, but spontaneously through the call of the other as subject. The student calls on the teacher for a relationship that meets their needs. The student is the cared-for and is active in the relationship.

Both subjects are active in the process, but it is not an equal act of caring. For Noddings (2013), the teacher has responsibility to confirm the student, which she describes as an act of affirming and encouraging the best in others. She writes:

> The teacher as the one-caring needs to see from both her own perspective and that of the student in order to teach—in order to meet the needs of the student … I must see the cared-for as he is and as he might be—as he envisions his best self—in order to confirm him. (Noddings 2013, pp. 83-4)

Noddings (2013), emphasises the power of the teacher as an active agent in drawing a response from and confirming the student. This requires constant reflection by the teacher. The reciprocity in the relationship comes not from the student returning the same care to the teacher, but in acknowledging the care from the teacher. This is not about acknowledging the care in a contractual way, as in acknowledging that the teacher has met a professional obligation, but rather about recognising that the teacher has genuinely committed to the needs of the student as the subject. In the next chapter on pedagogy of the *event*, I will deviate slightly from Noddings on this point, arguing that it is more than recognition for the teacher, it must also be transformation. The teacher grows and changes in each education encounter.

The ethic of care does not arise naturally as perhaps one might expect. It is a choice made by the individual, and it is learnt through living with others. An ethic of care derives from, but is different to, natural caring. Noddings (2013) explains natural caring as being like a mother's love for her offspring, a feeling that is drawn forward from her, almost without choice; it is what she wants to do. An ethic of care requires that a choice is made and action taken. We can learn an ethic of care. We can learn to make the commitment that is required. *Agapē* is to be learned, unlike, *philia* or *storgē*, which are representations of love that I equate to natural care.

This opens the idea that teachers have to learn how to care for their students. It is something to be taught and teachers can be taught how to create *agapē* relationships. I take confidence from my reading of Noddings (2011, 2013) that a relational pedagogy can be taught to others, it is not limited to something that arises naturally in a person.

Noddings (2013, p. 48) explicitly rejects '*agapism*' in education, equating *agapē* with universal love within a Christian ethic of loving God. I agree with Noddings that *agapē,* as she has defined it, is not appropriate in an education setting. However, I argue that there is alignment between the definition of *agapē* presented in this research text, and the social practices of Noddings' (2013) ethic of care. Paul's *agapē* was lived in a community established for that purpose, was learned in the living of *agapē* and is creative and generative. These are all consistent with Noddings' (2013) approach to the ethic of care. In an ethic of care, the teacher recognises their role in meeting the needs of the other without regard for their own interests. The teacher frees the student to act. Rather than focus on delivering a curriculum in which the teacher risks treating the student as the object of the teacher's actions, the teacher looks to the needs of the student and constructs with the student an environment in which the student might flourish. It could be argued that a difference between the positions is that, in the ethic of care, Noddings (2013) places greater emphasis on the acts of the teacher; in the duality of *agapē*, the teacher extends *agapē* but must also be open to being transformed by *agapē*.

Drawing together the literature on purpose, pedagogy and practice

I have located the purpose of the education encounter in a wider framework of an ethic for living, as offered by Dewey (2011) and his commitment to democracy. Underpinning Dewey's work (1975, 1997, 1998, 2011) is a commitment to purposeful relationships within a system of social cooperation. In Dewey's vision, a democratic society maximises the likelihood for any individual to make adaptations in their environment (2011). He wrote that a commitment to a democratic life rests on 'faith in the capacity of human beings for intelligent judgement and action if the proper conditions are furnished' (Dewey in Bernstein 2010, p. 75). The pedagogy that a teacher brings to the education encounter creates the proper conditions for the student to come to intelligent judgement and action.

Biesta (2006, 2010, 2013, 2017) balances the two themes of weakness and transcendence. His claim is for the weakness of education, that a teacher cannot control the student's learning and that learning is not an outcome of teaching. Rather than diminishing the teacher, it elevates the importance of the role. A teacher is required to bring to the encounter something that is beyond the experience of the student, which he names as the transcendent, along with wise situated judgement. The teacher constructs an environment in which the student is free to

receive the teaching and give authority to the teacher. Freire (1985b) would have the teacher come in humility to the encounter with the student, bringing an ability to understand the pain of the other. The teacher then engages in an act of love that pushes him or herself and the student to go beyond the present reality. In describing her ethic of care, Noddings (2011, 2013) argues that the relationship is the purpose and both teacher and student must learn such a relationship; it does not arise naturally. The teacher learns to respond to the call of the other, but this requires the teacher to be open to the call. This suggests that the teacher recognises the equality of the student in their care.

Each of these contemporary educators locates pedagogy in the experience of the agents in the encounter; it is not something that is separate to the experience of those who are involved. The teacher and student(s) bring experience to the education encounter and are active partners in that encounter. What brings these educators into relationship with Paul is the recognition that students are active partners, not just as students in the education encounter, but in the pedagogy and practice. The students become teachers of the teacher and of other students. This is the learning from the inquiry into Paul's letters; the conditions in which purposeful learning will arise are those in which teachers and students engage in the pedagogy and practice of teaching. In the discussion below I argue that *agapē* can be understood as the pedagogy and practice that both teacher and student can bring to the education encounter.

Paul's pedagogy and practice

The discussion in the research text, so far, has established that Paul's purpose in his encounters with the people of the *ekklēsia* was to bring them to a life of *agapē*. In this section I will argue that *agapē* was the dominant influence on Paul's pedagogy and practice, and that the people of the *ekklēsia* responded to his pedagogy and practice, and they learned from him, and from each other to live a resurrected life. I have shaped the analysis around three key ideas:

1. Paul's reflexivity as a teacher brings a new understanding to the role of the teacher in the education encounter.
2. *Agapē* is a pragmatic pedagogy that brings accountability to all.
3. Paul's letters were intersubjective education encounters.

Paul comes in 'fear and trembling' – his reflexivity as a teacher

In commencing the discussion on Paul's reflexivity, I note that I am drawing primarily on Giddens' definition, for whom reflexivity is 'grounded in the continuous monitoring of action which human beings display and expect others to display' (1984, p. 3). It is beyond self-

reflection, it has a social dimension. Paul made it clear to all communities that a commitment to *agapē* requires a commitment to reflexivity. *Agapē* was not a fixed way of engaging with people. His own transition was not complete when he moved from persecutor to teacher. He continued to change and adapt to his environment. Through the reflexivity in his letters we are witnesses to Paul's growth as a teacher.

In his first letter, Paul reminds the Thessalonians to reflect on the kind of life they lead, the life they are already living (1 Thess 4:1). What he taught was not a static existence to be held in that moment. Reflexivity requires them to go beyond any teaching Paul had transmitted to them and that they were already living; they were to make more and more progress. They were in transition from one life to another and the new life was one of constant learning and change.

The letter to the Galatians provides a different insight into Paul's reflexivity. Much of the letter focuses on bringing the Galatians back from observance of the Law, to which the false teachers have led them. He writes that no one can be justified by keeping the Law, 'If I were to return to a position I had already abandoned, I should be admitting I had done something wrong' (Gal 2:18). He is reminding the Galatians that they cannot unknow their experience with him. None who read or heard the letter could have been in any doubt that Paul had done away with the Jewish Law: 'I am dead to the Law, so that now I can live for God' (Gal 2:19). The Galatians could not pick and choose the rules and the times to obey them, the very thing of which he had accused Peter and the hypocrites at Antioch (Gal 2:11-14). He reminded them of the boundaries for the group, 'with **us** things are entirely different' (Gal 5:5 emphasis added). Paul brings the Galatians to an act of reflexivity, the letter is an experience in the present, which prompts them to consider their actions of the past, (i.e. choosing the false teachers), and to shape a different future, in which they live a life of *agapē*.

In his letters to the Philippians, Paul is increasingly explicit in his language to the *ekklēsia* about reflexivity. He writes to them of his own experience of moving from past to future: 'Not that I have become perfect yet: I have not yet won, but I am still running … I forget the past and I strain ahead for what is still to come' (Phil 3:12-13). He brings *agapē* into the conversation, linking it clearly with reflexivity (Phil 1:9-10), naming it as prayer, which as I have suggested might also be understood as Mead's (1934) internal conversation. Paul was removed from their physical presence, imprisoned in Ephesus, but he was still in relationship with the Philippians. At the same time that he was demonstrating his own reflexivity, he was encouraging the Philippians to improve their knowledge and deepen their perception about how to live in *agapē*. This would have been a new concept for the Philippians. In the first

century CE, in that time and place, knowledge of how to live according to life's virtues was fixed and generally held in the hands of the privileged. That people could come to knowledge of how to live in love through reflection on their own actions was a radical new intervention by Paul in the understanding of knowledge.

Paul used, Spirit, as a metaphor for the open space between the sender and receiver of a communication in the intersubjective encounter of a relationship. Paul wrote:

> In my speeches and the sermons that I gave, there were none of the arguments that belong to philosophy; only a demonstration of the power of the Spirit … we teach, not in the way in which philosophy is taught, but in the way that the Spirit teaches us: we teach spiritual things spiritually. (1 Cor 2:4, 2:13)

In Paul's words there was recognition that in the space between the sender and receiver of communication, there is the potential for something to occur or be experienced, that is beyond the rational or predictable. Paul rejected the rational wisdom of the philosophers and the written Law of the Scribes to define the encounter between people. He was open to the unpredictable and the potential for something beyond the rational. We can understand this space in many ways. For Paul, it is Spirit; for Biesta (2013) the transcendent; for Mead (2002), emergence; and for Badiou (2003), *event*. In each situation there is openness to possibilities that arise for people in an encounter that is outside of the rational, the routine and the predictable. The knowledge that Paul held could not be imposed, for it was not to be acquired through a single act of transmission or rhetoric, only through *agapē* relationships over time.

In letter CB to the Corinthians, we find 'I came among you in great fear and trembling' (1 Cor 2:3). It is a signature statement in my claim that Paul introduced a new approach to teaching. It is an approach that resonates with Biesta's (2013) thesis on the weakness of education. The phrase is not original to Paul. It is likely that he consciously appropriated it from one of several references in in the Old Testament (Fitzmyer 2008, p. 172). Paul also used the phrase in his letter to the Philippians at 2:12, but with a different emphasis to his usage with the Corinthians. The full context in Paul's letter to the Corinthians is:

> As for me, brothers, when I came to you, it was not with any show of oratory or philosophy, but simply to tell you what God had guaranteed … Far from relying on any power of my own, I came among you in great **fear and trembling** and in my speeches and the sermons that I gave, there were none of the arguments that belong to philosophy; only a demonstration of the power of the Spirit. (1 Cor 2:1-4 emphasis added).

In 'fear and trembling' we find the weakness and the power of education. Paul knew that he could withhold knowledge of the *event;* he feared this power in himself. He does not have to share his experience with the Corinthians; he has the power to withhold the experience. Instead, he chose weakness, meaning that he did not withhold knowledge of the *event* from them, rather he opened himself to *agapē* relationships in which he considered their needs above his own. He *trembled* at the thought that the Corinthians may not recognise, or may reject, this knowledge that he brought, as happened at Athens and the Incident at Antioch.

Paul builds on this statement throughout the Corinthian correspondence. Later in the same letter we have:

> I, personally, am free: I am an apostle and I have seen Jesus our Lord. You are all my work in the Lord. Even if I were not an apostle to others, I should still be an apostle to you who are the seal of my apostolate in the Lord. (1 Cor 9:1-2)

There was acknowledgement of uncertainty in these phrases; his sense of self was exposed to the Corinthians. He is engaged in an act of love, or *agapē*; he is open to a relationship with them, though he could be free. Paul was openly reflexive with the communities about his move from past to future and about his experience in the present. These were not just private musings in a journal, or with a trusted friend, as Paul sought a better understanding of his sense of self. They are expressed in written documents to be made public to the Corinthian community who have openly questioned his authority and his agency. Given the conflicts he experienced with that *ekklēsia,* he must rightly have trembled at the risk of placing in their hands the power to be the 'seal of his apostolate'.

Paul introduced teaching as an act of weakness. This was not helplessness or powerlessness, and not loss of control, but an openness to the possibility of what might be created when new *gnosis,* or knowledge, was generated through an education encounter. Paul does not reject outright the practical knowledge that a teacher might convey. In the analysis of his letters as teaching practice we find clear examples of instruction and transmission on practical matters. However, education encounters that give meaning to knowledge are based on relationships. In those encounters there is a unique relationship at work. The teacher has the power to offer or withhold knowledge and the subject must be free to accept or reject the knowledge. Thus, I argue for 'fear and trembling' as a description of how Paul comes to the education encounter.

Agapē as a pragmatic pedagogy

The evidence for Paul's agency is in the choice that people make to live according to a new way of life that he has brought to them. Their living a new life is itself witness to the power of his

agency to communicate this new life. He writes that those in the *ekklēsia*, 'those of us who are on the way' (1 Cor 1:18), and 'those who have been called' (1 Cor 1:24), understand this new knowledge and have responded to the *event*. Paul's approach resonates with the philosophy of pragmatism. We can consider Mead's theorising of knowledge, as interpreted by Joas:

> Knowledge arises from the practical engagement of members of society with an environment that they must reshape, and from their communicative collaboration and exchange of opinions. Knowledge undergoes development in the process of reaching agreement carried out by those collaboratively striving after knowledge, in the process of the individual's education and experience, and in the formation of the foundations of knowledge in the human subjects in the course of natural history. (Joas 1997, pp. 47-8)

Agapē is to live for the other, which requires that people live collaboratively. It is in learning from each other in practical living that new knowledge is generated about how to live.

The *ekklēsia* is the place where people have the primary experience of *agapē*. They experience *agapē* in their relationship with Paul and he invites them to modify their environment by choosing to live in *agapē* with all members of the *ekklēsia*. Individuals reflect on their experience within the *ekklēsia* and reach a new understanding of how to enact new practices in their daily lives and thus the *ekklēsia* becomes a community in which people live in *agapē.* We find in this sequence a clear example of the pragmatic philosophy, as summarised by Rorty: 'the whole point of pragmatism is to insist that human beings are answerable only to one another' (cited in Bernstein 2010, p. 211). Charles Peirce, credited with defining American pragmatism in the 1870s, wrote what has become the pragmatic maxim:

> Consider what effects, which conceivably have practical bearings, we conceive the object of our conception to have. Then our conception of those effects is the whole conception of the object. (cited in Bernstein 2010, p. 3)

For Paul and the members of the *ekklēsia,* their actions had no meaning of themselves until they influenced the other. Paul writes: 'You see, all this is for your benefit, so that the more grace is multiplied among people, the more thanksgiving there will be, to the glory of God' (2 Cor 4:15). Within the *ekklēsia* all were accountable to the other, and the purpose of life was to live for the other. Paul was accountable for the change that occurred in the lives of the people of the *ekklēsia* and they were accountable to each other for ongoing learning of how to live this new life. Paul used his letters as a teaching practice to extend people's learning about *agapē*.

As presented in Table 7.1, I have collated examples from each of the ten field texts as evidence of the change that took place in people's lives.

Table 7.1 Evidence of the change in people's lives

Letter TA to the Thessalonians	As soon as you heard the message that we brought you as God's message, you accepted it for what it really is (1 Thess 2:13) Timothy is now back from you and he has given us good news of your faith and your love (1 Thess 3:6)
Letter TB to the Thessalonians	How you have shown your faith in action, worked for love and persevered through hope (1 Thess 1:3)
Letter TC to the Thessalonians	We feel we must be continually thanking God for you, brothers; quite rightly, because your faith is growing so wonderfully and the love that you have for one another never stops increasing; and among the churches of God we can take special pride in you for your constancy and faith under all the persecutions and troubles you have to bear (2 Thess 1:3-4) Stand firm, then, brothers, and keep the traditions that we taught you, whether by word of mouth or by letter. (2 Thess 2:15)
Letter to the Galatians	Let me ask you one question: was it because you practised the Law that you received the Spirit, or because you believed what was preached to you? (Gal 3:3) Are you foolish enough to end in outward observances what you began in the Spirit? (Gal 3:2-3) Once you were ignorant of God, and enslaved to 'gods' who are not really gods at all; but now that you have come to acknowledge God - or rather, now that God has acknowledged you - how can you want to go back to elemental things like these, that can do nothing and give nothing, and be their slaves? (Gal 4:8-9)
Letter PA to the Philippians	In the early days of the Good News, as you people of Philippi well know, when I left Macedonia, no other church helped me with gifts of money. You were the only ones; and twice since my stay in Thessalonika you have sent me what I needed. It is not your gift that I value; what is valuable to me is the interest that is mounting up in your account. (Phil 4:15-17)
Letter PB to the Philippians	My prayer is that your love for each other may increase more and more and never stop improving your knowledge and deepening your perception (Phil 1:9) I shall know that you are unanimous in meeting the attack with firm resistance, united by your love for the faith of the gospel and quite unshaken by your enemies. (Phil 1:27-28) So then, my dear friends, continue to do as I tell you, as you always have; not only as you did when I was there with you, but even more now that I am no longer there (Phil 2:12) Keep doing all the things that you learnt from me and have been taught by me and have heard or seen that I do. (Phil 4:9)
Letter PC to the Philippians	My brothers, be united in following my rule of life. Take as your models everybody who is already doing this and study them as you used to study us. (Phil 3:17)
Letter CB to the Corinthians	You have done well in remembering me so constantly and in maintaining the traditions just as I passed them on to you (1 Cor 11:2) Brothers, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, the gospel that you received and in which you are firmly established (1 Cor 15:1)
Letter CD to the Corinthians	You are a letter from Christ, drawn up by us, and written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on stone tablets but on the tablets of your living hearts (2 Cor 3:3) You always have the most of everything - of faith, of eloquence, of understanding, of keenness for any cause, and the biggest share of our affection (2 Cor 8:7)
Letter CË to the Corinthians	In the meantime, brothers, we wish you happiness; try to grow perfect; help one another. Be united; live in peace, and the God of love and peace will be with you (2 Cor 13:11)

Paul's letters as an intersubjective teaching practice

Paul maintained a relationship with each *ekklēsia* through repeat visits, contact by fellow-workers, visits from emissaries from the communities, and through his letters. The letters came to have broader applicability as members of each *ekklēsia* circulated them and used them for ongoing teaching (Meeks & Fitzgerald 2007, p. xvi). The letters were a mix of implicit understandings, affirmation of previous teaching, new teaching and encouragement to keep learning within the community (Edsall 2014). They were an explicit teaching practice and they continue to have that function as I, and others, engage with them in the 21st century.

