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Chapter 7

From Permission to Prohibition: Paul and the Early Church on Mixed Marriage

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Numerous ancient Jewish texts speak out against mixed marriage, the marriage of a Jew with a non-Jew. The poet Theodotus, the Temple Scroll, the book of Jubilees, the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs, Philo, Josephus, and other works, written in Greek or Hebrew, in the land of Israel or the diaspora, clearly state that Jews are not to marry non-Jews. Rabbinic literature continues along the same trajectory. The reasons given for the prohibition usually reduce themselves to two: the non-Jewish spouse may turn the Jewish spouse away from the one true God and towards the worship of other, false gods; Jews constitute a "holy" people that cannot tolerate foreign admixture. Some of these texts attempt to ground the prohibition in passages from the Bible, especially the Torah, while others are content to argue without scriptural support. Jewish endogamy caught the eye of outsiders. *Alienarum concubitu abstinent (*"they abstain from sleeping with foreign women"), writes Tacitus. This material is well known and well studied.[1]

All translations are mine unless otherwise credited. For the dating and attribution of early Christian texts I follow *Dictionary of Early Christian Literature* (ed.

Strikingly absent from these discussions is the New Testament. It is not surprising, I suppose, that Jesus did not say anything about mixed marriage: he lived his entire life among Jews in the ethnic homeland and for most of them mixed marriage was a distant problem of little concern.[2] More surprising, however, is the near total silence of Paul on the subject. Here is a Diaspora Jew much concerned about Jewishness and identity, about the boundary between Jews and Greeks, about circumcision and non-circumcision, but who says almost nothing—explicitly, at least—about mixed marriage, whether between Jews and non-Jews or, what is the subject of this essay, between believers in Christ and non-believers. Paul, of course, re-defined the concept of God's people; for him the new Israel of God consists not only of Jews but of Greeks as well, all those who have come to have faith in Christ. Therefore we understand why Paul would have discarded one of the old arguments against mixed marriage. Since ethnic Israel is no longer the real Israel, the real people of God, then laws and practices

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Siegmar Döpp and Wilhelm Geerlings; New York: Crossroad, 2000). Some of the early Christian texts discussed here focus more on the marriage of a Christian woman to a non-Christian man than on the marriage of a Christian man to a non-Christian woman. This gender distinction is interesting and important but is not my concern; see Margaret MacDonald, "Early Christian Women Married to Unbelievers," *SR* 19 (1990) 221–234. I would like to thank Wayne Meeks and Laura Nasrallah for their comments, criticisms, and suggestions.

[1] See e.g. Menahem Stern, *Greek and Latin Authors on Jews and Judaism* (vol. 2; Jerusalem: Israel Academy of Sciences, 1980), 40 (on Tacitus Histories 5.5.2); Shaye J.D. Cohen, *The Beginnings of Jewishness* (Berkeley: University of California, 1999), esp. 241–262; Christine Hayes, *Gentile Impurities and Jewish Identities* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002) 24–33 and 68–91.

[2] Paul says explicitly that he does not have any statement of Jesus on the subject (1 Cor 7:12).

intended to safeguard the purity of ethnic Israel no longer have any meaning for Paul. This seems clear enough. But the other source for the prohibition of mixed marriage, the concern that members of the people of God may be led astray by those who worship false gods—this concern should have been as relevant to Paul as it was to other Jews. Was it?

Many writers of the early church assert that Paul did, in fact, transfer the prohibition of mixed marriage from the old Israel to the new. Tertullian (ca. 160–220) is the first Christian to state that Christians may not marry non-Christians, and the first exegete to find this prohibition in the writings of Paul.[3] By the middle of the third century C.E. Christian writers had a standard collection of scriptural texts to document the prohibition of mixed marriage. So, for example, to support the proposition that "Marriage is not to be joined [by Christians] with gentiles," the author of the tract *To Quirinus,* probably Cyprian of Carthage (ca. 250 C.E. or a little later), adduces the following evidence: Tobit 4:12; Genesis 24; Ezra 9-10; 1 Cor 7:39–40; 1 Cor 6:15–17; 2 Cor 6:14; and 1 Kings 1:4.[4] The citation of the Hebrew Bible by a Christian author in order to justify the prohibition of marriage between a Christian and a "gentile"—this is

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[3] There is no survey of mixed marriage in early Christianity. The fullest study remains J. Köhne, *Die Ehen zwischen Christen und Heiden in den ersten christlichen Jahrhunderten* (Paderborn: Bonifacius, 1931), which is not a history but a commentary on book 2 of Tertullian *Ad Uxorem*.