Before I move into further analysis of the letters, I want to review what I have written about the letters in the methodology chapter and the assumptions that I have made:

- The letters were addressed to identified groups, the *ekklēsia*. Paul knew personally, the people to whom he was writing (Bornkamm 1971; Edsall 2014).
- The letters were carried to each community by couriers, unknown to us, but possibly known to the audience. It is unclear what role the couriers had in communicating the message of the letters (Edsall 2014, p. 46).
- Paul wrote in Greek, a language common to all across this region at the time. The letters would have been read aloud at a gathering(s) of the *ekklēsia* as few had the literacy skills to read for themselves.
- The *ekklēsia* accepted the letters as being from Paul - this was significant as the authenticity of some letters had been questioned (2 Thess 3:17 and Gal 6:11).
- The members of the *ekklēsia* had sufficient regard for Paul that they continued to be interested in his words after he had left them and were committed enough to Paul's beliefs to justify keeping the letters for others and for later reference.

Edsall (2014) has analysed the instructional language in 1 Corinthians, 1 Thessalonians and Romans, with a view to understanding how 'Paul's preaching and other teaching contributed to the unity of the early church' (2014, p. 3). He traces distinctive patterns of the transmission of knowledge, showing that Paul was quite deliberative in his use of language and arguing that his language was designed to change behaviours to align with Paul's new practice. Edsall (2014) finds that the letters contain two broad approaches to building the knowledge of the communities. The first is knowledge that already existed in the community and the second, the introduction of new knowledge.

Edsall (2014) identifies new knowledge, not previously taught, including new applications for previous teaching and knowledge that the groups developed themselves. In passing on new knowledge, Paul used phrases such as, 'Now for the questions about which you wrote' (1 Cor 7:1) and 'There is something I want to add' (1 Cor 7:8) and 'This is the ruling that I give in all the churches' (1 Cor 7:17). As new situations arose, not contemplated on his original visit, Paul was asked by the Corinthians to provide a ruling. Paul expressed his frustration with the inability of the Corinthians to decide on actions based on *agapē*: 'Come to your senses, behave properly, and leave sin alone; there are some of you who seem not to know God at all; you should be ashamed' (1 Cor 15:34). As I noted in the earlier discussion about the food issues, he encourages them to exercise judgement. There are also occasions recorded in the Corinthian letters when Paul accedes to their requests and transmits rules to be followed.

I have leveraged Edsall's (2014) analysis of Paul's letters to affirm that Paul used his letters as a teaching practice. Edsall undertook a comprehensive and objective analysis of the language of the letters. In Appendix Five, I have presented a tabulation of Edsall's categories in which ten strategies used by Paul are identified, and for which I have listed examples from his letter CB to the Corinthians. The table provides evidence of the letters as a teaching practice, as defined by Edsall (2014) and supported by the evidence from my own inquiry. I now depart from Edsall. His definition of the encounter can perhaps be summarised as transmission of content from teacher to student, closer to what Freire (1970) has described as the banking model. Edsall (2014) was in search of the consistency, or otherwise, of Paul's message to the early church. I want to emphasise the relational language in the letters. Paul's letters were to people who had already made the decision to join the *ekklēsia.* Paul's letters were not designed to recruit or convert people to his way of living, they were written to maintain and build relationships with people who had already committed to the *ekklēsia*. Their success as a teaching practice owed much to Paul's existing relationship with the people and to the formation of the community as one in which each person was committed to *agapē* and looking to set right the other in education encounters.

The letters as a teaching practice in the contemporary world

The narrative inquiry methodology encourages me to live alongside Paul's letters, to understand the personal and social dimension of those texts, to seek to understand how the original audience may have responded, and to find where the texts have influenced and changed my experience. The methodology encourages me to engage in an intersubjective encounter with the texts. It is a risk to present a *retelling* of my experience with the letters as a teaching practice. The risk is not in revealing my experience, the risk is in what Clandinin calls the 'so what' moment (2016, p. 35). The response to that question in the context of this

research text has many layers. There is the ongoing presence and importance of the letters in western civilisation including the construction of new narratives about Paul as the author of those letters; constructions such as this one of Paul as an educator, and Badiou's (2009) construction of him as the universal subject. It can be substantiated also in the claim from Bornkamm (1974) that Paul was the first to use letters as a teaching practice and the possibility that opens for contemporary educators to learn new practices for education encounters. Finally, there is what I have named the Biesta defence, as he sets out in a recent publication ; it may be a better alternative to what already exists as the education task (Biesta 2017). In other words, the task is already being done, maybe this is a better way to think about doing it.

We have six letters to the Thessalonians and the Philippians written with warmth and affection. The argument I make, and here I use Mead's language (1934), is that Paul captured the generalised other for those communities. Their sense of self as a member of the *ekklēsia* was either affirmed by the experience of listening to the letter, or the discussion about the letters that occurred in the communities, led people to be reflexive about how they were to live in *agapē*. Paul's language in the letters is relational; he reminds members of the *ekklēsia* of their experiences together and he seeks to continue that relationship through the letters.

There is powerful learning in the letters to the communities with whom he had conflicts: the Galatians and Corinthians. I indicated earlier in this research text that, for much of the inquiry, Paul's letter to the Galatians was my favourite among the field texts. The letter reveals a complexity and depth of emotion in Paul's relationship with the *ekklēsia* that resonates closely with my own experiences in education encounters. It is a good case study in intersubjectivity. My interim research text on that letter is lengthy and, rather than condense it to a summary here, I have included the text at Appendix Six, as a further example of the inquiry process and where the reader can access the content on intersubjectivity. I focus the remainder of the analysis in this section on letters CD and CË to the Corinthians.

Paul sought to teach the Corinthians that it was not the law that should determine their actions, but their concern for the other. I return once again to the food example. For Paul, food has no intrinsic value. So the question becomes, not 'What food should I eat', but 'How will my action impact on the other?' What a powerful statement Paul makes about knowledge when he wrote 'my knowledge could become the ruin of someone weak' (1 Cor 8:11). In these communities, the generalised other is not one who exercises power through knowledge. The Corinthians are

encouraged to see themselves as people who, like Paul, come to an encounter in fear and trembling, reflexive about their actions, and making wise choices in the interest of the other.

Letter CD is the fourth letter to the *ekklēsia*. Early in the letter Paul tried to establish the grounds for the relationship: 'We are not dictators over your faith, but are fellow-workers with you for your happiness; in the faith you are steady enough' (2 Cor 1:24). He and his fellow-workers had come to them as people who are learning with them, not as teachers in control. As he progresses through the letter his language is measured, as if he is working to keep the channels of communication open. He wrote with caution about boasting, compared to his open derision elsewhere in his letters (2 Cor 11:1-33):

> This is not another attempt to commend ourselves to you: we are simply giving you reasons to be proud of us, so that you will have an answer ready for the people who can boast more about what they seem than what they are. If we seemed out of our senses, it was for God; but if we are being reasonable now, it is for your sake. (2 Cor 5:12-13)

He shows more caution in correcting them than in the scolding he delivered to the Galatians:

> Corinthians, we have spoken to you very frankly; our mind has been opened in front of you. Any constraint that you feel is not on our side; the constraint is in your own selves. I speak as if to children of mine: as a fair exchange, open your minds in the same way. (2 Cor 6:11-13)

He then complemented the Corinthians in a manner reminiscent of his praise of the Thessalonians: 'I have the very greatest confidence in you, and I am so proud of you that in all our trouble I am filled with consolation and my joy is overflowing' (2 Cor 7:4). He closed this letter with a call to reflexivity: 'Face plain facts. Anybody who is convinced that he belongs to Christ must go on to reflect that we all belong to Christ no less than he does' (2 Cor 10:7).

I cannot leave a discussion of the intersubjectivity of the Corinthian letters without acknowledging one of Paul's final comments in letter CË:

> What I am afraid of is that when I come I may find you different from what I want you to be, and you may find that I am not as you would like me to be; and then there will be wrangling, jealousy, and tempers roused, intrigues and backbiting and gossip, obstinacies and disorder. (2 Cor 12:20)

He expressed fear for the outcome of his encounters with the Corinthians, in what is one of the clearest examples of intersubjectivity in his letters. He acknowledged that he had already changed and that he is expecting that they too have changed. However, there is real conflict in

Paul. Having left them free to learn together how to live in *agapē*, they may not have become the people he had anticipated. Despite his best endeavours to promote *agapē* as the freedom to learn how to live, Paul had expectations of how the Corinthians will be in the world. This is Paul living in 'fear and trembling', his message may have been rejected. This interaction with the Corinthians also highlights the challenge of bringing a relational pedagogy to the education encounter. In this example, the education encounter focused on freedom led to 'wrangling, jealousy, and tempers roused, intrigues and backbiting and gossip, obstinacies and disorder'. It is the type of experience that might lead an educator to choose the apparent security of a pedagogy of transmission or, in Paul's language, the Law.

Paul's letters were a teaching practice. In the letters he succeeded in generating intersubjective encounters that continued his experiences from living in the communities. The letters have continued to generate intersubjective encounters; they have shaped my experience as a teacher educator. It is my argument that there is the potential for other educators to experience new intersubjective encounters in the *reliving* of Paul's experience. What Paul has brought to my experience is an understanding of the importance of reflexivity in the education encounter and the agency of the teacher who comes in 'fear and trembling'. I have captured Paul's purpose, pedagogy and practice in the word *agapē*, with all of its complex characteristics, which might bring people to a new understanding of love in education.

Agapē for contemporary educators

Writing this chapter has been an act of reflexivity, leading me to a re-examination of my own approach to the education encounter. The changes in my approach come to purpose, the nature of the relationship between teacher and learner, the presence of the teacher in the education encounter and the impact on the teacher of being present in an *agapē* encounter. The most significant change in my own perception of teacher education is an appreciation that teaching is expressed and experienced in relationships, and it is from relationships that teaching draws its authority. The value of teaching is found not in the planning or the theorising or the intent, but in the actions that draw a response from the other. Set out below are the lessons I have learned about purpose, pedagogy and practice from walking alongside Paul's letters. I contend that these are relevant to contemporary educators, but the authority of that contention rests in the hands of those who enter into a *reliving* of the narrative of Paul as educator.

Purpose

Each teacher is challenged to know who they are in the education encounter; why they are engaged in the encounter; and what is the purpose of the encounter. They are complex

challenges. For Dewey (2011), the purpose of education, and that to which he committed his professional life, is furthering social cooperation for democracy. Biesta (2010, 2013) outlines three interrelated purposes of education and argues the importance of alignment between the teacher's purpose and that of the organisation. He writes of the purpose of the teacher in the educational task as 'arousing desire in another human being for wanting to exist in the world in a grown-up way' (Biesta 2017, p. 4). I am suggesting that for a contemporary teacher, there is value in looking to Paul. He was very clear in his purpose and his pedagogy; always it came back to *agapē*. He lived in fidelity to the resurrection *event* and he engaged in education encounters because he believed that all could come to a new life, expressed as living in *agapē*.

Paul developed his purpose from his experience of the resurrection *event* and he acted consistently on that purpose. His interventions had a powerful impact on the agency of the members of the *ekklēsia*. While Paul operated in a place and time, it is my argument that his purpose is not constrained by that place and time. His response to the resurrection *event* has him become Badiou's universal subject, who is our contemporary (2003, 2009). The active presence of his letters in contemporary western society is evidence of that contemporaneity. I argue that Paul's purpose, to increase the agency of each person to live in *agapē*, is both a universal purpose and one that is contemporary. It is a purpose for contemporary educators and for the contemporary education encounter.

Teaching should have consequences; it should bring about change. When a person finds alignment between their purpose as an educator and the purpose of the education encounter, then the conditions have been created for powerful change in the life of both the teacher and the other in the encounter. A teacher who is not afraid of his or her own agency has not come to terms with the potential of the education encounter. The challenge for the contemporary educator is to reimagine *agapē* for their own place and time, to take the universal and apply it to the singularity of their experience.

Pedagogy

I remind the reader that I have taken a very broad approach to defining pedagogy; it is the frame of reference through which the teacher sets out to shape the education encounter. I have written earlier in this chapter that pedagogy is relational; it exists in the experience of the agents in the encounter and is not separate to the experience of those who are involved. What Paul's actions bring to the discussion is that the students are active partners in the pedagogy. Students become teachers of the teacher and of other students.

Paul's pedagogy is based on a relationship of 'simultaneity' (Joas 1997, p. 173) between two subjects – teacher and student or student and student. In the interactions both must be teachers and learners. What *agapē* contributes to our understanding of pedagogy is that all members of the group are to look to the good of the other. Teachers cannot meet the need of every student in every moment of the education experience, but they can create an environment in which all are cared for, and so the needs of one student may well be met by another. Signalling what I will come to present in the following chapter, the teacher creates an environment in which emergence (Mead 2002) is fostered and recognised by all, and may be responded to by any member of the group. In such an environment there is implicit acceptance that education and experience, and therefore knowledge, are constructed between the teacher and learners. Mead makes the following observation:

> If the means and ends are not identical, there can be no community in meeting the problems of social existence. If the suffering of another is not a reality in my own world and is not identified with myself, there is no possibility of giving to the instinctive reaction against it the large social meaning and value which we feel it should have. (Mead cited in Joas 1997, p. 59)

In the constant looking to the other, we reflect on ourselves and we change our routinised practice to respond not from the object 'me', but from the instinctive and personal 'I'. When living in a community of *agapē*, looking to the good of the other becomes the rule of the group, or the way teachers and students do things here.

In the education encounter that is characterised by *agapē*, the teacher is learning about the student in each interaction and must be changed by it. It is in looking to the other that a person sees a reflection of themselves and is transformed by the experience. To do that, each person needs to be freed from the restriction of identity. If the teacher does not respond to growth and change in the student then the teacher limits the transformation of the student. In the letter to the Corinthians, Paul wrote that 'all childish ways are put behind me' (1 Cor 13:11), and they should do the same. Paul then took this idea of growth into the next sentence, 'Now we are seeing a dim reflection in a mirror; but then we shall be seeing face to face' (1 Cor 13:12). To bring this to the contemporary world, if the teacher finds in the student a restriction on who they can become by virtue of their gender, their race, religion, social or economic status, then that is what the student will experience. The student will see that reflection of themselves and, importantly, in restricting the other, the teacher will also be diminished, their reflection clouded. The pure encounter requires the teacher to view each interaction as a new interaction. This pedagogy accepts that there is constant growth in the individual; the student I teach today is not the same student that I taught yesterday, they would have been modified by

their experiences. As a teacher I am asked to come to the encounter with no preconception of the student. This is not a neglect of the past but openness by both teacher and student to reinterpret what that past means for the student. A teacher who adopts this pedagogy cannot rely on a formula or a recipe to deal with any student.

A contemporary educator who seeks to enact such a pedagogy must be reflexive. Paul's letters are thick with examples of his reflexivity. He is constantly growing and changing in his relationships with the members of the *ekklēsia*. His pedagogy places a great demand on those teachers who would learn from his narrative. Teachers have a responsibility to articulate what they may struggle to express or prefer to keep hidden. They must be prepared to interrupt the flow of their own routinised activities for change. It is a concept expressed succinctly in the narrative inquiry process: 'we retell our stories, remake our past' (Clandinin & Connelly 2000, p. 85). Teaching is not a static practice nor can it be a static occupation. This is a demanding and challenging pedagogy that must be lived by the teacher in intersubjective encounters, not implemented as a result of reading a handbook on teaching.

Practice

There are profound implications for the teacher approaching the education encounter with this openness to the student. For a start, it recasts knowledge. Paul offered a new concept of knowledge to the members of the *ekklēsia*. Consider his words about his teaching as 'not some human thinking … it is a living power among you who believe it' (1 Thess 2:13). The knowledge that has been generated between him and the Thessalonians in their living together in *agapē* has a life of its own, it continues to live with them. It shifts and changes in their ongoing relationships with each other. Paul took this further when he wrote to the Corinthians that love generates knowledge. To grow in *agapē* is to grow in knowledge, and thus it is a creative act. The knowledge of which Paul writes is knowledge that is lasting and which leads to a transformation of self. Embracing the generative and creative power of *agapē* is not a rejection of traditional curriculum knowledge but a rejection of curriculum knowledge as a source of control for the teacher. It might be described as a 'throw away the textbooks' pedagogy for it does not accept that knowledge is separate from the person. *Agapē* changes teaching practice.

Amidon (2013) is the one teacher who I have found has written about the challenge of teaching as *agapē.* I note that he has taken the meaning of *agapē* to be unconditional love, a different conception of *agapē* to that which I have presented. Amidon (2013) situates *agapē* within a broader analysis of power in education relationships, drawing on Freire's critical pedagogy (1996). He argues that teaching mathematics as *agapē* calls on teachers to create a connection between the student and mathematics that he describes through four relationships. He lists

functional relationships in which the student is led to success based on society's criteria, such as high stakes tests. He describes a communal relationship that counteracts documented inequities and sustains cultural practices. His third relationship is critical, where students learn mathematics to analyse and question the world. The final relationship is inspirational, in which students can use mathematics to envision and move to a better world (Amidon 2013, pp. 21-5).

There are difficult challenges for teachers in implementing a pedagogy that is driven by *agapē*. Commenting on traditional mathematics teaching, Amidon notes that:

> Students are not in a direct relationship with mathematics but are merely passive receivers of information from the teacher expert. It is this model that dominates the majority of classrooms and is where the teacher controls access to the common property of mathematics. (2013, p. 20)

This observation can extend beyond the mathematics classroom to many classrooms across formal school settings. It is a description of what educators recognise through Freire (1970) as the banking model of education. In my experience, the banking model or transmission of information is the default model for teachers, it is justified on the basis that they are required to cover the curriculum made obligatory by education authorities. The alternative that Amidon (2013) has wrestled with, and which has become important in this inquiry, is to teach through *agapē*. A classroom based on *agapē* opens the possibility of new knowledge coming into being. I will continue with Amidon's mathematical theme to further explore teaching practice.