[4] Cyprian, *Ad Quirinum* 3.62 (CCSL 3.153-154). The *Ad Quirinum* is sometimes known as *Testimonies from Scripture.*

fascinating in itself, but is not my theme here.[5] I am interested rather in the three cited Pauline passages. Here they are in full (in Cyprian's sequence):[6]

> 1 Cor 7:39–40: [39]A wife is bound as long as her husband lives. But if her husband dies, she is free to be married to anyone she wishes, only in the Lord. [40]But in my judgment she is more blessed if she remains as she is. And I think that I too have the Spirit of God.

> 1 Cor 6:15–17: [15]Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Should I therefore take the members of Christ and make them members of a prostitute? Never! [16]Do you not know that whoever is united to a prostitute becomes one body with her? For it is said, "The two shall be one flesh." [17]But anyone united to the Lord becomes one spirit with him.

> 2 Cor 6:14: [14]Do not be mismatched with unbelievers. For what partnership is there between righteousness and lawlessness? Or what fellowship is there between light and darkness?

Cyprian's citation of these three Pauline passages conceals two serious problems. First, it is not clear that any of these passages prohibits mixed marriage; all three are

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[5] Thus e.g. Ambrose uses Genesis 24:9 as the basis for his preaching against mixed marriage between Christians and non-Christians (whether Jews, gentiles, or heretics); he does not cite any NT passage as a source of the prohibition. See Ambrose, *De Abraham* 1.9.84-85 (CSEL 32.555-557); cf. too Ambrose, Epistle 62.2 ad Vigilium (CSEL 82.121).

[6] Translation follows the NRSV with some modifications.

ambiguous, as we shall see. Second, Cyprian fails to cite a fourth passage, which constitutes the real challenge to those who believe that Paul prohibited mixed marriage:

> 1 Cor 7:12-14: 12To the rest I say—I and not the Lord—that if any believer has a wife who is an unbeliever, and she consents to live with him, he should not divorce her. 13And if any woman has a husband who is an unbeliever, and he consents to live with her, she should not divorce him. 14For the unbelieving husband is made holy through his wife, and the unbelieving wife is made holy through her husband. Otherwise, your children would be unclean, but as it is, they are holy.

No matter how we interpret "For the unbelieving husband is made holy through his wife, and the unbelieving wife is made holy through her husband" (1 Cor 7:14), one thing is clear: in these verses Paul is permitting, or at least is not opposing, the union of a believer with a nonbeliever. No prohibition here.

Augustine saw these two problems. In a tract written around 421 C.E. Augustine debates one Pollentius, otherwise unknown, about the correct interpretation of 1 Cor 7:10–11 and Matthew 19:9 concerning divorce. Along the way they also discuss 1 Cor 7:12–14. Pollentius argues that "This, therefore, is the Lord's commandment, both in the Old Testament and the New, that only spouses of the same religion and faith may

remain joined to each other."[7] Pollentius buttresses this contention by appeal to Deuteronomy 7:3–4 (a passage that Cyprian had missed) and 1 Cor 7:39.[8] Augustine summarizes Pollentius' argument and then asks:[9]

> If this is the Lord's commandment, in both the Old Testament and the New, and this is what the Lord commands, and this is what the apostle teaches, namely, that only spouses of the same religion and faith may remain joined – why then, in opposition to the Lord's command, and in opposition to his own teaching, and in opposition to the commandment of the Old Testament and the New, does the apostle [in 1 Cor 7:12–14] order spouses of different faiths to remain joined?

After some further discussion, Augustine says "As I recall, in none of the works of the New Testament, either in the Gospel or in any of the writings of the apostles, is it clearly

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[7] Augustinus, *De adulterinis coniugiis* 1.21 25 (CSEL 41.372): "hoc est domini praeceptum tam in veteri quam in novo testamento, ut nonnisi unius religionis et fidei coniugia sibi maneant copulata"; cf. too 1.21 25 (CSEL 41.372) "dominus iussit ne coniugia sibimet diversae religionis copularentur"; 1.21 26 (CSEL 41.374) "dominus prohibet fideles infidelibus iungi."

[8] Neither Pollentius nor Augustine cite 1 Cor 6:15–17 or 2 Cor 6:14 in this connection. Hayes (*Gentile Impurities*, 98) does not know of any church writer who cites Deut 7:3–4 as a source for a Christian prohibition of mixed marriage. Pollentius is one.

[9] Augustinus, *De adulterinis coniugiis* 1.21 25 (CSEL 41.372): "si hoc ergo est domini praeceptum tam in veteri testamento quam in novo et hoc iubet dominus, hoc docet apostolus, ut nonnisi unius religionis et fidei maneant copulata coniugia, quare contra hoc domini iussum, contra doctrinam suam, contra praeceptum testamenti veteris et novi iubet apostolus ut diversae fidei coniugia maneant copulata?" My translation is based on that of *The Works of Saint Augustine A Translation for the 21st Century: I/9 Marriage and Virginity* (tr. Ray Kearney; ed. David G. Hunter; Hyde Park, New York: New City Press, 1999).

stated without ambiguity that the Lord has prohibited believers from being joined in marriage to unbelievers."[10] Augustine knows that most of his predecessors (he cites Cyprian by name) believe that the Church's prohibition of mixed marriage derives, at least in part, from Paul, but Augustine is not convinced. On the one hand, the utterances of Paul that are cited to support the prohibition are ambiguous and, on the other hand, 1 Cor 7:12–14 seems to deny the prohibition altogether. For Augustine the prohibition does not derive from scripture.

Augustine is right. To derive a prohibition of mixed marriage from the writings of Paul will require a great deal of exegetical work. The exegete will need to clarify the ambiguity of 1 Cor 7:39–40, 1 Cor 6:15–19, and 2 Cor 6:14–18, and, further, to show that, appearances to the contrary notwithstanding, 1 Cor 7:12–14 opposes mixed marriage, or at least does not permit it. In other words, the exegete will have to make Paul say something that he did not say. I shall now survey ancient Christian exegesis of these four Pauline passages, from Tertullian to Augustine, in order to show what a difficult challenge they presented—and present—to those who want Paul to prohibit mixed marriage.[11]

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[10] Augustine, *De adulterinis coniugiis* 1.25 31 (CSEL 41.378): "Non enim tempore revelati testamenti novi in evangelio vel ullis apostolicis litteris sine ambiguitate declaratum esse recolo, utrum dominus prohibuerit fideles infidelibus iungi."

[11] J. M. Ford, "Saint Paul the Philogamist: 1 Cor VII in Early Patristic Exegesis," NTS 11 (1964–65) 326–348 does not discuss the verses that are central to this paper. For samples of ancient exegesis on 1 Corinthians see Judith L. Kovacs, *The Church's Bible: 1 Corinthians Interpreted by Early Christian Commentators* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005);

1 Cor 7:39–40

In these verses Paul returns to the theme of the inviolability of marriage which he had raised earlier in the chapter: a Christian couple may not divorce (1 Cor 7:10–11). A wife is bound to her husband as long as he lives; if she becomes a widow Paul prefers that she not remarry at all (1 Cor 7:40). Preference aside, Paul does permit the widow to remarry but "only in the Lord" (1 Cor 7:39). What does this mean?

In his treatise *To his Wife* (written ca. 200 C.E.) Tertullian argues that it means "in the name of the Lord, which without doubt means 'to a Christian'."[12] In another treatise

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Gerald Bray, *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture New Testament vol. VII 1-2 Corinthians* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press 1999). On First Corinthians I have consulted four representative modern commentaries (one English, early twentieth century, Anglican; two German, mid twentieth century, Lutheran; one American, early twenty-first century, Catholic): Archibald Robertson and Alfred Plummer, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the First Epistle of St Paul to the Corinthians* (ICC; New York: Scribner's, 1911); Hans Lietzmann, *An die Korinther*, vierte von Werner G. Kümmel ergänzte Auflage (HNT; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1949); Hans Conzelmann, *A Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1975; Hermeneia; German original 1969); Joseph Fitzmyer, *First Corinthians* (Anchor Bible; New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2008). I note the religious orientation of the commentator because at times it is not irrelevant. E.g. Conzelmann 121 n. 24 writes as a Lutheran ("Paul's view of marriage is diametrically opposed to that of the Roman Catholic Church"); Fitzmyer 298 writes as a Catholic ("… if Paul … under inspiration could introduce … an exception [to the prohibition of divorce] on his own authority, then why cannot the Spirit-guided institutional church of a later generation make a similar exception?"). No doubt my own Judaism is somehow evident in this paper.