A student only comes to a real understanding of mathematics, as opposed to the capability of using its processes, if he or she can enter into a relationship with the knowledge. That occurs in relationship with the teacher or other students in the group. A*gapē* is creative and generative; the new knowledge appears not as new facts about mathematics but as knowledge to be applied to experience. The formula for solving quadratic equations does not change, but through *agapē* relationships the student comes to new knowledge about the value of that equation. That knowledge may take the form of a new insight into the meaning of the equation, or it may lead to a new sense of the self as one who loves the precision of mathematical equations, or the student may find a utilitarian value in the equation for something they have set out to achieve. The point to be made here is that knowing the formula for solving quadratic equations has no intrinsic value. Millions of people have lived meaningful lives before the formula was articulated and millions continue to do so ignorant of its existence. So what is the purpose for teaching each child about this formula? Teachers are challenged by the knowledge of Paul's experience to teach in a way that opens the possibility for each child to enter into a

meaningful relationship with that content. The relationship with content will occur, not through the pages of a mathematics textbook, but through interaction with a community of people who are engaged with mathematics in a way that enhances their life experience. When approaching teaching from this perspective, the curriculum serves to bring the teacher and student into a relationship. The teacher carries the responsibility to make that a generative and creative relationship that looks to the future. The teacher will, through their own social practices, show that engagement with mathematics has enhanced his or her own life and in doing so represent the generalised other as one who enjoys the challenge of mathematical concepts. Intersubjectivity is a critical absence from Amidon's (2013) four relationships.

Conclusion

The structures and systems that sustained the public education of adults in the Mediterranean Basin in the first century CE were well established. Paul made a deliberate choice to reject those models for his own pedagogy and teaching practice. His commitment to living in fidelity to the resurrection *event* led him to a life of *agapē*, where he looked to the good of the other. He engaged in education encounters leading to the formation of *ekklēsia* in four communities. The unique features of the *ekklēsia* included their composition as communities of emancipation, in which all could engage in *agapē* relationships freed from the restrictions of their identity, and a commitment to social learning as essential to the group. Paul introduced social practices that sustained the emancipation of the members and the commitment to social learning.

Paul engaged the people of the *ekklēsia* in relational experiences and in dialogic communication. He established a new approach of building relationships as essential to the education encounter. He made it clear that *agapē* required of them to commit to the needs of the other in the *ekklēsia* and that this meant they were to engage in a teaching relationship with each other. The purpose was to bring each other to this possibility of new life, which was expressed as living in *agapē.* These dynamic relationships contributed to an *ekklēsia*, where communities were unified by this one purpose; to live a resurrected life. That people could come to knowledge of how to live in love through reflection on their own actions was a radical new intervention by Paul in the understanding of knowledge. I have explained the relationships initiated by Paul through Mead's (1934) concept of intersubjectivity. Paul and his fellow-workers lived in *agapē* in each of the four communities. It could be described as generating a new generalised other; people adapted their sense of self to be one who also lived this new life. Paul is deliberative in his teaching how to live in *agapē* relationships. It did not arise naturally or just by modelling but was experienced and taught.

Reflexivity was essential in Paul's education encounters. Reflexivity cannot exist as part of a commitment to fixed knowledge and fixed virtues, which Paul associated with the Greek philosophers and rhetoricians, nor could people live this new life and be subject to the Jewish Law. In Paul we have a unique expression and understanding of what reflexivity means for an educator. To come in 'fear and trembling' recognises that the teacher holds knowledge and 'fears' his or her ability to withhold this knowledge. Teachers have a power to withhold knowledge but a teacher committed to *agapē*, and who has the capacity for self–reflection and understands and fears this power, will not make this choice. At the same time, a teacher engaging with students in an *agapē* encounter for the purpose of emancipation and freedom will 'tremble' at the possibility of rejection. Paul's pedagogy is risky; he engaged in the education encounter aware of his weakness in the encounter. The authority to teach comes from the student who holds the power to receive the teaching in the education encounter, and in this we have a concrete example from Paul's work with the *ekklēsia*.

In changing people's understanding about the relationships that they were to live, in which the good of the other was the consideration, Paul opened a new way of thinking and being in the world. Had he simply modelled this approach then small groups of people may have changed their lives to imitate Paul. However, Paul set about teaching others through a pedagogy in which each person made the commitment to teach and learn from others. He engaged in a pedagogy and practice that can be universalised. We know from the historical evidence and from Paul's letters that people who joined the *ekklēsia* changed their lives. Paul makes it clear in the letters that they have a responsibility to set each other right. But it is not the power of correction by authority, it is to be done in a spirit of gentleness, it is to be done with a consciousness of their own temptations, and it is to be done within the broader commitment to live as one group.

In the final chapter of analysis I argue that Paul initiated a pedagogy of the *event*. It is a concept I first encountered in the writing of Biesta (2013). I seek to go beyond what Biesta has formulated and to offer Paul as one who enacted a pedagogy of the *event*.

Chapter Eight: A pedagogy of the *event*

A personal narrative

This is the last of the personal narratives in this research text and chronologically the last to be written. It comes near the end of the inquiry into Paul's letters as the writing of this research text comes to its conclusion. It is a good time to ask myself where the inquiry has brought me. It has changed my philosophy as a teacher educator and researcher, and it is changing my practice.

In the current education environment there is a progressive reduction in teacher autonomy. Increasingly there is a return to models of teaching in which the teacher becomes a functioning part in a formula. I offer the example of the research of Professor John Hattie. His landmark publication, *Visible Learning*, widely disseminated across Australian schools, was a review of over 800 meta-analyses relating to student achievement (Hattie 2009). The enduring feature of his impressive research is the effect size graphic that allowed him to rank 138 influences on student achievement; a measurement of how much a particular contribution influenced the student's achievement in any given year, be it something from the student's background, or a teacher, or school intervention. Hattie's (2009) research reviewed what had happened in the past. Therefore, it offered the possibility of starting any change process in a school with an inquiry into what had been the impact on student achievement when any idea about education had been implemented previously. In my view, that was a good starting point for any process of change about classroom based teaching.

Unfortunately, the research has morphed into a prescription for teachers to maximise their effect on measurable student outcomes. It is part of the wider movement that would have schools completely engrossed in student achievement, narrowly defined as test outcomes. The effect size concept has been reproduced in schools as a formula to which teachers are a contributor. It has been implemented as: if every teacher does *x*, where *x* is write the learning intention on the whiteboard, then students will achieve *y* increase in learning. There is now a suite of publications bearing Hattie's name as a contributing author and the label 'Visible Learning' (Fisher, Frey & Hattie 2016; Hattie 2012; Hattie et al. 2016; Masters, Hattie & Birch 2015; Yates & Hattie 2014). This series of publications promotes a recipe for teachers to produce student outcomes. Already some schools have moved to identify, if informally, as a 'Hattie school' or a 'Visible Learning school'. An accreditation system is sure to follow. There are many other teaching models in the marketplace but this is the most prominent example

in my experience. Hattie is an academic at the Graduate School of Education, University of Melbourne, and Chair and non-Executive Director of the Commonwealth government's teaching standards body, the Australian Institute of Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL). In these roles he has a powerful influence on policy and research into teacher education and teacher practice in Australia. The current education environment favours certainty, predictability and measurable outcomes. There is no question that some teachers find security in this formulaic approach. Teachers do engage in routinised practice in their professional practice and so a formula that brings the complex pieces of teaching into coherence, like a jigsaw puzzle, is appealing. In the midst of the overwhelming demands that a contemporary school places on teachers, a recipe and the promise of certainty has appeal. Unfortunately, recipes do not work in education.

In the first of these personal narratives, I wrote about the appeal of Paul as an outsider. In living alongside Paul's letters I have taken up a position that is outside the dominant narrative in contemporary education. I like that space and it is good to have as a friend one who stood against the structures and systems of a monolithic empire. In my reflections, I keep coming back to the irresistible lesson from Paul, that education is not an *event* to be described and measured; it is not the Damascus moment. Education occurs in the relationships that are open to the *event*; it is living in *agapē* in the *ekklēsia*. Paul's pedagogy looks to the future and not the past.

This chapter on a pedagogy of the *event* is not a recipe for what works in education. The evidence I have presented is subjective; it is generated from my experience. That experience includes learning about being open to an *event*, being transformed by *agapē*, finding the power of reflexivity expressed as coming in 'fear and trembling', and realising the strength of building an education community on the principles of the *ekklēsia*. What is now sitting comfortably with me is Paul's statement to the Galatians: 'The man who practises these precepts finds life through practising them' (Gal 3:12). It is another great sound bite in Paul's letters, albeit one with appeal to a narrower market than Galatians 3:28. It captures the pragmatism of knowledge, learning and teaching that is embedded in the experience of narrative inquiry. My experience with Paul's narrative has changed my practice. That experience has been validated in education encounters in which these experiences have been *relived.* It may be further validated by those who are influenced by this *retelling* of Paul's narrative.

Introduction

The *ekklēsia* that Paul had created were communities in which education encounters were constitutive of the group and in which Paul engaged in practices that I have described as teaching. The teaching practices he applied were implemented with intent and purpose and can be rightly described as a pedagogy. This chapter refines my narrative of Paul as educator, to one where he becomes the enactment of a pedagogy of the *event*. I have drawn on Biesta's (2013) pedagogy of the *event* as the theoretical framework for this discussion but seek to go beyond what Biesta has set out. The pedagogy of the *event* that I outline draws on my inquiry into Paul's letters, Mead's (2002) theory of emergence and *event* and includes Badiou's (2003) resurrection *event*. It is my contention that a pedagogy of the *event* opens the possibility for teachers and students to transform their sense of self. The three dimensions of the narrative inquiry model underpin the discussion (Clandinin 2007, 2016; Clandinin & Connelly 2000). Theorising Paul's actions into a particular approach to pedagogy of the *event* is an integrated response to the overarching question of what modern educators might learn from Paul, and a claim to new knowledge arising from this research.

The literature on pedagogy of the *event*

My encounter with pedagogy of the *event* begins with Biesta, who has lived in the space in much of his published work (2006, 2010, 2013, 2017). Biesta introduced the idea of a pedagogy of interruption, with the idea that our very being is interrupted at the point in time when 'I no longer deny the undeniable responsibility that is waiting for me … the point in time at which I respond to the other' (Biesta 2006, p. 149). This finds rich expression in a more recent publication where he writes, 'My subject-ness, therefore always appears as an interruption of my "immanence", and interruption of my being with and for myself' (Biesta 2017, p. 13). A pedagogy of interruption (Biesta 2006, 2010) becomes a pedagogy of the *event* (Biesta 2013), which finds a presence in teaching as dissensus (Biesta 2017). The consistent theme across Biesta's four publications is that purposeful education encourages encounter with otherness and difference, and enable a subject to come into being as the unique person that they are. The educational task 'is concerned with arousing the desire in another human being for wanting to exist in and with the world in a grown-up way, that is, as subject' (Biesta 2017, p. 82).

The teacher holds only 'a weak existential power' (Biesta 2013, p. 53), but this does not render their actions as meaningless in the education encounter. The teacher cannot produce the *event* of subjectivity but in their actions they could prevent the student bringing forward

their experience. For Biesta (2013, p. 140), the teacher is not the holder of knowledge nor some simple facilitator of learning, but one who must have the capability to be always 'open to the unpredictability of education, to be orientated toward an event that may or may not happen'. The teacher brings the transcendent to the experience by which Biesta means 'something that comes from the **outside** … something **radically new**' (2013, p. 52 original emphasis). The teacher, in bringing the transcendent, is addressing the student and calling them into being; the students are able to 'come into the world as free subjects' (Biesta 2013, p. 140). More recently, when writing about subject-ness, Biesta (2017, p. 43) has explored the idea of 'being called forth' or 'being addressed' by the *event*. This happens not in predictable and planned ways but in the accumulation of experiences in which the student and teacher risk coming into being in the presence of the other, are affirmed, and in so doing recreate the world.

Biesta (2013, p. 143) explores the idea of the subject 'coming into presence' not as an 'essence or identity' but through an *event* which is relational. He contends that we come into the world through our interactions with others, but 'the ways in which others take up my beginnings are radically beyond my control' (Biesta 2013, p. 143). He writes:

> To exist as a subject … means being in a 'state of dialogue' with what and who is the other; it means being exposed to what and who is the other, being addressed by what and who is the other, being taught by what and who is the other, and pondering what this means for our own existence and for the desires we have about our existence. (Biesta 2017, p. 4)

The emphasis is on being addressed by the other who calls me and interrupts my own desire, to consider who I am in the '**relationship** between my existence and the existence of the world' (Biesta 2017, p. 8 original emphasis). The *event* that calls me to be transformed or interrupts my desire is one of difference or plurality and it requires a relationship in which I take the risk of coming into presence.

The student comes into presence in their 'grown-up-ness', which Biesta describes as living with the question of whether 'what we desire is desirable for our own lives and the lives that we live with others' (2017, p. 16). He emphasises that this is not about overcoming or destroying desire, but selecting and transforming desire so that 'we move from being subjected to our desires to becoming a subject of our desires' (Biesta 2017, p. 18). Education then becomes a staging of 'the experience of resistance' (Biesta 2017, p. 19). Teaching is being open to interrupting the desire of the subject and to questioning what is desirable for the subject in the world and what is not. In a pedagogy of the *event,* the teacher creates an

environment in which students reveal their desires, bring forward their experience of an *event*, and are free to express the experience of interruption. There is risk in this process:

> Its outcomes are unpredictable. But it is also risky because we, as teachers, risk ourselves, as we are always enacting power without often knowing whether this power will 'return' as authority, as accepted and acknowledged power. (Biesta 2017, p. 20)

The teacher makes 'wise situated judgements' about what is 'educationally desirable' in the education encounters with the subject (Biesta 2013, p. 143). Each student will derive his or her own truth from an experience, thus rendering the act of teaching both powerful and existentially weak. The strength of the teacher rests not in some form of fixed knowledge, but in knowledge of how to respond to the desire of the student. The teacher addresses the student not from their identity as teacher but as one who is in relationship with the subject. In the education encounter, there is always something at stake, 'there is always the question whether the *event* of subjectivity can be achieved' (Biesta 2013, p. 145).

Following Rancière, Biesta (2017, p. 83), has come to describe the *act* of teaching as dissensus, meaning, 'the introduction of what we might call an "incommensurable element" into an existing state of affairs'. He explains that it is a pedagogy orientated toward the unforeseen and which calls on the teacher to take the risk of:

> Approach(ing) a child or student as subject **precisely** when this flies in the face of all available evidence, that is, of everything that can be seen and known … it is precisely this gesture – a teacherly gesture – that opens up a possibility for the child or student to appear as subject. (Biesta 2017, p. 83 original emphasis)

In my reading, this is the teacher being called to enter into an *agapē* relationship, always remaining open to the possibility of an *event*, which arrives, 'like a thief in the night' in the life of the student or the teacher. *Agapē* is the call of the other to me as subject, unmediated by my identity and without expectation of reciprocity, but purely as an encounter with who I am. *Agapē* is a state of being which Paul reminds every *ekklēsia,* requires ongoing learning with, and from, each other.

Biesta (2013, 2017) assumes reflexivity on the part of the student and teacher, and the agency to reflect on the meaning of the encounter for ongoing actions and interactions. It is a legitimate purpose of the education encounter to increase the student's and the teacher's agency to engage in reflexivity. This is what Paul captures when he comes in 'fear and trembling' to the Corinthians. The discussion above once again highlights the double

hermeneutic (Giddens 1984). Biesta (2006, 2010, 2013, 2017) helps me to understand Paul's work as an educator, while my experience with Paul's narrative brings acuity to my reading of Biesta's theorising.

Caputo (2012, 2016) is conscious of Biesta's work and, like him, draws on a theory of *event*. He is expansive on the place of *event* in the world:

> Teaching and writing, reading and learning, teachers and students, all are about the event. We may even speak of a pedagogy of the event. Everything is about the event, inside or outside the academy, religion, everyday life, in sacred space or secular space. (Caputo, J 2016, p. 10)

He follows a similar path to Biesta (2013), arguing that we can neither make *events* happen, nor can we predict when they will come, and agrees that we can prepare the conditions in which the *event* might be recognised. Like Biesta (2013), he would ensure that education 'take every precaution not to prevent the *event*' (Caputo, J 2016, p. 7), which happens when difference and plurality are denied. The environment in which the *event* might be recognised is one where the teacher creates an environment that is 'relatively unstable, in a state of optimal disequilibrium, not too much but enough and this requires judgement and discernment' (Caputo, J 2016, p. 6). In his own teaching setting, a university, he would have a place with 'a certain anarchy, an open-endedness of thought … (and) … people of many different sorts' (2016, p. 7).

Caputo (2016) has an intriguing approach to transformation of existence, describing three possible processes. He writes of 'secular information', 'religious formation' and then poses the idea of a third force, 'the possibility of the *event*' (Caputo, J 2016, p. 5). He claims the first two options are guided, rules-driven process. He focuses on the use of technology as the structured and predictable process for the communication of secular information. There is in the Caputo discussion the possibility for a link to Biesta's (2015) metaphor of 'robot vacuum cleaners', in which he differentiates conventional contemporary approaches to teaching from his own rediscovery of teaching. However, it is not possible to follow that discussion in this research text. Caputo (2016) relates his direct experience of monastic life, which leads him to argue, that even the process of religious formation is a rules-driven process. This brings him to the *event* as a call to transformation. Only an *event*-driven transformation is based on freedom and unpredictability. He offers a concrete example from his experience in education:

> A teacher gives a class, or maybe just makes a comment in class, and a student's life is changed. The teacher does not know she did this, and at the time neither does the student. That is the event. (Caputo, J 2016, p. 6)

I have no disagreement with what he describes as the impact of a teacher on a student(s), but it is a description that varies from what I am naming a pedagogy of the *event*. Caputo does not account for the child acting in fidelity to the *event*, which is what brings the *event* into existence. The child makes a choice to change and is aware of the *event* in the present.

In an earlier article on the *event,* Caputo (2012) used the aporia of the gift to bring light to his understanding of teaching the *event*. He argues that without the presence of the *event* the education encounter risks being locked into 'a rigid system of exchange' (Caputo, J 2012, p. 33). His argument is that in giving a gift, there is the creation of an economics of exchange, whereas, the act of giving by the teacher is beyond what can be described by such a contract or obligation and is beyond the language of economics. Caputo acknowledges the structures of formal schooling but his argument is that these structures must allow for the *event* to be 'running quietly in the background' (2012, p. 29). He makes the observation:

> The teacher must somehow allow the event to happen without standing between the student and the event, without attempting to manipulate the event. The teacher must figure out how to be a weak force, how the middle voice works, how to be an agent without agency (Caputo, J 2012, p. 29).

Caputo reinforces that teaching that is open to the *event* is essential, for it is in openness to *event* that we create the possibility of the future.

Atkinson (2014), in his brief paper, and drawing on Badiou, addresses a pedagogy of the *event,*. He also offers the alternate label, 'a pedagogy against the state' (Atkinson 2014, p. 1), bringing the political dimension of this pedagogy into focus. He locates a pedagogy of the *event* outside of the normative boundaries as a form of critical engagement with liberal democratic economics. Atkinson (2014) promotes an *eventa*l pedagogy as one that begins with the encounter and not the normative representations that comprise a typical curriculum structure. He argues:

> Pedagogy itself must pass beyond its own assimilated knowledge and practices in order to open up new forms of pedagogy and new learning communities. We might argue that representation controls thought and practice whereas events or encounters open up possibilities for new ways of conceiving and acting and in doing so may lead to new learning communities. (Atkinson 2014, p. 8)

He shares with Biesta (2013, 2017) and Caputo (2016) an interest in a pedagogy that has a future orientation, one that is capable of responding to the 'changing socio-cultural realities' of modern western societies (Atkinson 2014, p. 1).

Pedagogy of the *event* as a new ethic for educators

The literature on pedagogy of the event is embryonic. I seek to contribute to that literature with this research text on a pedagogy of the *event* as implemented by Paul in the first century CE. It is my argument that this pedagogy is universalisable for contemporary educators. In this chapter I explore a pedagogy of the *event* as a new ethic for educators and set out a brief discussion on the challenges and opportunities for such a pedagogy in contemporary education settings.

This pedagogy calls on all involved in the education encounter, teachers and students, to engage in intersubjective encounters and reflexivity. When enacted, this means that in each purposeful encounter the people involved are open to being changed by the experience. This is what Paul introduced as *agapē* relationships. *Agapē* calls on people to look to the good of the other, accept the responsibility to set right the other in a spirit of gentleness, and be open to relationships of *agapē* with others. We can also understand this as the personal and social dimension of narrative, there is the need to look inward and outward. There is a duality in *agapē* relationships, to look to the good of the other and simultaneously be open to receive from the other. *Agapē* relationships flourish where there is pure encounter, where people are emancipated from the restrictions of identity and commit to the encounter with the freedom to learn more about living a new life.

Paul brought the *event* into people's lives through the relationships he lived with them. Thus the *agapē* relationship that the teacher lives in the education encounter, may well create an *event* for the student and bring about transformation for that student. A pedagogy of the *event* recognises that a teacher holds the possibility and the responsibility to bring a unique relationship to the education encounter. I draw the comparison to Biesta's (2013) notion of transcendence; the teacher brings something from outside the experience of the student, which may initiate purposeful change for the student. We must also recognise the possibility that a student will experience an *event* beyond the time and place of the classroom, and bring that experience to the education encounter. In which case the teacher committed to a pedagogy of the *event* will use the education encounter to increase the agency of the student to respond in fidelity to that *event*.

A pedagogy of the *event* needs a place in which there is recognition that *event* occurs, in which it might be recognised and accepted, and in which it is legitimate for people to respond to an *event*. This is the *ekklēsia.* Paul succeeded in creating an environment in which the resurrection *event* was experienced in relationship with others and people were free to respond to the *event*. Through his agency, Paul initiated the *ekklēsia*; it became a place where people came to experience the truth of the resurrection *event*. The *ekklēsia* became the place where people changed their lives in response to their ongoing experience of *event*. Living in relationships of pure encounter, unmediated by the restrictions of identity, in a community where all looked to the good of the other, was an experience of *event* that caused people to reflect and change. That is at the core of an *eventa*l pedagogy.

A pedagogy of the *event* has a temporal dimension; it enables teacher and the student to bring about transformation in their sense of self. In the right place and under the conditions of *agapē* relationships, the past and future are reconstructed from the experience of the *event* in the present. A pedagogy of the *event* is designed to create change and that change cannot be predicted or planned. The lesson from Paul is that change can be purposeful if it occurs in a community that is supportive and united in the purpose of living for the other. Thus, a pedagogy of the *event* built from *agapē,* which is generative and creative, increases the agency of those who are open to the experience. Reimagining the future will come about through a pedagogy that promotes reflexivity.

Paul's description of coming to the Corinthians in 'fear and trembling' is the reflexivity that leads to transformation. Paul feared his capacity to withhold that knowledge that he could bring to them, knowledge about how to live a new life. There was also the possibility of rejection of his message, rejection of the possibility of new life and adherence to social systems that did not bring growth and change. The teacher brings to a pedagogy of the *event*, a forward looking, or teleological view. This is *agapē* extended by the teacher to the student, maintaining a commitment to a new life, even in the face of possible rejection.

The challenges of a pedagogy of the *event*

The *event* can only be experienced by the student and not created, forced or imposed by the teacher. The *event* is not something to be taught. In Paul's letters, in a phrase utilised by both Biesta (2013, p. 52) and Badiou (2003, p. 111), we learn that an *event* comes 'like a thief in the night' (1 Thess 5:2). Biesta acknowledges that a pedagogy of the event requires an orientation 'toward an event that may or may not happen' (2013, p. 140). This poses challenges for a teacher. They live with the unknown; not knowing when an *event* might occur for any student and not knowing how they might respond to that *event.* The occurrence

and the response are outside the direct control of the teacher. The teacher creates an environment in which the student might recognise the *event,* and in which the student is able to respond to the *event*. In creating an environment like an *ekklēsia*, the teacher is inviting recognition of every *event* in the student's life.

This is not a pedagogy composed of strategies and techniques to be applied to the student, rather it is an ethic of teaching. In implementing a pedagogy of the *event,* the teacher gives up the authority that comes with the identity of teacher and accepts that their authority is situational and relational. It implicitly acknowledges weakness in the education encounter. The teacher has the agency to create the learning environment but cannot create the experience of being taught. That rests with the student. It is uncomfortable and challenging for the uncertainty that it creates; risk is inherent, even desirable in this pedagogy.

The nature of the *event* is that which interrupts the existing social order. Such an interruption may be epistemological or ontological or both. In implementing this pedagogy the teacher creates an environment in which the *event* is fostered so there is a deliberate intent to bring into being that which interrupts the existing social order. A student may bring an *event*, one that may well have happened outside of the formal education environment, to the education community. A pedagogy of the *event* has a political dimension, it leads to education encounters that are not sanctioned by the state (or school), and thus we have 'a pedagogy against the state' (Atkinson 2014, p. 1).

An *event* bypasses authority. There is no clearer example than the narrative of Paul as educator. Paul operated without any teaching authority. He had none according to the rules of Graeco-Roman society and he rejected that which he might have claimed in the Jewish community. He brought to the people an ontology, resurrection, which had no foundation in their existing experience. He brought to them *agapē,* of which they had no knowledge, but which would radically reshape how each person was to relate to the other. There was no plan in the lives of the Thessalonians, the Philippians or the other communities, or indeed in the governing Roman or Jewish authorities for *ekklēsia* to be created. It was a response to the resurrection *event*. In recognising that an *event* bypasses authority, I acknowledge that it is also possible for learning from the *event* to bypass the teacher. This is the importance of the teacher creating a social system, like the *ekklēsia,* where students will learn from, and teach each other.

This is a pedagogy that challenges the routinised practice of many teachers. It requires reframing of the agency that they bring to the education encounter. While a teacher cannot control the response of a student, that is they cannot control the students' learning, a teacher's reflexivity can lead them to wise situated judgements about supporting the student in each education encounter. In responding to an *event*, students may pursue a path that does not seem in their own best interests. We recognise this situation from Paul's relationship with the Corinthians. In leaving open the freedom for them to learn how to live in *agapē*, it was possible that they may have been different from what he wanted them to be. Paul had to decide if this was the Corinthians coming into subject-ness and grown-up-ness (Biesta 2017), or making a choice for the Law, as did the Galatians. Teachers exercise wise situated judgement about whether to correct, as Paul did with the Galatians, or allow the freedom of growth. In this pedagogy, the teacher carries responsibility for deep and open reflection on what new knowledge arising from the *event* means for both teacher and student.

The possibilities of a pedagogy of the *event*

An *event* is not confined to the space-time of the learning environment or classroom. The student may experience an *event* at any time, in any place, and may bring that experience to the learning environment. A teacher cannot predict how a student will respond, 'from causal nexuses effects can emerge which are not reducible to their causes' (Joas 1997, p. 176). For the educator in the modern world, the opportunity is to be open to the possibility for the education encounter to be situated within the widest possible social boundaries; not limited by the learning space, by formal structures, by national borders or by the limitations of cultural, ethnic or religious backgrounds. Here I return to an observation I made in the Prologue of this research text that is drawn from Badiou (2003, p. 109): 'The production of equality and the casting off, in thought, of differences are the material signs of the universal'. Paul has shown that it is possible for education to enable people, in a material sense, to see beyond their difference, toward the universal. Strhan, in writing about Badiou and fidelity to the resurrection *event,* captures this possibility: 'it is a singularity because it could only occur in particular circumstances, but universal in that the implications of the event are lived in the name of and for all' (Strhan 2010, p. 236). To create a singular and situated environment, which exists universally 'in the name of and for all', represents a powerful contribution for a teacher to make to the community.

In company with Badiou (2003), I have made much of Paul's statement to the Galatians that there is neither Greek nor Jew, slave nor free, male nor female (Gal 3:28). For Badiou (2003), the statement is overtly political; Paul has demonstrated in the resurrection *event* that there is an alternative to being divided by capitalism into separate identities for the purpose of

increased consumption. As an educator, I read it as a statement about the education encounter. If the teacher succeeds in removing the restrictions of identity, there is the possibility of pure encounter in the education space, and from that, purposeful growth in agency for both teacher and student. In a pure encounter unmediated by identity, unconstrained by physical space or by the limitations of the surroundings, and focused on learning to live for the other, the teacher is engaged in the universal. Paul has demonstrated the power of learning in such an encounter.

Agapē is a living power among those who make the choice. The definition of *event* that I have followed in this research text leads to a pedagogy of the *event* that is teleological or future oriented. An *event* interrupts the order of the existing world, the choice is to look to return to the past or to bring that *event* into existence with a changed life. To acknowledge an *event* is to accept that change has occurred, and as we learn from Mead (2002), the past has already been recreated, even as the present is disappearing. At a practical level, a pedagogy of the *event* exposes official and pre-determined curriculum knowledge as backward looking, capturing what we knew in the past and without the capacity to generate a vision for the future. Curriculum continues to be necessary for qualification and socialisation (Biesta 2010, 2013), and for the polity to create the meeting place for teacher and student. Once established as a place, the teacher holds the possibility through a pedagogy of the *event* to create new knowledge that is orientated to the future.

A teacher who adopts this pedagogy of the *event* will create a community that holds up a mirror to each person so that they can come to transformation. This requires two things. Firstly, that relationships exist in the community, which are oriented toward learning, growth and transformation. The reflection in the mirror must show a person not only as who they are now but who they can become. Secondly, it requires each person in the community to have a feeling of being loved by that community, understood as *agapē*. I draw language from Noddings (2013) to make the observation that where a teacher, or another student, can envision the student's best self and affirm them, then that is the reflection the student will see in the moment of the *event*. The student will see the possibility for him or herself and from that, transformation is possible. That transformation is reinforced by the ongoing relationships in the group. We can bring Mead (1934, 2002) to this discussion. From him we learn that difference is the source of growth. Mead proposed that the 'I' appears as a social object, reflecting the social group to which I belong, or have belonged. When I hold up the mirror I see an expression of that social group. If my encounters remain homogenous, drawn only from the known and familiar, then it follows that there can be no growth. It is from this

concept that we can understand the importance of encountering plurality (Biesta 2013), unpredictability (MacIntyre 2011) or, as I have preferred, *event* in the education encounter.

A pedagogy of the *event* offers the opportunity to create the possibility of *eventa*l moments; the introduction of literature, art, musical compositions, beautiful mathematical formulas that are beyond the experience of the student and at times outside of what it seems possible for humanity to achieve. Each of these has the possibility to be an *event* in the life of a child or student. What we learn from Badiou's (2003) Paul is that an *event* described in that way as a single incident is only the commencement. It is fidelity to the *event* that brings the *event* into existence. So the beautiful music or the breathtaking artwork is only the beginning of a process. It is the teacher's agency that brings the student into fidelity to the *event* and the challenge for the teacher is to find purpose in the *event*.

In adopting this pedagogy of the *event,* a teacher is declaring that their orientation to the education encounter is one in which they will also live in *agapē*. To live in *agapē* is not something that exists separate to the teacher, as in a set of rules that students will follow in a classroom. The teacher must also be open to growth and change by the experience of an *event*, thus might a teacher be renewed by their experience with students rather than emptied by meeting their needs in an act of self-sacrifice.

Perhaps I can conclude the possibilities of a pedagogy of the *event* with an example. A student who arrives at school hungry on a regular basis, is experiencing an *event*. It is possible to simply ignore the emergence or to respond in a way that does not allow for that *event* to come into existence; in which case it would remain as the experience of the child. Paul could have got back on his horse and ridden into Damascus as a persecutor. The Galatians, Philippians, Thessalonians and Corinthians could have laughed at Paul as the Athenians did. However, a teacher committed to a pedagogy of the *event* cannot ignore the emergence represented in that hunger and is called to act. A pedagogy of the *event*, as with Freire's critical pedagogy (1996), cannot ignore the material conditions faced by the student. What is required of the teacher?

The teacher cannot control the experience of the *event;* they cannot control the experience that has brought the child to hunger. Nor can the teacher control the response of the child or the education community. However, as with Freire's (1970) pedagogy, the teacher is called to name the experience. In naming the experience, the teacher is creating the possibility for the child to recognise that the present experience of hunger does not need to be the future, be it

the next day or beyond that. The teacher opens the possibility of a new future. This is the temporality of the experience of the *event*. In responding to the present emergence a new past is reconstructed and a new view of the future is imagined.

Given a pedagogy of the *event* is exercised in a community who are committed to the good of the other, then others in that community are called to respond in *agapē* to the subject, the hungry child. Here then is a challenge for the teacher, they must bring, as Biesta (2013) tells us, wise situated judgement. Students may make choices not in their own social or economic interest. The teacher has a role to judge whether the response that will bring the *event* into existence is one that leads to growth in subject-ness, or one that gives-in to the desire of the ego or accepts a fixed response as in accepting the Law.

Finally all are called to be reflexive and in that process the teacher and the other students must be open to being changed by their experience with that child. In a community of *agapē*, they must be open to being transformed by the experience; as Paul wrote to the Galatians, they were to 'carry each other's troubles (Gal 6:2).

Yes, I can hear the voice of some readers saying, 'just give the child a sandwich'. But how do we respond when the hunger of the child is for love, or security, or physical safety. There is the challenge of the education encounter for which a pedagogy of the *event* offers a possibility.

Conclusion

A pedagogy of the *event* is premised on recognition of *event* in the lives of teachers and students. To engage with this pedagogy is to accept Badiou's (2003) description of the *event* as something new in the world that disrupts the routinisation of people's lives and creates a break between an old life and a new life. In Mead's (2002) language, this is acceptance that something new occurs in the present that causes us to reconstruct our past and future, at the very same time that it passes from the present. This is a pedagogy embedded in a temporal experience of the world; it is open to change and a new future, in fact it desires change and a new future and accepts that the past is constantly reviewed in light of the present.

A pedagogy of the *event* can appear in different guises, such as interruption or dissonance. I have explored in this inquiry a pedagogy of the *event* as introduced by Paul of Tarsus. I have understood his pedagogy as a frame of reference that he brought to the *ekklēsia* that valued otherness, unpredictability and difference as opportunities for learning. A pedagogy of the

event accepts the weakness and uncertainty of the education encounter. This pedagogy is not some form of loose and vague arrangement to which the moniker of education is attached. In contrast, a pedagogy of the *event* relies on a strong and clear sense of teacher purpose and the agency of the teacher to create an education community that fosters social learning based on *agapē* relationships. The weakness and uncertainty emerge from the acceptance that *event* has a social character and is brought into existence in an environment where each person has the freedom to respond. In this pedagogy of the *event*, the experience of *agapē* is the *evental* experience. *Agapē* exists only in intersubjective encounters and where the people involved are committed to reflexivity. *Agapē* is creative and generative and thus we have an orientation to the future and uncertainty. This is a pedagogy with universal application; it relies on building relationships in a community that is committed to the future and the creation of new knowledge in those relationships.

Creating a narrative of Paul as educator allows us to validate his pedagogy. People responded to him and changed their lives. They committed to living in *agapē* in pursuit of a resurrected life, even though the social practices of the *ekklēsia* may not have been in their personal interests. What we have learned in analysing Paul's actions in the education encounter is that the members of the *ekklēsia*, modified their desires and committed to *agapē*. In changing their lives they validated Paul's experience of the resurrection *event* and the education encounters he introduced. The education encounters, and therefore his pedagogy, are universal. He is, in Badiou's words, the universal subject and our contemporary (2003, 2009). I argue that the narrative of Paul as educator set out in this research text validates his pedagogy for modern educators.

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Chapter Nine: Conclusion

Introduction

The narrative of Paul as a reflexive teacher centred on *agapē*, the narrative of the *ekklēsia* as communities of emancipation and social learning, and the finding that Paul's pedagogy is an enactment of what Biesta (2013) has theorised as a pedagogy of the *event*, are the claims to new knowledge arising from this inquiry. That knowledge opens new possibilities for educators, some of which I raise in this conclusion, and new areas of research, for this researcher or others. The inquiry has also traversed discoveries about the education encounter, teacher practice and the narrative inquiry methodology. In this chapter I set out a summary of those findings. As with all research in the narrative inquiry methodology, this is an investigation of experience and that comes with limitations, which are also set out in the discussion below. It is not a research text designed to influence policy, rather to enhance the experience of others who engage in a *reliving* of Paul's narrative by reading this text.