[12] *Ad Uxorem* 2.2.4: "tantum in Domino id est in nomine Domini quod est indubitate Christiano" (CCSL 1.385–386). See also 2.1.1 (CCSL 1.383). Latin text (and French translation): Charles Munier, *Tertullien à son épouse* (SC 273; Paris: Cerf, 1980). The same point in *De Corona* 13.4-5 (written 208 C.E.): "ideo non nubemus ethnicis, ne nos ad idololatriam usque deducant, a qua apud illos nuptiae incipiunt. Habes legem a patriarchis quidem, habes apostolum in domino nubere iubentem" (CCSL 2.1061). See

written a few years later Tertullian cites 1 Cor 7:39 to prove the concordance of the old law with the new. The old law prohibits marriage between the people of God and idolaters, and so does the new.[13] Tertullian has no doubt that his exegesis is correct and that Paul prohibited mixed marriage. Cyprian and Jerome, among others, follow Tertullian and simply assume that "only in the Lord" means "to a Christian."[14] They in turn are followed by many modern scholars.[15]

Jacques Fontaine, *Tertulliani De Corona* (Collection Érasme; Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1966) 159–160.

[13] *Adversus Marcionem* (written 207/8) 5.7.8: "certe praescribens tantum in domino esse nubendum, ne qui fidelis ethnicum matrimonium contrahat, legem tuetur Creatoris allophylorum nuptias ubique prohibentis" (CCSL 1.683). See *Tertullien Contre Marcion Livre V*, ed. Claudio Moreschini (SC 483; Paris: Cerf, 2004) 168. Same point in *De Monogamia* (written 214) 7.5: "illa nuptura in domino habet nubere, id est non ethnico sed fratri, quia et vetus lex adimit coniugium allophylorum" (CCSL 2.1238).

[14] Cyprian (cited above); Jerome, *Adversus Jovinianum* 1.10 (PL 23.234; written in 393); Pelagius Commentary on 1 Cor 7:39 (written ca. 405): "Tantum ut infideli vel infidelium ritu non nubet" (Alexander Souter, *Pelagius's Expositions of Thirteen Epistles of St Paul* (3 vols.; Texts and Studies 9; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1922–1931) 2.170); Pollentius cited by Augustine (see above). Origen too seems to understand "only in the Lord" to mean "to a fellow Christian"; see below.

[15] Three of my four sample modern commentaries explain that "only in the Lord" means "only to a Christian." Robertson and Plummer, 161: "only as a member of Christ which implies that she marries a Christian." Lietzmann, 37: "mit einem Christen." Fitzmyer, 329: "Paul prefers that she marry a Christian, which is a counsel against entering into a mixed marriage. Paul is undoubtedly extending a Jewish notion, expressed in such OT endogamic regulations as Dt 7:3, Ezra 9:2, 11 QTemple 57:19 …, to the Christians of Corinth." Conzelmann makes no clear statement. Albrecht Oepke, RAC 4 (1959) 659 s.v. Ehe, writes simply "Mischheirat schliesst Paulus aus (1 Cor 7.39)." I am astonished that none of our four representative commentaries cites a study of the Pauline phrase ἐν κυρίῳ. Is it possible that there is no such study? Cf. A. Deissman, *Die neutestamentliche Formel 'In Christo Jesu'* (Marburg, 1892) and A.J.M. Wedderburn, "Some Observations on Paul's Use of the Phrases 'In Christ" and "With Christ'," *JSNT* 25 (1985) 83–97 (with bibliography). Fitzmyer notes that Paul's "she is free to be married to anyone she wishes" seems to echo the formulary of Jewish divorce

Matters are not so simple, however. Augustine remarks on the ambiguity of the phrase "only in the Lord." It might mean "to a Christian" or it might mean "as a Christian," that is, piously, with proper motivation.[16] Theodoret of Cyrrhus (b. ca. 393–d. ca. 466) tries to have it both ways in his commentary, glossing the words "only in the Lord" with "that is, to a fellow believer, to a pious person, chastely, properly."[17] Ambrosiaster (writing between 366 and 384 C.E.) writes similarly.[18] But John Chrysostom (writing probably in the 380s or 390s) saw the phrase as a demand for propriety without any reference to mixed marriage: if a widow seeks to remarry, her motives and conduct must be pure or "in the Lord." This is how the passage is construed by Epiphanius of Salamis (ca. 375) too.[19] In support of this interpretation I would adduce Ignatius' Letter to Polycarp. The letter, written in the early decades of the second century C.E., contains a paragraph about marriage, in which Ignatius writes "It is right for men and women who marry to establish their union with the approval of the

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as attested in documents of the Judean desert (e.g. DJD 2:105) and the Mishnah (Gittin 9:3), but this parallel does not clarify the meaning of ἐν κυρίῳ. Had Paul wished to restrict the Christian widow to remarriage with a believer, he could have said simply "but only to a believer" (πιστῷ).

[16] Augustine, *De adulterinis coniugiis* 1.25 31 (CSEL 41.378): "'tantum in domino' quod duobus modis accipi potest: aut christiana permanens aut christiano nubens."

[17] Theodoret in PG 82.277 and 285.

[18] Ambrosiaster in CSEL 81,2.90: "tantum autem in domino. Hoc est ut sine suspicione turpitudinis nubat et religionis suae viro nubat."

[19] John Chrysostom, Homily 19.7 on 1 Cor 7:39 in PG 61.160; Epiphanius, Panarion 59.6 (GCS 31.371 ed. Holl) writes: τὸ δὲ ἐν κυρίῳ τουτέστιν τὸ μὴ ἐν πορνείᾳ μὴ ἐν μοιχείᾳ μὴ ἐν κλεψιγαμίᾳ, ἀλλ' ἐν εὐνομίᾳ ἐν παρρησίᾳ ἐν σεμνῷ γάμῳ, ἐπιμένοντα ἐν τῇ πίστει ἐν ταῖς ἐντολαῖς ἐν εὐποιίαις ἐν εὐλαβείᾳ ἐν νηστείαις ἐν εὐνομίᾳ ἐν ἐλεημοσύναις ἐν σπουδῇ ἐν ἀγαθοεργίᾳ. ταῦτα γὰρ συνόντα καὶ παραμένοντα οὐκ ἀργοὺς οὐδὲ ἀκάρπους καθίστησιν εἰς τὴν τοῦ κυρίου παρουσίαν.

bishop that the marriage may be according to the Lord and not according to lust."[20] The phrase "according to the Lord" reminds us, of course, of the Pauline phrase "in the Lord"—indeed, it has been suggested that Ignatius is alluding here to our Pauline passage.[21] Ignatius shows that what the phrase means to exclude is not mixed marriage but lust.

Now, of course, one could argue that even if the primary meaning of the phrase "in the Lord" is "modestly, properly, without lust," unions with non-believers would be prohibited too because by definition they are immodest, improper, and lustful. Perhaps. But if this assumption is correct, we will have to concede that the prohibition of mixed marriage retreats from the primary semantic field to the secondary. And we have the remarkable comment of the remarkable Theodore of Mopsuestia (ca. 350–428) to show that this assumption is not necessarily correct and that the verse may not be a prohibition of mixed marriage at all. Theodore writes, "'Only in the Lord': preserving her piety should she marry an unbeliever."[22]

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[20] Ignatius To Polycarp 5.2: πρέπει δὲ τοῖς γαμοῦσι καὶ ταῖς γαμουμέναις μετὰ γνώμης τοῦ ἐπισκόπου τὴν ἕνωσιν ποιεῖσθαι, ἵνα ὁ γάμος ᾖ κατὰ κύριον καὶ μὴ κατ' ἐπιθυμίαν. Translation follows William R. Schoedel, *Ignatius of Antioch* (Hermeneia; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985) 272.

[21] "Ignatius is apparently thinking of St Paul's words in 1 Cor vii 39," writes J. B. Lightfoot in *The Apostolic Fathers Clement Ignatius and Polycarp* (vol. 2; London: Macmillan, 1889–1890; repr. Peabody: Hendrickson, 1989) 350. Lightfoot also cites a parallel phrase in Clement of Alexandria.

[22] Karl Staab, *Pauluskommentare aus der griechischen Kirche* (Münster in Westf: Aschendorff, 1933) 184: Μόνον ἐν κυρίῳ τὴν εὐσέβειαν φυλάττουσα, ἐὰν ἀπίστῳ συνοικήσῃ.

1 Cor 6:15–17

In these verses Paul preaches against *porneia* (1 Cor 6:13,18), illicit sexual relations (usually translated "fornication"). Paul singles out for specific mention sex with a prostitute (1 Cor 6:15). We may presume that he is referring to some notorious incident in the life of the Corinthian Christian community, just as he was in 1 Cor 5:1 when he condemned the relationship of a Christian man with his stepmother. Paul's argument is that a Christian's body belongs to God. He illustrates this idea with two images: first, the bodies of Christians are "limbs" or "members" of Christ (1 Cor 6:15); second, a Christian body is "the temple of the holy spirit" (1 Cor 6:19). Hence Christians are to cling to the Lord, avoid *porneia* (1 Cor 6:18), and not sin with their bodies—that is, sexually.