The inquiry justified

Paul's presence is strong in the narrative of western Christianity and western civilisation. In setting out a narrative of Paul as an educator I have not sought to supplant the existing narrative of Saint Paul. That is a legitimate narrative within the social system of Christianity. However, in this inquiry, operating from a materialist perspective, I was in search of an understanding of the transformation that occurred in the lives of people with whom Paul lived and worked. I commenced with the idea that Paul was an educator engaged in education encounters. I have constructed a narrative of Paul as the first educator of the first millennium that confirms that instinct. However, I am an educator before I am an historian, and the second element of the inquiry was to discover whether contemporary educators could learn from Paul's narrative. This second element carries wider implications. The western democracy in which I live is in need of constant renewal and it is through education that ongoing renewal is possible. Paul's initiation of *agapē* in the education encounter is an idea that could lead renewal in the community in which I live.

Paul has offered some unique challenges to the inquiry. The research has been framed by some colleagues in the academy as an inquiry into 2,000-year-old letters from a morally conservative, homophobic, misogynist who was the architect of an oppressive, hierarchical religious institution. My response to that challenge has been to be more excited about the potential for this research text. If after two millennia a narrative construction can evoke such

a strident reaction, then the source material for the narrative is truly influential. I could not, in contrast, generate any reaction to the narrative of Livius Andronicus of Tarentum, the first Latin poet, the first teacher of Greek in Rome and the first to translate the *Odyssey* into Latin (Marrou 1956, p. 251).

In reinterpreting the letters and constructing a new narrative of Paul as an educator, I am drawing on several assumptions. Firstly, that social change or transformation happens to people who exist in a real time and place; people who live in communities and have a past, a present and hopes for a future. Secondly, that knowledge is socially constructed and so in developing this new narrative of Paul I am constructing new knowledge within the structures and systems of the academy. I view education as a social encounter in which people come together for the purpose of creating something new for all who are involved in the encounter. In accepting that education is creating something new, there is explicit acknowledgement that teachers who contribute to the education encounter are active agents in promoting change in society.

The literature

On offer to me was a wide selection of commentaries on the religious beliefs and practices of the Pauline communities (c.f. Chadwick 1967; Freeman 2002, 2011; Horsley 1997b, 2000b; Meeks 2003; Murphy-O'Connor 2002, 2008b; Ramsay 1907, 1925; Wallace & Williams 1998). There was great variety in interpreting the change that occurred, from Freeman (2002) describing Paul as the major contributor to the decline of reason in the western world, to Meeks (2003) who has the communities at the heart of the transformation of all of Europe. Chadwick (1967), credits Paul's Christianity with introducing the notion of responsibility for individual moral choice and, controversially, elevating the domestic status of women and slaves. Meeks (2003) argued for the *ekklēsia* as unique communities and Horsley (1997b, 2000b) applied a political lens, suggesting that Paul created the *ekklēsia* to challenge the imperial cult of Caesar. I have located this inquiry in the new conversation that is evolving between historians, theologians and philosophers, centred on Paul, which has been described as Paul's new moment (Milbank, Žižek & Davis 2010).

The inquiry commenced with Badiou (2003, 2009, 2013) and his description of Paul as the universal subject who responded in fidelity to the resurrection *event*. This was a unique construction of Paul. Here was a significant biblical figure made contemporary, extracted from theology and dogma, and available for a materialist interpretation. Badiou's (2003) naming of Paul's experience on the road to Damascus as an *event* is foundational to this

research text. Badiou (2003) is in search of the militant figure to save the world from capitalism. I am an educator searching for new insights to enhance the transformative capacity of the education encounter. I coalesced with Badiou on the resurrection *event*. An intervention that made an immanent break with the past and led to new actions in fidelity to a truth *event* offered much to the idea of a transformative education encounter. Mead (1934, 2002; Joas 1997) and his approach to emergence, intersubjectivity and ideation created the necessary bridge between Badiou (2003, 2009) and education. Mead's insight into the process of change in the sense of self is interpreted by Joas (1997, p. 192) as, 'a self-reflective organism is capable of experiencing the present and reconstructing the past while testing alternative future possibilities in the present and constructing a plan of action'. I drew on this theory to understand how Paul had changed the social practices and the relationships between people in the communities of the Mediterranean Basin in the first century CE.

There were risks in looking to a historical figure for new insights into the education encounter. There was a threshold question of whether a person who was not named as a teacher in his own time could be a model for teaching some 2,000 years later. Judge (in Harrison 2008) appears to have been the first to separate Paul from a religious or missionary context and undertake a detailed analysis of his work as an educator. As the inquiry progressed, the publication of analyses of Paul's teaching language by two scholars (Edsall 2014; Smith 2012) strengthened the foundation for my narrative of Paul as an educator. I now tender my inquiry into Paul's work across the four communities of Galatia, Philippi, Thessalonica and Corinth as a further contribution to the construction of Paul as educator.

I came to read Paul's letters through the lens of Dewey (1975, 1997, 1998, 2011) and the philosophy of pragmatism (Bernstein 2010). I had adapted my own pedagogy in response to reading Dewey, so I sought to respond to the threshold question, of whether Paul was an educator, with reference to his theories on communication and education. The essence of pragmatism is the movement from experience to action in relationship with others, whether through physical action, or language, or other form of communication (such as letters), which leads to modification of the environment. A new experience is created from which new action arises and so on. In my early analysis of Paul I found that members of the *ekklēsia* experienced *agapē* through Paul and his fellow-workers. What was at work was more than modeling; there was an intersubjective encounter in which members had a direct experience of what Paul was teaching. Paul was teaching people how to live in *agapē* relationships by living in *agapē* relationships with them and the people changed in response to the experience.

Following Dewey, I focused on the education theories and frameworks of Freire (1985a, 1985b, 1996), Noddings (2010, 2011, 2013), and Biesta (2006, 2010, 2013, 2017; Biesta & Stengel 2016), for the insights they provided me into the education encounter. These educators place great emphasis on the skill of the teacher to bring wise judgement to their experience with students. The teacher must bring to the encounter something that is beyond the experience of the student, described by Biesta (2013) as transcendence. If they are able to do this then the experience may alter the sense of self of the student and open them to growth in experience in what Dewey has described as a genuine education encounter (1997). The intimate nature of the relationship between student and teacher is described by Freire (1970) as love, and by Noddings (2013) as an ethic of care and I suggest might now be understood as Paul's *agapē*. What was at work in this process was what Giddens (1984) has described as the double hermeneutic, the educational thinkers who have shaped my practice as an educator also shape the lens of inquiry that I bring to Paul's letters. My reading of Paul has in turn shaped how I read contemporary education literature.

Methodology

Narrative inquiry (Clandinin 2016; Clandinin & Connelly 2000) became for me both an epistemological and an ontological commitment. Not only had I developed trust and confidence in narrative inquiry as a research methodology, I also had come to understand that narrative was how I organised my life and understood my social world. I understood my place in the world narratively, and continue to create and formulate my own narrative to accommodate the world that I experience. The narrative inquiry methodology served me well in this investigation into Paul's letters, inviting not just a *retelling* of Paul's narrative but reflexivity on my own role as a teacher educator.

Clandinin (2016), guides narrative inquirers toward a structured response to the challenge of relevance and meaning in narrative research. The role of the researcher is to find in the narrative inquiry, personal, practical and social justifications (Clandinin 2016).The first of these, the personal justification, is infused through this research text. In this conclusion I summarise my practical justifications. There are implications for practice that arise from the narrative of Paul as an educator. His approach to the development of the learning community, the *ekklēsia,* and his own pedagogical practices offer new insights for teacher practice in formal education settings and the practice of teacher educators. What is new in the practical justifications comes together in the chapter on a pedagogy of the *event*. Educators committed to a relational pedagogy may find that this pedagogy enriches their insight into the education

encounter. Clandinin (2016), suggests that an inquiry may have theoretical justifications and social action and policy justifications. I have given little explicit attention to the social action or policy development that might justify this research. No policy development should arise from this research; it is not designed for that purpose. Rather, the inquiry has sought a deeper insight into one of history's leading agents of social change to enrich the understanding of education as an encounter for social transformation. In *retelling* the story of Paul as an educator I am offering a new insight into the possibility of personal and social transformation. In undertaking a *retelling* a narrative of Paul as an educator I hope that some will come to *relive* the narrative in their own practice. I hope that others will engage with Paul's letters in further research that will enrich their understanding of the education encounter.

Using historical field texts, while not unknown in narrative inquiry, did bring complexity. While it is possible to argue for some similarities between the Mediterranean Basin of the first century CE and contemporary western society, these are very generalised societal characteristics; both are multi-lingual, multi-faith, multi-cultural communities. However, we cannot, nor would we want to, recreate the historical circumstances in which Paul operated including the imposition of a form of Roman imperial rule, or the stratification of society into slave and free. In theorising Paul's action through Giddens' structuration theory (1984) and the education philosophies of contemporary educators, I have articulated universal concepts that have value to educators in modern education settings.

I did not come to the texts with a neutral, objective stance. I have been in formal education roles for all of my working life and my approach has been shaped by my experiences over that time, including my work as a practitioner and through professional reading. In acknowledging that perspective, it raises one of the challenges to qualitative research: that one finds what one is looking for. Have I found Paul to be the educator that I wanted him to be; an educator aligned with my reading of Dewey, Biesta, Freire and Noddings? In response to that, I offer this comment from Hooley (2009):

> In this type of qualitative research, the issue of knowledge credibility will always be central, requiring that as many cycles of investigation and reflection on outcomes as possible are completed, so that truth, trustworthy claims, insights and descriptions of meaning are agreed and supported by the research community. (2009, p. 179)

As with any research, the work stands for itself and the reader will make their own judgement about the quality of insights developed from the narrative inquiry process. It will

earn credibility, or not, over time, as others read and *relive* this narrative, and as research on Paul as an educator expands.

The key findings

Paul introduced a new ontology to the world, resurrection, which was to be lived as *agapē* within a community of people who were committed to living that new life. Paul was responding to an *event* in his life. People changed the way they lived and communities changed. People made the choice to join the *ekklēsia* even though it did not always appear to be in their social or economic interest.

The key finding is that these changes came about as a result of education encounters between Paul and people in the cities of Thessalonica, Philippi and Corinth and the province of Galatia. These education encounters occurred in social groups, *ekklēsia*, in which people came and interacted, emancipated from the restrictions of identity and committed to learning with, and from, each other about how to live this new life of *agapē*. In these communities, people engaged in pure encounters unmediated by identity or the constraints of the physical space or time, and focused on learning how to live according to the new structures for living that Paul had initiated. *Agapē* was not only the purpose for living introduced by Paul, it was also his pedagogy and teaching practice. *Agapē* called on each person, teacher and student, to commit to intersubjectivity and reflexivity. These were new ideas in education encounters in the first century CE. It is my argument that they are universalisable practices that could enhance education encounters in the 21st century.

The culmination of these findings is my claim that Paul implemented a pedagogy of the *event*. My introduction to this pedagogy was through Biesta (2013). I have argued that Paul can be understood as having enacted a pedagogy of the *event*. Paul's approach to pedagogy has changed my teaching practice and my work as an education researcher. I have set out below a more detailed summary of my key findings in response to the second dimension of this inquiry, what modern educators might learn from Paul.

Ekklēsia as a model for modern education communities

The *ekklēsia* came about through an approach to relationships introduced by Paul as *agapē.* These communities were formed by people living in *agapē*, and formed for the purpose of living and learning about *agapē*. In the *ekklēsia* people were freed from the rigid social, economic, gender and religious hierarchies in which they lived, memorably expressed in Paul's letter to the Galatians. In the *ekklēsia* every person could come to the knowledge of a

new life if they committed to living for the good of the other. Within the spatial-temporal dimension of the *ekklēsia,* all were equal subjects through their commitment to the new life of the resurrection *event*.

Paul formed the *ekklēsia* with rules and resources, implemented through social practices, which were repeated across space and time in a diversity of contexts. The modern educator can translate these social practices into contemporary practice to create education communities in which students can come to relationships with the teacher, with each other and with knowledge that creates a new and transformed sense of self. In this pedagogy, the teacher accepts responsibility for creating an environment in which each student is emancipated from the restrictions of identity and in which social learning is valued. In such an environment, students will be open to recognising and responding to an *event.*

Agapē for modern education encounters

Agapē relationships were both essential for living a new resurrected life, and for the creative act of forming new and lasting knowledge. *Agapē* has been widely interpreted. Not unlike the many constructions of Paul, there are many definitions of *agapē.* I bring an education lens to the discussion and argue that *agapē* can and should play a major role in education encounters in the modern world. The link between relationships based on love and the creation of new knowledge is one of the most significant, if challenging, findings of the inquiry.

An educator must firstly commit to living *agapē*. This means a commitment to otherness rather than to meeting one's own desires. It demands of the teacher an openness to change in themselves and the other. It requires the teacher to be open to the renewal of the relationship with each student in each encounter, to envision who the student can become, not who they have been. *Agapē* is creative and generative and begins with the person not with fixed or textbook knowledge. There is no recipe on how to live and teach in *agapē*, not even in Paul's letters. *Agapē* is realised in the living of *agapē*; it is experienced in the moment with the person and within a community committed to that purpose.

Teaching in formal education settings is demanding and complex. At times I wished that this research had developed a response that might have lessened the load on teachers rather than offering an idea such as *agapē*, which adds complexity to the education encounter. I am somewhat comforted by two things. Firstly, Paul offers signposts, such as the creation of the *ekklēsia* and the accompanying social practices; and secondly, Paul succeeded with personal and social transformation, which is, and should be the purpose of the education encounter.

Reflexivity and intersubjectivity reimagined

Paul was committed to reflexivity as essential to the education encounter. Paul was actively reflexive about his learning and his shared experiences with each of the communities. He documented this publicly in his letters and described new actions and new practices from that reflexivity. His approach to teaching, unique to his own time and place, found its ultimate expression in his telling the Corinthians that he came to them in 'fear and trembling'; open to the potential of creation but aware of the risk of rejection. He was consciously reflexive of his own experiences with each community.

Paul rejected the rules and resources, the structures and systems of education of his time and place. He consciously chose a new approach to education. He communicated a purposeful and meaningful ontology, resurrection. He engaged people in a relationship, which became an education encounter. By entering into a relationship with people, Paul's conversations, his meetings with the social group, his letters and his living what he taught brought about a change in people's actions within the boundaries of the *ekklēsia.* The life he lived with them was not a random sequence of actions, but actions chosen with intent and purpose in response to the resurrection *event*. In bringing the actions of this new life into practical consciousness (Giddens 1984), Paul was inviting people to change their lives. In that encounter we have the intersubjective encounter. People experienced the *event* through *agapē* relationships and each experience of *agapē* in a relationship in the *ekklēsia* was intended to change a person's sense of self; to encourage them to see themselves anew. People belonged to a group that reinforced the importance and desirability of living a resurrected life, and who were committed to ongoing learning about living this new life.

The possibility of a pedagogy of the *event*

A pedagogy of the *event* responds to an *event,* which by definition is unplanned and unpredictable. Not every *event* will bring a person to fall off their horse with universal consequences. An *event* understood as emergence, is the appearance of something new in the present, which causes us to reconstruct our past and future, at the very same time that it passes from the present (Mead 2002). This can happen every day, for every person who is self-reflective, and so for every student every day. A pedagogy of the *event* invites the teacher and student to generate change from each *event*, and in the construction of Paul offered in this research text, we have an example of how it has been achieved.

The centrality of *event* in this pedagogy presents challenges for teachers, for an *event* cannot be predicted or planned for. In the *ekklēsia* each person who experienced *agapē* in the

present experienced it as *event*. An experience of event carries powerful possibilities; in the *ekklēsia* each person reconstructed his or her past, adapting the narrative of their past experiences to accommodate a new understanding of the experience. The experience of *agapē* led people to reimagine their future. A student's experience of event that carries such powerful potential may occur for that student outside of the formal education experience, but they bring the experience to the education encounter. Hence, the teacher's responsibility for creating a social system like the *ekklēsia*, in which the *event* is recognised and fostered in the relationships between students. A reflexive teacher committed to a pedagogy of the *event*, understands that it is fidelity to the experience that creates the *event* and so exercises their agency with the student to bring each *event* into existence. A teacher committed to a pedagogy of the *event* is challenged to find purpose in the *event*. Paul's response to the Damascus incident was to live in *agapē*, which generated new knowledge about how to live. That is a pedagogy worthy of investigation by modern educators.

Implications for practice

The key findings set out above include lessons for the contemporary educator, and so are implicitly about practice. However, I have also addressed explicitly the implications for practice as they relate to the core elements of the education encounter, namely the purpose, the pedagogy, and the practice of the teacher and the student-teacher relationship. Following my commitment to narrative inquiry, I make these implications personal to me in my role in teacher education.

The purpose of the education encounter

I am influenced by Biesta's (2010, 2013) multi-dimensionality of educational purpose, qualification, socialisation and subjectification, and join with his argument that teachers must 'make situated judgements about what is educationally desirable in relation to these three dimensions' (Biesta 2013, p. 129). Through qualification, educators open doors for students to achieve goals, such as effective functioning in the material world and the development of a meaningful career. Through socialisation, an educator shares with the subject the ways of being in the society of that time and place. Reflecting on my own experience of teaching adolescents, I recall describing my purpose as providing a bridge for them as they transitioned from the world of school to that of wider society. This knowledge is transitory, or as Paul suggests to the Corinthians, 'imperfect'. The only lasting power is subjectification knowledge or that which creates the possibility for a subject to 'come into being' (Biesta 2013, p. 143). In this pedagogy, this is expressed as *agapē*.

Agapē is universal and available to all regardless of identity; it is transferable across cultures and communities. *Agapē* is a generative power that creates knowledge and so is a living power. We learn from Paul that *agapē* can be taught. Paul lived in *agapē* and people learnt from him. Paul wrote that what he taught was 'not some human thinking … it is a living power among them' (1 Thess 2:13). This is a powerful and telling sentence. Paul teaches that the social group, the *ekklēsia,* has within it the knowledge of how to live a new resurrected life. The commitment to the other is what gives *agapē* a generative power.

As a teacher educator I have a responsibility to use my agency to create environments in which teachers experience *agapē*. Living *agapē* in those moments when I am in direct contact with teachers holds the possibility of bringing them to an appreciation of the importance of subjectification in formal education settings. It holds the possibility for recognising and responding to an *event* in the teaching community.

Role of the teacher

In this inquiry there is affirmation for Biesta's concept of the weakness of education:

> Education isn't a mechanism and shouldn't be turned into one ... education only works through weak connections of communication and interpretation, of interruption and response … this weakness matters if our educational endeavours are informed by a concern for those we educate to be subjects of their own actions. (Biesta 2013, p. 4)

Weakness in the education encounter does not mean a lack of agency or a lack of purpose, or an absence of function for the teacher. It calls from the teacher greater wisdom, mature judgement, and deep reserves of emotional and social sensitivity. It is a genuine relationship in which both parties are affected, not just the student as subject. The teacher must come to the encounter open to being changed by the experience.