We cannot be sure exactly what other sexual sins (that is, beyond consorting with a stepmother or a prostitute) Paul meant to include under the category of *porneia*.[23] Tertullian is the first to argue that Paul meant to include mixed marriage. Tertullian has already cited 1 Cor 7:39 to prove that Paul prohibits mixed marriage (see above); he has

[23] Lietzmann 27 and Conzelmann 111, the latter cited with approval by Fitzmyer 267, understand *porneia* to be extramarital sexual intercourse. But *porneia* usually includes more than just adultery (Fitzmyer 265). Robertson and Plummer 95 correctly remark, "*Porneia*. Illicit sexual intercourse in general."

already argued that 1 Cor 7:12–14 does not permit mixed marriage (see below). He continues as follows:[24]

> In the light of all this it is evident that believers who enter into marriage with gentiles commit a sin of fornication and are to be cut off completely from communion with the brethren, in accordance with the letter of the Apostle who says "with such a one we must not even break bread" (1 Cor 5:11). Will we make bold to present our marriage certificates on that day before the tribunal of our Lord and claim that a union which he himself forbade is a union properly contracted? Is it not adultery that he prohibits? Is it not fornication? Does not one who marries an outsider violate the temple of God and "make the limbs of Christ the limbs of an adulteress" (1 Cor 6:15)?

For Tertullian the category of *porneia* (in Tertullian's Latin, *stuprum*) includes mixed marriage. Even if such marriages are solemnized with the proper certificates, at the end of time ("on that day") they will be condemned by the Lord as adultery and *porneia*. Sexual relations between a Christian and a non-Christian violate the Christian body

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[24] Tertullian, *Ad Uxorem* 2.3.1 (CCSL 1.387; p. 132 ed. Munier): "Haec si ita sunt, fideles gentilium matrimonia subeuntes stupri reos constat esse et arcendos ab omni communicatione fraternitatis, ex litteris apostoli dicentis *cum eiusmodi ne cibum quidem sumendum.* Aut numquid tabulas nuptiales die illo apud tribunal Domini proferemus et matrimonium rite contractum allegabimus, quod uetuit ipse? Non adulterium est, quod prohibitum est, non stuprum est? Extranei hominis admissio minus templum Dei uiolat? minus membra Christi cum membris adulterae commiscet?" The translation is that of William Le Saint ,*Tertullian Treatises on Marriage and Remarriage* (Westminster, Md.: Newman Press, 1951; ACW 13) 27–28, slightly modified.

which is the temple of God (1 Cor 6:19)[25] and "make the limbs of Christ the limbs of an adulteress" (1 Cor 6:15).[26]

This reading of 1 Cor 6:15 is adopted by Cyprian, not just in the *To Quirinus* (as we have seen above) but also in his *On the Lapsed* (251 C.E.). Cyprian argues that God has let the Roman state persecute the Christians because they have been lax in their faith. He draws up a list of their sins, among them "The bond of marriage joined with nonbelievers, members of Christ given in prostitution to gentiles."[27] The reference to 1 Cor 6:15 is unmistakable. In the fourth century Zeno of Verona and Jerome similarly cite 1 Cor 6:15 in order to condemn mixed marriage.[28]

The main problem with this reading of 1 Cor 6:15 is that it is wrong; Paul does not believe that marital unions between believers and non-believers constitute *porneia*.[29] He says just the opposite in 1 Cor 7:14, which I shall discuss below.

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[25] In their notes ad loc both Munier and Le Saint cite 1 Cor 3:16–17; those verses indeed refer to the violation of the temple of God, but there the temple metaphor refers to the Christian community as a whole (as in 2 Cor 6:16). That the Christian individual is a temple of God is the point of 1 Cor 6:19.

[26] Our texts of 1 Cor 6:15 read *pornê* (prostitute), followed by the Vulgate (*meretrix*). Tertullian, however, says *adultera* (adulteress). This is exegesis, not a variant reading. For the same exegetical move by Chrysostom see note 51 below.

[27] Cyprian, *De Lapsis* 6 (CCSL 3.223): "iungere cum infidelibus vinculum matrimonii, prostituere gentilibus membra Christi."

[28] Zeno of Verona (between 360 and 380 CE) *Tractatus* 2.7.11-12 (CCSL 22.174); Jerome, *Adversus Jovinianum* (393 CE) 1.10 (PL 23.234): "at nunc pleraeque contemnentes apostoli iussionem iunguntur gentilibus et templa Christi idolis prostituunt."

[29] Not one of my four sample commentaries even mentions mixed marriage in connection with this passage.

2 Cor 6:14

The theme of 2 Cor 6:14–7:1 is that believers are to separate themselves from unbelievers, so that they may avoid pollutions of body and soul, and pursue sanctification. The vocabulary and world-view of this paragraph are not readily paralleled within the Pauline corpus, and the paragraph seems to disturb the connection between 6:11–13 and 7:2–3. Hence many scholars argue that it is an interpolation, but whether it is Pauline, non-Pauline, or anti-Pauline, and how it came to find itself in chapter six of 2 Corinthians, are questions that have long been debated and are far from settled.[30] For my purposes, the first question is exegetical: does 2 Cor 6:14, whatever its origin, prohibit mixed marriage?

The short answer is: it does not do so explicitly, it might do so implicitly, and it might not do so at all. The key to the verse is the unusual verb *heterozugein* (the participle of which appears here), which might mean either "pull half a yoke" (lit. "to be yoked one of two") or "to pull a yoke with an unequal partner" (lit. "to be yoked with another unequally").[31] Either way, the passage warns believers not to yoke themselves to unbelievers; the difference between the two renderings is the nuance. Does the

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[30] See e.g. the detailed and judicious discussion in Victor Paul Furnish, *II Corinthians* (Anchor Bible, 1984) 371–383; more recent bibliography assembled by Yonder M. Gillihan, "Jewish Laws on Illicit Marriage, the Defilement of Offspring, and the Holiness of the Temple: A New Halakic Interpretation of 1 Corinthians 7:14," *JBL* 121 (2002) 711–744, at 712 n 3.

[31] These two possible meanings are presented with admirable clarity by Cornelius a Lapide (1567–1637), *Commentaria in Scripturam Sacram tomus XVIII: Divi Pauli Epistolarum* (ed. A. Crampon; Paris: L. Vivès, 1868) 460–461. A third possible meaning discussed by a Lapide is "to tilt a scale." For all these meanings see LSJ s.v.

passage treat such a junction neutrally or disparagingly? Is it a union of equals or of unequals? Virtually all modern translations and commentators take it the second way (e.g. in the NRSV "do not be mismatched with unbelievers"), because the verse seems to echo the LXX's rendering of Leviticus 19:19, "You shall keep my law. You shall not breed your animals to those of a different kind (*heterozugôi*), and you shall not sow your vineyard with something different, and you shall not put on yourself an adulterated garment woven with two materials."[32] Clearly the author of 2 Cor 6:14 is taking the law of mixed kinds metaphorically.[33] According to 2 Cor 6:14 a union of a believer with an unbeliever is an improper (or unequal) union, a violation of the order established by God, in which each species is to remain distinct from every other.

What unions is 2 Cor 6:14 talking about? Some ancient commentators argue that sexual unions with idolaters are the main target; the verse is a prohibition of mixed marriage.[34] In support of this interpretation is the fact that the metaphor of yoking easily lends itself to a sexual meaning and Leviticus 19:19 was understood by various ancient Jewish interpreters to refer to improper sexual unions, especially mixed

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[32] Τὸν νόμον μου φυλάξεσθε·τὰ κτήνη σου οὐ κατοχεύσεις ἑτεροζύγῳ καὶ τὸν ἀμπελῶνά σου οὐ κατασπερεῖς διάφορον καὶ ἱμάτιον ἐκ δύο ὑφασμένον κίβδηλον οὐκ ἐπιβαλεῖς σεαυτῷ. Translation follows *A New English Translation of the Septuagint* (ed. Albert Pietersma and Benjamin Wright; Oxford University Press, 2007). The Göttingen edition of the LXX does not offer any variants of consequence for our purposes. The *heterozug-* root does not appear in the parallel verse in Deut 22:9–11.

[33] Similarly, the prohibition of muzzling the threshing ox (Deut 25:4) is understood metaphorically at 1 Cor 9:9 (and 1 Tim 5:17–18).