I have offered another perspective on weakness in identifying Paul's approach as coming to the education encounter in 'fear and trembling'. In this description of teaching from Paul, the teacher is conscious of the knowledge that they hold and fears their ability to withhold knowledge from the student. The teacher understands that the knowledge they have is the power of the subjectification, to create the possibility for the student to come into being. The teacher also 'trembles'. They recognise and accept that the student has the freedom to reject that knowledge. This approach recasts the power relationship between teacher and student. It does not leave the teacher without power; they have the power, indeed the responsibility to bring new knowledge and new experiences to the education encounter, but they do not have control over the students' learning.

The knowledge that the teacher holds cannot be confined to curriculum knowledge. In the 21st century, curriculum knowledge is available to anybody who has literacy and access to Google. This is not the power of the teacher. That power arises through bringing the student to knowledge of his or her own agency. We learn from critical pedagogy that this includes increasing the students' capacity with language (Freire 1985b, 1996; Giroux 1982). It is also bringing the student into connection with the experience of the *event* and promoting fidelity to that *event*. This is the power held by the teacher, to open the possibility for the student to recognise and respond to the *event* from which change and transformation is possible.

The implication for modern educators is to be reflexive about the relationships they create with the students with whom they interact. Reflexivity is a challenge for teachers. In my experience, reflective journals, reflective conversations and time for reflexivity are the first casualties of work intensification, accountability and standardised assessment requirements. Without reflexivity, teachers risk becoming automatons. The challenge for my practice as a teacher educator is to be reflexive in the company of the teachers with whom I work.

The student-teacher relationship

The current structures and social practices of education, understood as an industrial model of schooling, bring complexities to the teacher-student relationship. Regulated school locations and times, one teacher allocated to 25 or more students, rigid timetables and mandated state curriculum, can all work against *agapē* relationships. However, this model of schooling has evolved in Australia over 150 years, it has brought benefits and is unlikely to be significantly modified in my lifetime. The challenge is to consider how the experience of living alongside Paul's narrative could modify, rather than replace, established structures and social practices.

In an education encounter involving teacher and student, it is the student who holds authority. Biesta (2013, p. 53), argues that 'the teacher's power to teach is a weak existential power, a power that relies on interaction and encounter'. What is critical in this commentary is that the student holds power over the teaching but not power over the teacher. We learn this important distinction from Paul. He enters the *ekklēsia* as an equal; he is accorded the same respect and love as every other member of the community. However, as we see with the Galatians, Corinthians and Athenians, people are free to reject the knowledge that Paul brings. We learn from this that the teacher has a responsibility to create relationships in which the student distinguishes between the knowledge arising from the teaching and the person who is the teacher. Let me offer an example. In formal education settings, teaching and learning is sometimes reduced to a transactional process situated in a coercive

environment. Teachers use reward and punishment and their identity as teacher to control relationships as they transmit knowledge. In that environment, the student is not free to accept or reject the knowledge that the teacher brings. Where a student does not have the freedom to reject knowledge, they may well exercise their freedom by rejecting the teacher. This can also extend to a rejection of formal schooling. In such a situation, conflict is almost inevitable. In my work in teacher education this is the area of greatest confusion and greatest need. The most demanded in-service teacher professional development programs are those that are grouped under the title, classroom management. Teachers are looking for the agency to change teacher-student relationships that have descended into conflict. Implementing a pedagogy of the *event* is an alternative response to that expressed need.

The challenge is to learn from Paul. He responded to the *event* in just four communities in one relatively small geographic region but his actions continue to reverberate. As a teacher educator it is my work to find and promote models of teacher-student relationships in which students value the teaching, and allow for their own and the teacher's reflexivity. Having walked alongside Paul, I am persuaded that those relationships must be open to the possibility of *event*.

Limitations of the research

I have read all of the field texts in English translation and not in their original language. This will bring significant criticism of the research by scholars of the New Testament. However, while translated text might be a limitation for biblical exegesis; it is less of a limitation for narrative inquiry. Narrative inquiry looks to the text, the experience of the creator of the text, and the experience of the receiver of the text, in both its historic time and in its modern incarnation. Thus the Jerusalem Bible translation of the Pauline letters exists now, is in circulation and is being read by an audience. It is a living text in its translated form. Similarly, I have only accessed secondary sources that are available in English. This has meant that for some commentaries from German and French scholars, including for example Badiou (2003), I have relied on translations. There may be gaps in the literature review, where I have not been able to access works in English translation.

For readers of this research text there are likely to be three stumbling blocks related to the origins of the field texts. A new narrative of Paul that removes the theological element from his letters will be unpalatable to many. They are likely to find a materialist interpretation strips from the texts their core meaning and value, and thus will find any construction of Paul as an educator, removed from his missionary purpose, a meaningless, even a false

construction. Secondly, the religious language may disconcert those who profess adherence to a religion other than Christianity, or to no religion at all. Phrases and language that speak of 'all one in Christ' will be a barrier. Finally, the idea of the resurrection as fable that is central to Badiou's construction of Paul as a universal subject (2009) will be an obstacle for many. It is a difficult concept.

The field texts I have chosen are embedded in Christianity. While in the methodology chapter I argued for dealing with the letters as historical documents, I partially concede to the argument:

> We cannot read the letters of Paul in the same way we read the letters of Cicero or Seneca, no matter how hard we try to do so. The fact that Paul's letters, for nearly two millennia, have been part of the Bible exercises some constraints upon even the most avowedly secular of their interpreters. (Meeks 2009, p. 146)

Thus, while I have argued that these field texts should be seen as historical documents of equivalence to the letters of Cicero or the work of Plato or Quintilian, I cannot realistically see them on the reading list for a teacher education program because of that heritage.

The narrative inquiry methodology does not lead to replicable results, which is important to those operating within a logical-scientific paradigm. Other researchers may draw very different conclusions from the same field texts. Indeed at another time, and therefore with different experiences, I may have drawn different conclusions from the same material. Perhaps the most pertinent point to make here is that those people who have encountered Paul's letters through experiences of misogyny or slavery, or homophobia, will come to the field texts and this research text with a very different viewpoint and may not share in my findings. I am content in applying a pragmatic philosophy to the research text. The value of the inquiry will be derived from educators who draw new insights or new practices from the findings that enrich the education encounters in which they are involved. My inquiry will be accountable to the social community in which I operate.

Finally I acknowledge that throughout the text, I have limited my observations to my experience of education in predominantly English-speaking western democracies. Those experiences include practical experience, and reading and professional discussion with colleagues whose practical experience has also been in in those settings. I offer no comment about the extent to which the findings might enrich the experience of teachers in other cultural or political environments.

Further research

There is wide scope for other education researchers to engage with the Pauline texts. The field is new, there are few in the space and there is a rich lode to be mined for original insights. I contend that what has been achieved in this research text is no more than an entrée into new territory. It is the first research text to explore Paul's work as an educator using a narrative inquiry approach. It is the first research text to investigate Paul's work as an educator for a modern audience from a secular and materialist perspective. It is my reading of Smith (2012) and Edsall (2014) that they approach Paul's letters from a faith perspective. The classics scholar Judge was a committed Christian (Harrison 2008), and as discussed earlier, his analysis of Paul's work should be considered in its historical context, rather than through an education lens. Despite having brought a materialist paradigm to the letters, I do wonder whether those with a theological interest in Paul may find interest in this construction of him as an educator.

I opted for a broad approach, covering letters from Paul to four communities. An inquiry could have been undertaken using letters to just one community (e.g. the Corinthians). Given the embryonic state of research into Paul as an educator, I opted for breadth rather than depth in the inquiry. Having found no other narrative inquiry into Paul's letters, there seemed to be a compelling case to establish a broad foundation. The research text has established signposts for others to explore Paul's work with individual communities in greater depth. The opportunity remains for this researcher, or another, to undertake a deeper inquiry into Paul as an educator, using only his correspondence to a single community.

The letters to the Colossians and Romans provide opportunities for further inquiry into Paul's practice as an educator. Comparisons could be made between his letters to the *ekklēsia* he founded and those that were already established. Edsall (2014) touches on this, comparing the teaching language in 1 Corinthians, 1 Thessalonians and Romans. His is a linguistic analysis in which differences in the founding of the communities are of little importance. In the same way, further research could be conducted into the difference between Paul's teaching and that of his successors who wrote the pseudo-Pauline letters. Smith (2012) has analysed the teaching language from both an authentic letter (1 Corinthians) and the later Pastorals. The focus of Smith's study was how the people of the *ekklēsia* defined themselves as learning communities, with only limited attention to differences between Paul's teaching and that of the Pauline school. There is much to be explored in the space between Paul's own letters and his later imitators.

I have signalled in this research text that Paul's work has been viewed through a political lens by Horsley (1997b, 2000b). There is an obvious avenue for an inquiry into Horsley's analysis of Paul's correspondence with the Corinthians, viewed through the education frame of Freire's (1996) conscientisation and Lave and Wenger's (1991) communities of practice. I concluded that our understanding of Paul as an educator is in an embryonic state and therefore it was too premature for this research text to follow a path of Paul as an overtly political educator. Nor was it possible within the limitations of this text. However, it is my hope that this research text has contributed to the possibility that such an inquiry might be undertaken.

There is a space for further comparisons between Paul and the Hellenic philosophers, notably Socrates, Plato and Aristotle. There is an ongoing influence from those philosophers on contemporary western education. However, in this research text I have signalled influences from Paul on western education that are under-theorised. Hogan (1995, 2010) and Judge (2008g) have opened the door for this discussion with their work on the Socratic influence on Paul. This comes to more than just recognising the antecedents for the work of educators, it comes to epistemology and ontology. It is through the philosophical thinkers that we are challenged to come to terms with our beliefs about the nature of knowledge in the world. Paul has posed an alternative that love leads to knowledge. This is an epistemological and ontological idea worthy of deeper investigation than offered in this research text.

I noted earlier in the text that I had made a choice for Badiou (2003) and his interpretation of the resurrection *event* in preference to Žižek and *event* (Žižek 2010b, 2014). There is scope for further research and development of a different approach to a pedagogy of the *event* drawing on the theories of Žižek.

Finally, while I have speculated, in the company of Biesta (2006, 2010, 2013, 2017), on the meaning of weakness in the teaching encounter, it is a field that would welcome action research by practitioners. What does it mean in practical terms to come to the learning environment in 'fear and trembling'? What does that look like in a small primary school in the western suburbs of Melbourne on a meltingly hot December afternoon? What does it mean for the daughter of a Kurdish asylum seeker, who enters that Year 2 classroom with minimal English, that her teacher comes to her open to the weakness of the education encounter and creates a learning environment for emancipation? They are the questions for practitioner research that would build on the findings of this research text.

Final Things

The letters of Paul of Tarsus have generated many narratives. Badiou, who has been a significant influence on this research text has reduced Paul's narrative to the single statement 'Jesus is resurrected' (Badiou 2003, p. 4). Following Badiou (2003), I have constructed a narrative of Paul as the first educator of the first millennium. I have argued for Paul as an educator, one whose narrative is the enactment of a pedagogy of the *event*. In his own life he responded to the resurrection *event* and created *ekklēsia* where people learned with, and from, each other how to live for a new ontology: the belief that new life was possible. This was to be done by living in *agapē*. Through dialogic education encounters Paul changed lives and communities. The claim to be the first educator will be disputed by scholars who favour the work of his contemporaries from antiquity, such as Socrates, Plato and Aristotle. However, given my definition of the education experience as an intersubjective encounter that draws on reflexivity from those involved to bring about change, I am confident in my claim.

Badiou (2003, p. 109), in naming Paul as the foundation of universalism and our contemporary, comes to an explanation of the universal: 'The production of equality and the casting off, in thought, of differences are the material signs of the universal'. From that explanation of the universal, I find Paul's contribution to education; he implemented the universal in the education encounter. He cast off social and economic identities, cultural, ethnic and religious backgrounds and the boundaries of geographic space. In responding to the resurrection *event* he even moved beyond the perceived restrictions of time to create a new possibility for the future. He created structures that were situated in a place and time but are not bound by the limitations of that history. People responded, changed their lives and committed to a new way of living in community, they became universal subjects to the event of *agapē*. That is the lesson from Paul for contemporary educators.

The most powerful idea about teaching that resonates with me from the letters is that Paul comes to the Corinthians in 'fear and trembling'. This phrase captures the power and the weakness of the teacher in the education encounter. The teacher must come to the environment with confidence that what they bring has the power to increase the agency of the students and lead them to change their lives. Thus, when the teacher comes to the full realisation of their capacity, they live in fear of this power that they hold. A teacher can withhold the knowledge and withhold wise judgement that might enable the student to come into presence. There is a paradox at the heart of this approach. Through reflexivity the

teacher will recognise the weakness in the education encounter. In creating an environment in which students are emancipated to make free choices, there is always the possibility that they will reject knowledge that is in their interests. Teachers should tremble at the power of the student to reject the knowledge, but rejoice if they have developed the agency to do so in a meaningful way.

As the inquiry has progressed, the phrase from Paul that has grown on me is his reminder to the Thessalonians that what he teaches is 'not some human thinking … it is a living power among them' (1 Thess 2:13). This is powerful statement about education. As an educator, it encourages me to ask: 'What is the living power that has been generated as a result of any education encounter in which I am involved?' It captures Biesta's (2013) notion of the transcendent, something that is beyond the experience of the other in the education encounter. The teacher must bring something new to the encounter. The living power comes into being only in a community where all commit to a shared purpose, and that was the *ekklēsia*. The learning from the *ekklēsia* is that it comprised universal structures, emancipating all members from the restrictions of their identity, allowing them to come together in pure intersubjective encounters. This captures the essence of what I have described as social learning.

I am confident that the echo that will live longest for the reader of this text is from Paul's letter to the Galatians: 'there are no more distinctions between Jew and Greek, slave and free, male and female,' (Gal 3:28). It is repeated frequently throughout the research text, from several different perspectives. It has been described as a great 'sound bite' (Fredriksen in Caputo, JD 2009, p. 177) and there is no doubt that it is. But this should not allow its significance to be reduced. This is at the core of Paul's work with the *ekklēsia*. It is what brings Badiou to Paul as the universal subject (2009), and it is in my view a phrase that can inform all contemporary educators. What it offers is the possibility that in the face of a universal truth we are all stripped of our identity. We do not come to a universal truth as man or woman, as Jew or Greek or Muslim, as slave or refugee or asylum seeker or boat person, but we come as a universal subject. This does not mean we are stripped of our sense of self to become as Badiou (2003) writes, bland and homogenised global consumers, but the differences by which we come to an identity, as opposed to a self, fall away. Badiou (2003) critiques the movement in his own country, and by implication western Europe, to particularise the law for specific groups. He has in his sights the Le Pen party and their maxim 'France for the French', which is used to exclude all of those not considered French, or even French enough. I could equally point to Australian laws that have established offshore prison

camps for those who seek asylum in Australia but who do not meet our definition of being Australian enough.

Here is the challenge for education in the modern world; to increase the agency of all people to embrace difference, unpredictability and the possibility of change. That is the message of the *event*, which by definition interrupts the daily routine of our existence. We are asked to respond to difference every day. The task for the educator is to encourage all who are involved in the education encounter to view an *event* as an opportunity to come to new life. The challenge for the educator is to place each *event* in the context of the broader question: 'What is the universal truth before which we are all subject and what is our role as educators in bringing people into fidelity to this truth?' Surely, that is to live together in *agapē*!

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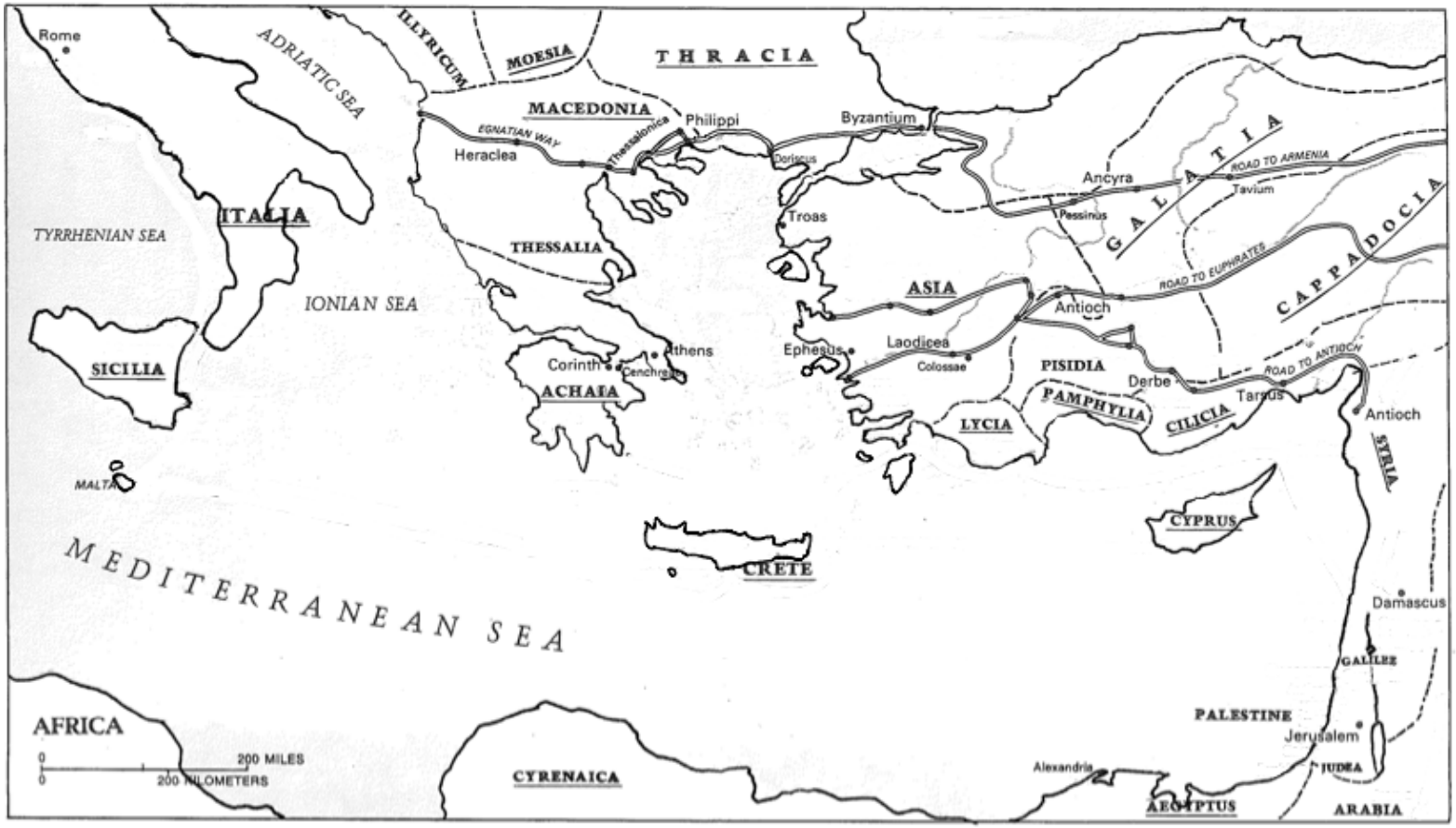
Appendices

Appendix One: Map showing key locations from the field texts



Source: Modified by the author from an original map in (Perrin & Duling 1982, p. 162)

Appendix Two: A timeline of Paul's visits and letter writing to the communities

Paul of Tarsus, born 6 BCE - died 67 CE (presumed in Rome)

Date	**33-37**	**37-45**	**December 45-February 46**	**46 April – Sept.**	**Sept. 46 – May 48**	**Sept. 48 – Spring 49**	**Spring 49 – April 50**	**50 April**	**April 50 – Sept. 51**	**51 October**	**51-52 (Dec. – Februay)**	**August 52 – October 54**	**Winter 54-55 and Summer 55**
Key incidents	Damascus *event* in 33	Travelling as emissary of Antioch Church (including first visit to Jerusalem in September to November 37)								Jerusalem Conference	Incident at Antioch	In prison in Ephesus and travelling	Travelling
Location	Damascus	Syria (including Antioch) and Cilicia (including Tarsus)	Antioch	Southern Galatia (Iconium, Lystra)	Northern Galatia (Pessinus, Tavium, Ancyra)	Philippi	Thessalonica	Athens	First visit to Corinth	Travels from Jerusalem to Ephesus via Antioch and includes 2nd visit Galatia (July 52)		Ephesus 2nd visit Thessalonica, Philippi & Corinth	Macedonia & Illyricum & 3rd visit to Corinth
Letters								Writes TA to Thessalonians	Writes TB and TC			Writes Galatians, PA, PB, PC to Philippians and CB while in Ephesus	Writes CD and CË

Source: This timeline is based on Murphy-O'Connor (1997, 2002, 2008b)

Appendix Three: Sample of analysis of field texts

Letter A: 1 Thessalonians 2:13 – 4:1

Paul first lives in Thessalonika for around 12 months between the Spring of 49 and April 50. He arrives there after spending time in Philippi and Galatia. After Thessalonika, he leaves for Athens, where he stays only briefly and then travels to Corinth. Murphy-O'Connor (MO'C) has him writing Letter A from Athens around Spring/Summer (possibly April) of 50. Letter B and 2 Thessalonians are written from Corinth between April 50 and September 51. I have maintained the sectioning provided in the online version of the Jerusalem Bible.

Text of letter	**Dimension of place**	**Personal and social dimension**	**Temporal dimension**	**Pedagogy**	**'Curriculum'**
2:13 Another reason why we constantly thank God for you is that as soon as you heard the message that we brought you as God's message, you accepted it for what it really is, God's message and not some human thinking; and it is still a living power among you who believe it. 2:14 For you, my brothers, have been like the churches of God in Christ Jesus which are in Judaea, in suffering the same treatment from your own countrymen as they have suffered from the Jews. 2:15 the people who put the Lord Jesus to death, and the prophets too. And now they have been persecuting us, and acting in a way that cannot please God and makes them the enemies of the whole human race, 2:16 because they are	Thessalonika in the first century was a free city. While it was subject to Roman rule, it had a degree of local autonomy that included freedom from military occupation, the right to mint coins, an advantageous tax regime (Jewett 123 paraphrasing Evans) and a citizens' assembly (Meeks 47). The population was largely of Greek descent – the native Macedonians having been integrated into a 'coherent nation with Greek identity'. Some Celts and Italians had arrived in the city following the Roman legions. There is no clear consensus on the	This letter going to an audience of recent converts who were under external pressure (probably from friends, neighbours and those in the community who were uncertain about this life change). (Edsall p.89) No evidence of infighting as occurs in Corinth. Paul is keen to draw parallels between the suffering of the Thessalonians and his own experience of suffering. A shared experience At 2:14-15 he writes seemingly without irony of the Jews who persecuted brothers in	There is no direct explanation of why Paul starts writing letters to the *ekklēsia* in Thessalonika. However, given his presence was not possible in that city (or others), he was under threat from some enemies, then letters were one of the few forms of communication available to him to maintain a relationship with the *ekklēsia*. There is no evidence in the correspondence of any emissaries being stationed permanently in Thessalonika. We know that Timothy undertook one trip but it is not clear whether	2:13 shows a link between the letter and what Paul had taught the Thessalonians when he was with them. He writes as if the first encounter was successful, '*as soon as you heard the message … you accepted it*' Contrast with his experience in Athens as reported in Acts and his ongoing difficulty with the Corinthians. 2:13 Paul claims his teaching has a power separate to Paul's presence – it is a '*living power among them*' it exists within and between them, regardless of Paul's	2:16 shows Paul's own understanding of his role- '*to preach to the pagans and save them'.*

Text of letter	Dimension of place	Personal and social dimension	Temporal dimension	Pedagogy	'Curriculum'
hindering us from preaching to the pagans and trying to save them. They never stop trying to finish off the sins they have begun, but retribution is overtaking them at last.	presence of a Jewish community. Jewett concludes from the lack of evidence of a synagogue or Jewish inscriptions, that there was only a very small Jewish population. Meeks writes that there is no reason to doubt the evidence of the Book of Acts that there was a strong Jewish community but he does acknowledge the lack of archaeological evidence. Thessalonika was a successful city, being positioned on the Via Egnatia, a major East-West trading route and was also a major port for North-South traders (Meeks 1983). The temporary absence of war and the arrival of immigrants and slaves to the port city ensured that a small elite with access to this labour were prosperous (Jewett	Judaea (the very same mission that the 'Jewish Paul' had undertaken prior to the event on the road to Damascus).	he was even the bearer of the letters. Paul does not mention a 'trusted brother' to carry the letters leaving it open to us to assume that Paul perceived his relationship with the *ekklēsia* as strong enough to sustain the time and distance of the separation, and that the power of the words in his letters would be a sufficient influence to guide the *ekklēsia*. Paul does not rely on his own personal presence or that of a 'disciple' to maintain the relationship with the *ekklēsia*, he is confident of the shared experience he has with the Thessalonian community. From this earliest letter, he links the Thessalonians to the broader movement	presence or not. This is reinforced at 3:1-5, where Paul is worried that his own absence (or eviction) and the resulting distress will lead them to lose faith – he reminds them here that it is God's message (not a human one) and that it has a power even without Paul. It is important to note that in his first communication almost the entire text is committed to a sense of longing and relationship. It has echoes of a letter written by one forced to depart from a lover. In this first of his letters to that community the theme of suffering emerges very early in the communication. He uses the plural to show he is sharing the experience with them (he was chased out of	

Text of letter	Dimension of place	Personal and social dimension	Temporal dimension	Pedagogy	'Curriculum'
	p.119), however, the distribution of wealth was uneven in the community with many small traders, artisans and craftsmen experiencing a degree of relative deprivation. (Jewett 121). There was a civic priesthood honouring Greek Gods and cults of the mystery religions Serapis and Dionysus. There were shrines for Aphrodite, Zeus, Asclepius and other deities. There was also evidence among the civic establishment of adherence to the Egyptian inspired cult of Isis. Jewett details at some length (1986 p. 126ff) the local structures, which saw the civic leaders holding both economic and religious influence. Jewett makes much of the cult of Cabirus, a cult that he argues was appropriated from the artisan class by the		(see 2:14) IMPORTANT – this letter is written prior to the incident at Antioch – see more in Galatians. 2:14 suggests that the persecution/suffering being experienced in the *ekklēsia* is from others within Thessalonika and not an external force of any sort.	the city by the civic authorities)	
2:17 A short time after we had been separated from you - in body but never in thought, brothers - we had an especially strong desire and longing to see you face to face again, 2:18 and we tried hard to come and visit you; I, Paul, tried more than once, but Satan prevented us. 2:19 What do you think is our pride and our joy? You are; and you will be the crown of which we shall be proudest in the presence of our Lord Jesus when he comes; 2:20 you are our pride and our joy.		The sense of longing for the community is quite profound – there was a valued relationship at work that Paul is keen to continue. (2:17) Even by the standards of letter writing of the day, of which Paul is judged to have been familiar, (Jewett 1986) which commonly included '*philophronetic phrases, language intended to convey the writer's esteem for the recipient and to encourage the latter's positive*	'*we had been separated'*, suggests that Paul was forcibly removed from Thessalonika. Edsall (p.173) writes '*given Paul's premature and forced departure from Thessalonika it is highly probable that he felt the need to complement his teaching'* It is also the case that at this stage he has lived in Philippi and Galatia – where he established very strong relationships with those communities. It is interesting that he	Relationship is central to Paul's communication with the *ekklēsia* – he expresses this as a desire. (we were separated in body but not in thought) The letter has clearly become a replacement for his presence with them where he could have expressed these sentiments to them at a gathering. It is the absence of any clear instructions or teachings (until the end of the letter) that signifies the importance of the	Early in this letter is the 'coming of Jesus' expressed in a way that makes it clear that this has been central to Paul's teaching when he was with them. The casual use of '*but Satan prevented us'* also implies that this had comprised part of his teaching when with them – he does not seek to explain the phrase. Edsall (with backing by several others p.131?) makes the point that Satan is a

Text of letter	Dimension of place	Personal and social dimension	Temporal dimension	Pedagogy	'Curriculum'
	ruling elite, thus becoming a source of resentment among the craftsmen. The evidence available to date (from Meeks), suggests that Thessalonian society was stratified but relatively stable. There were few opportunities for a person to move beyond their current status in life. Entry into the Roman army and a successful campaign provided one opportunity to move ahead, but the first century was relatively peaceful and Thessalonica as a free city did not have a military garrison. The greatest change of status for a person of the lower classes was from slave to freedom and vice versa. More on place - urban v. agrarian in my notes on Thessalonian letters if needed.	*sentiments towards the writer' (Malherbe in Meeks 2003, p. 86)*, Paul's letters are particularly effusive about his relationship with them. There can be little doubt about the deep affection and esteem with which Paul holds the Thessalonian *ekklēsia*. In his first communication to them he writes, *what do you think is our pride and joy? You are; and you will be the crown of which we shall be proudest in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ when he comes (1 Thess. 2:19).*	places the Thessalonians on such a high pedestal here – you are our pride and joy, you are our crown.	sense of connection and relationship as central. We see the 'building up' of the other	Jewish concept (and derivatively Xtian) with no parallel in Graeco-Roman thought
3:1 When we could not bear the waiting any longer, we decided it would be best to be left without a companion at Athens, and 3:2 sent our brother Timothy, who is God's helper in spreading the Good News of Christ, to keep you firm and strong in the faith 3:3 and prevent any of you from being unsettled by the		On suffering there is an argument that his focus on suffering is evidence of the reciprocal relationship that Paul has developed with the *ekklēsia*. Meeks writes: *One cannot read far in the letters of Paul*	Paul did not place a 'disciple' in Thessalonika to continue the education of the *ekklēsia*. He does send Timothy as an emissary (3:2) to find out what is happening in the *ekklēsia* following his own hasty departure. It is	On the focus on suffering - Malherbe (2011) writes about Paul's approach as caring for his converts, based on a well-known philosophic tradition of pastoral care. In Classical rhetoric speakers and writers are trained to persuade	Malherbe 2000 p.195 explains Tempter in light of 2:Cor. 2:5-11, which I don't find all that satisfactory – so who or what is the Tempter is unclear.

Text of letter	Dimension of place	Personal and social dimension	Temporal dimension	Pedagogy	'Curriculum'
present troubles. As you know, these are bound to come our way: 3:4 when we were with you, we warned you that we must expect to have persecutions to bear, and that is what has happened now, as you have found out. 3:5 That is why, when I could not stand waiting any longer, I sent to assure myself of your faith: I was afraid the Tempter might have tried you too hard, and all our work might have been wasted.		*and his disciples without discovering that it was concern about the internal life of the Christian groups in each city that prompted most of the correspondence. The letters also reveal that those groups enjoyed an unusual degree of intimacy, high levels of interaction among members, and a very strong sense of internal cohesion and of distinction both from outsiders and from 'the world'*. (2003 p.74) Malherbe 2011 p.57 makes the point that warnings about suffering and persecution were not uncommon among philosophers of the time – he cites passages from Seneca.	following Timothy's return that Paul commences his correspondence. He must have heard reports that concerned him – ' '*when we could not bear the waiting any longer …*' and then 3:5 and 3:6 or as Malherbe 2000 p.196 suggests, in sending Timothy, he writes that he is doing it out of his own sense of deprivation to know more about them. There is a great emphasis on inoculating the *ekklēsia* against suffering that might come their way. Paul warns about suffering in each of the three Thessalonian letters. here at 3:2-4. (also 1 Thess 1:6, & 2 Thess 1:4-5).	their audiences to make some kind of change in their life (Lausberg quoted in Jewett p. 63). The focus is primarily on the activity of the communicator but in his letters Paul is genuinely reflexive and focused on the relationship. There is very little instruction. First mention in a letter of others working with Paul – but they feature throughout his correspondence. Timothy is sent '*to continue the pastoral care Paul had engaged in when he was in Thessalonika*' '*Paul feared that his distress might trouble them so much that their faith might be shaken'* (Malherbe 2000 p.196)	
3:6 However, Timothy is now back from you and he has			There is no evidence of persecution by the civic		

Text of letter	Dimension of place	Personal and social dimension	Temporal dimension	Pedagogy	'Curriculum'
given us good news of your faith and your love, telling us that you always remember us with pleasure and want to see us quite as much as we want to see you. 3:7 And so, brothers, your faith has been a great comfort to us in the middle of our own troubles and sorrows; 3:8 now we can breathe again, as you are still holding firm in the Lord. 3:9 How can we thank God enough for you, for all the joy we feel before our God on your account? 3:10 We are earnestly praying night and day to be able to see you face to face again and make up any shortcomings in your faith. 3:11 May God our Father himself, and our Lord Jesus Christ, make it easy for us to come to you. 3:12 May the Lord be generous in increasing your love and make you love one another and the whole human race as much as we love you. 3:13 And may he so confirm your hearts in holiness that you may be blameless in the sight of our God and Father		If we are prepared to trust Paul's own reporting it appears that the relationship is reciprocated. The sequence is *(3:1-2)* through to Timothy's report at (3:6) *Timothy is now back from you and he has given us good news of your faith and love, telling us that you always remember us with pleasure and want to see us quite as much as we want to see you.* No detail on the Greek translation of love at 3:6 or 3:12 – my reading of Malherbe is that it is not agape. Maybe allēlous – see p.244)	authorities of Xtians at this time – so suffering is perhaps exclusion and ridicule for choosing a different life. 3:12 gives an indication – reinforced in his next letter that the purpose of this movement is not to threaten the Roman social order. 3:12 – 4:1 seems critical to understanding what Paul wanted for the community as a result of his intervention. It is about living a different life, a community oriented life as Paul modelled for them	There is active reflexivity by Paul when he shares with them his own experience of suffering. It is evident in his intimate longing for them, (3:7-8). Paul does not claim expert status, nor teach them how to deal with suffering and persecution; rather he shares in their injury. The two way nature of the relationship is expressed here by Paul – '*your faith has been a great comfort to us …'* The emphasis on community finds direct expression at 3:12. This is part of the change that Paul has instituted – '*Ancient cult was not generally dependent on group support. Sacrifice was an individual rather than congregational matter, though everyone was expected to offer sacrifice. The*	In this first written communication with the *ekklēsia* in Thessalonika there are no strong reminders about behaviours of actions required of the people other than to live a good life. (3:12 & 4:1). These words do not form part of the initial greeting or conclusion to the letter – they are part of the 'instruction' of the letter. There is one comment that hints at more learning when Paul writes, *we are earnestly praying night and day to be able to see you face to face again and make up any shortcomings in your faith (1 Thess 3:10)*. At this stage, admittedly just weeks after he has left the community, there is no doctrine, no rules, no

Text of letter	Dimension of place	Personal and social dimension	Temporal dimension	Pedagogy	'Curriculum'
when our Lord Jesus Christ comes with all his saints.				*innumerable social, funerary or trade associations linked themselves with a sanctuary for patronage, discipline and legitimacy. <u>But their effective purpose is normally not derived from the cult</u>'.* (Judge p.614 – emphasis added) Keep in mind this comment follows a lengthy discussion on religion/cults/Xtianity. Judge goes on to say *'... they transposed the ritual approach to the divine into a studied reconstruction of social relations'* (p. 614).	theology, no guidelines, no evidence from the life of Jesus, just an emphasis on living a life based on loving relationships. Parousia implied in 3:13.
4:1 Finally, brothers, we urge you and appeal to you in the Lord Jesus to make more and more progress in the kind of life that you are meant to live: the life that God wants, as you learnt from us, and as you are already living it.	Paul writes the first letter just a few weeks after being forced to leave Thessalonika. He is probably in Athens at the time where it seems he had limited success in spreading his message (we have only the historically questionable report in Acts and the absence of any discussion by Paul			It is only here in the final statement that Paul takes the opportunity to connect their shared experience. As we will see he does more of this in the next two letters to the *ekklēsia*. It could be argued that he learns more over time about how to use	

Text of letter	Dimension of place	Personal and social dimension	Temporal dimension	Pedagogy	'Curriculum'
	about Athens as proof of this). The Thessalonian correspondence is sandwiched between Paul's time In Philippi where he had success in forming the *ekklēsia*, a group that remained loyal to him, supporting him financially but where he was also jailed, beaten and evicted from the city by the authorities, and his brief sojourn in Athens where according to Freeman, *Paul was exasperated by the statues to gods in Athens – idols. He was also separated from Silas and Timothy. He was given a hearing before the Court of Areopagus that oversaw all new cults coming into the city. He is humiliated in Athens – an outsider in the world of Greek philosophers* (Freeman 2011 p. 56). It may well be that these two experiences			the letter to build up the community. What is evident is Paul's constant encouragement *to make more progress in the kind of life that you are meant to live* (4:1). Words similar to this about the type of life that is to be lived are expressed by Paul to the *ekklēsia* on another five occasions (1 Thess 3:12, 1 Thess 1:5-6, 1 Thess 4:9-11, 1 Thess 5:13, 2 Thess 1:3). Possible connection with Plato's approach (in The Republic) which focuses on the question of 'What is the good life?', (Lawton & Gordon 2002 p.16) Paul believes he has modelled for the answer to this question but they must learn to live that with each other and keep learning how to live that life as new challenges arise. Paul	

Text of letter	Dimension of place	Personal and social dimension	Temporal dimension	Pedagogy	'Curriculum'
	encourage him to see his time with the Thessalonian community in a very generous light and leads him to the effusive proclamation of their relationship.			does not take control of the behaviour or actions of the *ekklēsia*, responsibility rests with each person to live the life he has modelled.	

General comments

Paul's Letters to the Thessalonians are the first letters (or the oldest) for which we have the text and in fact the oldest written texts in Christianity. We have no evidence of any letters from Paul that were written prior to the Thessalonian correspondence but scholars of whom Malherbe is one (2000, p. 13) work on an assumption that there were earlier letters but they have simply not survived. The significance for this paper is that caution must be exercised in proclaiming that this form of interaction, letter writing, was new for Paul or that it represented a significant change in Paul's approach to educating the communities with whom he worked. It is simply that we do have this letter to the Thessalonians as the oldest known letter.

At some point, and clearly by the time Paul engaged with the Thessalonians, he reached the view that he needed to understand and share people's experiences and that living with them was a critical element in influencing how he wanted them to live their lives. He lived and worked in Thessalonika for approximately 12 months; he engaged with people in their environment. One could describe this change as a shift from preacher (*I have a message for you*) to nurturer (*I want to work with you)*. The letters represented an ongoing relationship with the community after Paul left.

(From my own paper – could be helpful - try and place yourself in the situation of a member of the *ekklēsia* of Thessalonika in about 49. This simply the use of imagination to think about what it would have been like for a person hearing the letter.)

You hear an extraordinarily personal and intimate letter overflowing with praise, longing, love and affection. After the initial greetings, standard in your experience, you then hear praise, *another reason why we thank god for you (2:13), You are our pride and joy (2:20)* and *How can we thank God enough for you, for all the joy we feel before God on your account? (3:9)*. You hear a longing to be connected, *A short time after we had been separated from you – in body but never in thought, brothers – we had an especially strong desire and longing to see you face to face again' (2:17), And we tried hard to come and visit you (2:18).* You hear that relationship is important, *Timothy is now back and he has given us good news of your faith and your love, telling us that you always remember us with pleasure and want to see us quite as much as we want to see you (3:6)*. You hear that we are doing well in this new life, *And so, brothers, your faith has been a great comfort to us in the middle of our own troubles and sorrows; (3:7).* You hear that you are like others in this new movement, *For you, my brothers, have been like the churches of God in Christ Jesus in Judaea* (2:14) You do hear concern and fear about persecution and this does worry you. If you are really listening you hear a touch of desperation in Paul's words – it is as if he cannot do without you, *When we could not bear the waiting any longer (3:1)* and *When I could not stand waiting any longer I sent to assure myself of your faith (3:5)*. There are no less than 9 exhortations to love and/or expressions of longing from Paul to you in this quite short letter. You are reassured that you understand what Paul has told you. Really he is only telling you to live a good life as he modelled. The letter is intimate and you are drawn to his words.

Appendix Four: Paul's interactions with the Corinthians

Date	Location and travel	Letters
April 50	Paul's first visit to Corinth accompanied by Silvanus and Timothy (after having been in Macedonia and Athens)	
Sept. 51	Paul called before the proconsul Gallio and departs Corinth	
August 52	Paul arrives in Ephesus where he writes several letters	Paul writes letter CA 'The previous letter'. No trace exists but mentioned at 1 Cor 5:9.
May – June 54	i) 'Chloe's people' arrive in Ephesus (1 Cor 1:11) ii) In response Paul dispatches Timothy to Corinth (he is absent from early May to mid-June) iii) A delegation arrives from Corinth with a letter for Paul in mid-May after Timothy's departure (1 Cor. 7:1 and 16:15-17)	Paul writes letter CB - 1 Corinthians probably in response to the two delegations The letter is sent with the returning delegation led by Stephanas
July 54	Timothy returns from Corinth and Paul is so disturbed by his report that he makes his second visit to Corinth – he stays approximately three weeks During this visit, Paul is confronted and challenged by an outsider to the *ekklēsia* in Corinth, possibly a Judaic-Christian	
August 54	Paul returns to Ephesus	Paul writes Letter CC – 'The painful (or tearful) letter' after his brief and unpleasant visit. The text of this letter is lost but is referenced at 2 Cor 2:4. Titus carries the letter to Corinth.
December 54 - February 55	Paul leaves Ephesus meets up with Titus (possibly in Thessalonica) who reports on his visit to Corinth	With Timothy Paul writes letter CD to the Corinthians - 2 Cor 1-9. It is delivered in March or April of 55 again in the hands of Titus
June/July/August 55	Following the writing of letter CD and the departure of Titus, Paul heads to Illyricum for more missionary work	Messengers reach Paul in Illyricum with news of further criticism and conflict in Corinth. He writes letter CË - 2 Cor 10-13 and sends it back with the messengers
Winter 55/56	Paul travels to Corinth and winters there following which he takes the 'collection' to Jerusalem	

Source: All dates from Murphy-O'Connor (1997, 2002)

Appendix Five: Teaching language in 1 Corinthians

	Strategy	Example references from 1 Corinthians
1. Explicit reminders of his teaching		
1.1	Paul reminds people of his previous teaching	*I want to remind you, brothers* (10:1) *Brothers, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, the gospel that you received and in which you are firmly established* (15:1)
1.2	Paul re-teaches some knowledge	*When I wrote in my letter to you not to associate with people living immoral lives, I was not meaning to …* (5:9-10) *Brothers, this is what I mean: our time is growing short* (7:29) *The other matters I shall adjust when I come* (11:34)
1.3	Paul builds on previous experiences shared with him	*During my stay with you, the only knowledge I claimed to have was about Jesus, and only about him as the crucified Christ.* (2:2) *By the grace God gave me, I succeeded as an architect and laid the foundations, on which someone else is doing the building. Everyone doing the building must work carefully.* (3:10) *As you see, I do not want to make it only a passing visit to you and I hope to spend some time with you, the Lord permitting. (16:7)*
1.4	Paul makes direct appeals to knowledge from his initial teaching	*As for me, brothers, when I came to you, it was not with any show of oratory or philosophy, but simply to tell you what God had guaranteed* (2:1) *You know perfectly well that people …* (6:9)
2. Direct appeals to his readers' knowledge		
2.1	Paul uses existing religious traditions or experiences	*As scripture says: I shall destroy the wisdom of the wise and bring to nothing all the learning of the learned* (1:19) *All this happened to them as a warning, and it was written down to be a lesson for us who are living at the end of the age* (10:11) *You remember that, when you were pagans* (12:2)
2.2	Paul's uses generally known information	*As you know* (6:16) *You must know how even a small amount of yeast is enough to leaven all the dough* (5:6)
3. Implicit appeals to knowledge		
3.1	Paul assumes implicit knowledge from his initial teaching.	*I am an apostle and I have seen Jesus our Lord. You are all my work in the Lord. Even if I were not an apostle to others, I should still be an apostle to you who are the seal of my apostolate in the Lord.* (9:1-2) (There was at the time no normative definition of an apostle)

4. New knowledge is introduced		
4.1	Paul passes on new knowledge	*Now for the questions about which you wrote* (7:1) *There is something I want to add* (7:8) *This is the ruling that I give in all the churches.* (7:17)
4.2	Paul finds new applications for his previous teaching or reinterprets previous teaching	*Well then, in the first place, I taught you what I had been taught myself etc.* (15:3-8) *Come to your senses, behave properly, and leave sin alone; there are some of you who seem not to know God at all; you should be ashamed.* (15:34) *Do you see now how God has shown up the foolishness of human wisdom?* (1:20)
4.3	The Corinthians were '*continually instructing each other*' (Even if sometimes incorrectly)	*You have done well in remembering me so constantly and in maintaining the traditions just as I passed them on to you. (11:2)* *I thank him that you have been enriched in so many ways, especially in your teachers and preachers; the witness to Christ has indeed been strong among you* (1:5-6) *It is not my business to pass judgement on those outside. Of those who are inside, you can surely be the judges.* (5:12) *In this way your knowledge could become the ruin of someone weak* (8:11) *How can some of you be saying that there is no resurrection of the dead?* (15:12) *keep on working at the Lord's work always, knowing that, in the Lord, you cannot be labouring in vain.* (15:58)

Source: The information in this table is adapted from (Edsall 2014)

Appendix Six: Interim research text for the Galatian letter

The opening to the letter is concise, abbreviated. Paul establishes his authority, 'Paul, an apostle ... to the churches of Galatia' (1:1-3). There is no attempt to flatter: 'to the churches of Galatia' are the only 5 words that create connection with the audience. It is curt, just five verses, 150 words, and very little thanksgiving. In comparison, scholars have the opening and thanksgiving of the first letter to the Thessalonians running to ten verses and 270 words (Jewett 1986). In the first 150 words of that letter Paul delivers five compliments to the audience and uses 'you' or 'yours' on twelve occasions. In a portent of what is to come, Paul tells the Galatians that they have been snatched 'out of the grasp of the present evil age' (1:4).

He moves to a very direct attack on the people: 'I am amazed that you are so rapidly defecting from the God who called you in his grace, and are turning your allegiance to a different gospel' (1:6). He expresses what he has been feeling since hearing the news that people were turning away from his teaching. The words escaped in anger, for no sooner have these words been recorded, than he immediately corrects himself: 'Not that there really is another gospel; but the point is …" (1:7). This is such a clear insight into the letter writing. There is no delete button on a piece of parchment. Paul is speaking so quickly that the scribe does not have time to re-work the first sentence. What Paul has said, the scribe has written and so 2000 years later we have Paul's immediate reflexivity. After correcting himself he continues to try and recover this position: 'if someone should preach to you a gospel contrary to the gospel I preached you' and 'As I have said before, I say now once again, If someone is preaching to you a gospel contrary to the one you originally received' (1:8-9).

In an extended passage he re-establishes his narrative, contrasting himself with what he believes another group have said about him. The overarching theme for this tirade is – 'have you forgotten all that I told you?' In this sequence he uses the personal pronouns 'I', 'me' or 'my' on no less than 48 occasions. This includes phrasing such as, 'What I am writing to you now is no lie, God being my witness' (1:20) and 'Those leaders did not add anything to my gospel' (2:6). Peter and James are described as hypocrites, 'even Barnabas was carried away' (2:13). Paul is reminding them that he has encountered all of the ideas that these new teachers are now presenting them with and he has stuck to the truth, as the Galatians should. Once again it is interesting to contrast his approach to the Thessalonians. In those letters he seeks to establish his connection with the people by reminding them of their shared experience. He does not place himself at the centre of the drama, but rather allows them to

make choices based on the guidance he has given them. In Galatia, having been challenged, he is seeking to re-establish his credentials.

This passage contains his description of the Incident at Antioch and shows his feelings at having been betrayed by Peter and Barnabas, with whom he had travelled and worked for a decade. He writes 'The other Jewish members of the Antioch church joined him in playing the hypocrite' (2:12) and 'I said to Cephas in front of the whole church, "You, a Jew by birth, are living like a Gentile, not like a Jew. How then can you compel the Gentile members of the church to line in the Jewish manner'" (2:14).

He transitions from his anger at what happened at Antioch to teaching the lesson that emerges from his experience. From 2:15 – 2:17 he softens a little, almost as if he is drawing breath having expunged his first wave of anger at the leaders who have undermined him. He begins to use the shared pronouns more regularly, using 'we' or 'our' on seven occasions with no personal pronouns.

The passage from 3:1 – 3:27 begins with one of the most remarkable phrases in all of his letters. Having re-asserted his authority, Paul has again built to anger and he explodes with: 'You foolish Galatians' (3:1) and rolls into the sarcastic, 'Tell me just one thing, are you really so foolish?' (3:2-3). This is not theological, this is personal and Paul is angry and upset and he lashes out at the community. Perhaps in a moment of reflection he may have wished to rephrase some of this letter but for those of us reading it 2000 years later, this is wonderful insight into the anger and frustration of a community leader. Compare this with Paul describing the Thessalonians as his 'pride and joy', letting them know that 'he boasts about them in the Churches of God'.

Paul, having arrested their attention with his 'foolish' admonition, then delivers a short lecture showing them their connection to Jesus through Abraham, without the need for the Law. He loads on to them guilt for their 'defection. He presents a more restrained historical/logical argument (3:16 – 3:25)

Paul reaches the climax of the letter in 3:28 with 'There is neither Jew nor Greek; there is neither slave nor free; there is no male and female;' before adding the unifying postscript 'for all of you are one in Christ Jesus' (3:28). In one beautiful sentence he dismantled cultural, social and gender divisions for those who would seek to follow *agapē*. I have made much of this sentence in this research text. His rhetoric is softer in tone and content (e.g. What I mean

can be made yet clearer by a picture (4:1)). The opening sentence in each verse is softened and statements are qualified. The directness of 'You foolish Galatians' is gone. Having expunged much of his anger and reached what even he must have realised was a crescendo in 3:28, he appears to be thinking about the relationship with the *ekklēsia*. He offers the face-saving statement: 'It is true that formerly not knowing God, you were enslaved to things that in nature are not gods' (4:8). As if to say to them, 'it is not entirely your fault that you have made this mistake of listening to others'.

Paul returns to the language of Thessalonians. It is as if, in the aftermath of his two early tirades, he has been able to reflect. If indeed 3:28 has registered with the Galatians, then they will be greatly astonished and disturbed by this expression, so he offers reminders of the love and affection, the friendship that they have shared with each other. His modus operandi of remembering shared experience becomes central to his thought and speech (e.g. Brothers and sisters, I beg you to become as I am because I have become as you are. You did not wrong me in any way. (4:12)). Until finally we get a strong echo of Thessalonians: 'My children, I am going through the pain of giving birth to you all over again … would that I could be there with you now, and that I could change my tone of voice; for I am quite uncertain about you'. (4:19-20). It is Paul as parent speaking intimately to them, he has given birth to them in their new belief. There is longing in this last sentence.

He then moves into some detailed Scripture references (4:21 -31). It is another variation on the way that Paul uses the letters as an intersubjective encounter, for here he is addressing the false teachers, who he assumes are in the audience. He begins the sequence with 'You want to be subject to the Law? Then listen to what the Law says' (4:21). It is only the false teachers, and not the Gentiles who would have understood the depth of the references to the two covenants and the story of Hagar and Sarah.

He returns to address the general audience: 'Stand your ground, therefore, and do not ever take up the yoke of slavery' (Gal 5:1). His direct language is back and he knows where he wants to go with the rest of the letter. There is unfinished business with this community. He commences another attack, reasserting his authority, 'Look here! I, Paul, say to you that if you undergo circumcision, Christ will be of no help to you.' (5:2). It is direct, it is authoritative but it is controversial. They cannot have just have part of the Law, picking and choosing the times, the very thing of which he has accused Peter and the hypocrites at Antioch. He redefines the audience as 'us', 'With us things are entirely different' (5:5) and then explodes the whole argument with, 'neither circumcision nor uncircumcision accomplishes anything at

all' (5:6). So the whole debate created by the teachers who challenged Paul is irrelevant. Circumcision is irrelevant to the gospel preached by Paul. Forget the conflict says Paul, neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything at all.

Paul concludes this section with the remarkable, 'I wish that the people who are troubling your minds would castrate themselves'. (5:12). Once again the absence of a delete button on the papyrus exposes a passionate, tempestuous man who is frustrated by those who would undermine him. It is a delight to imagine the sideways looks they would have received at this point. Martyn gives the sentence a theological context, arguing that Paul may be thinking of the cult of the priests of Cybele and castration as a sense of a 'trust in the redemptive power of religion' (Martyn 2010, p. 478). I think he is just angry and the jump from the mental image of circumcision to castration happens easily, quickly and indelibly.

Paul returns to the style and approach that was evident in the Thessalonian correspondence. It seems to be his pattern, that he rises to a crescendo of anger, I wish they would castrate themselves, and then he plateaus and finds familiar language.

There are very strong echoes of Thessalonians at 6:1 where he writes about forgiveness of those who have been caught committing a transgression. He asks for gentleness and restoration to their position in the community. His language is relational rather than rule based. Given that he is attempting to counter the false teachers who are seeking to impose the rule of circumcision and Jewish food rules, he sets himself up as leading a culture based on relationships. There are no definite rules. Belief in what Paul offers is available to everyone without having to follow a set of Laws. At this point we see a gentler Paul, the Paul who builds up rather than admonishes.

Having returned to his key themes, he ends the letter. It is a fascinating conclusion. He has remembered what brought him to write the letter, his teaching has been undermined, and he cannot let this go. He writes, 'Notice the large letters I am using, as I now seize the pen to write to you with my own hand' (6:11). One can picture him grabbing the pen from the scribe and writing these last few sentences himself, asserting his authority as directly as he can through the format of the letter. He reiterates the circumcision debate at the heart of the conflict, before introducing a new idea to conclude: 'What is something is the new creation' (6:15)

Then there is an admission of tiredness and resignation, ‘Let no one make trouble for me anymore’ (6:17). It is not said with force or anger or as a threat. It is paired with the resigned, ‘For I bear in my own body scars that are the marks of Jesus’, scars from the beatings he has experienced from the authorities. His energy is spent and one can imagine him physically drained by the experience of dictating the letter. Once again, the final thanksgiving and farewell is no more than perfunctory: ‘Brothers and sisters, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your sprit. Amen’ (6:18). The letter writing is not just an act of dictation, it is physical, it is personal, and it is emotional.