[34] Cyprian (cited above note 4); Jerome (cited above note 14); Didymus of Alexandria (ca. 313–398) apud Staab, *Paulus Kommentare* 32. Origen too refers to mixed couples as those who are "misyoked with unbelievers" (see appendix below).

marriage.[35] However, modern scholars (at least the commentaries I have sampled) argue that the 2 Cor 6:14 is a general prohibition of intimacy with unbelievers and that the specific reference of the verse—if indeed it has a specific reference—is unclear. Some commentaries suggest that a prohibition of mixed marriage is implied, others are silent on the point. [36] For a fair number of ancient and medieval commentators the verse warns against consorting spiritually with idolaters, heretics, or Jews; consorting carnally through mixed marriage does not make the list.[37] I conclude that if 2 Cor 6:14

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[35] Philo, *Special Laws* 4.203–204 (Loeb edition 8.134–137); Josephus, AJ 4.229; MMT (4Q396); 4Q271 frag. 3 lines 9–10 with the note of the editor in DJD 18.177. Cf. Calum Carmichael, "Forbidden Mixtures," *VT* 32 (1982) 394–415 and C. Houtman, "Another Look at Forbidden Mixtures," *VT* 34 (1984) 226–228.

[36] A prohibition of mixed marriage is implied by the general prohibition: see Alfred Plummer, *Second Corinthians (*ICC; New York: Scribner's, 1915) 206; Margaret Thrall, *Second Corinthians* (ICC, 1994) 473; Furnish, *Second Corinthians* 361 and 372. Calvin eloquently defends this position; see *Ioannis Calvini Opera Omnia … Series II Opera Exegetica volume XV Commentarii in Secundam Pauli Epistolam ad Corinthios* (ed. Helmut Feld; Genève: Librairie Droz, 1994) 114–115. In contrast other commentators do not even mention a prohibition of mixed marriage: see e.g. Hans Windisch, *Der zweite Korintherbrief* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1924; Meyers Kommentar) 212 ("eine allgemein gehaltene, an keine lokale Situation gebundene Bekehrungsmahnung"); Lietzmann 129 ("Worauf sich das im einzelnen bezieht, können wir wieder nicht sagen"); Rengstorf, ThDNT 2.901 s.v. *heterozugein* (no mention of marriage).

[37] In their discussions of mixed marriage, referenced above, neither Tertullian nor Pollentius nor Augustine cite 2 Cor 6:14. In their commentaries ad loc. neither Theodoret nor Pelagius nor Ambrosiaster mentions marriage. For what it is worth I note that not a single one of the excerpted commentaries on 2 Cor 6:14 presented in *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture* (see note 11 above) even mentions marriage. For Pelagius, as for some modern scholars, the unbelievers of the passage are heretics rather than gentiles; Pelagius (ed. Souter 266) writes: "Nolite iugum ducere cum infidelibus. Nolite illis coniungi vel aequari; quia iugum simul non trahunt nisi pares: id est, nolite iungi pseudoapostolis vel his qui in idolio recumbebant [1 Cor 8:10]." And here is Thomas Aquinas on the passage: "Hoc ergo dicit nolite iugum ducere, id est

prohibits mixed marriage, it does so implicitly, subtly, and indirectly—and perhaps not at all.

I return to the question of origins. If 2 Cor 6:14 is Pauline, it provides, like 1 Cor 7:39, discussed above, ambiguous evidence at best for a Pauline prohibition of mixed marriage. In the absence of solid evidence documenting such a prohibition, not much can be based on 2 Cor 6:14 (or 1 Cor 7:39, for that matter). If 2 Cor 6:14 is not Pauline, as many scholars argue, then it has nothing to tell us about Paul's attitude to mixed marriage, no matter how it is construed. One argument advanced by scholars to "prove" that 2 Cor 6:14 cannot derive from Paul is the fact that it seems to be at odds with positions that the genuine Paul takes elsewhere.[38] The author of 2 Cor 6:14 instructs his followers not to associate with idolaters, but in 1 Cor 5:9–10 Paul explicitly instructs his followers to continue associating with idolaters "else you would need to leave the world," and in 1 Cor 7:12–14 Paul explicitly tolerates mixed marriage. As we have already seen in this essay, and as Augustine well observed, any claim that Paul prohibits mixed marriage comes up against 1 Cor 7:12–14. I turn now to that passage.

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nolite communicare in operibus infidelitatis, cum infidelibus. Et hoc propter duo. Primo quia aliqui erant inter eos, qui reputabantur sapientiores, non abstinentes ab idolot[h]itis, et ex hoc scandalizabant inferiores. Alii autem erant qui communicabant cum Iudaeis in traditionibus seniorum. Unde Apostolus hortatur eos cum dicit nolite, ut non communicent cum Iudeis in traditionibus legis, neque cum gentibus in cultu idolorum. Utrique enim infideles sunt." See *Tomus Sextusdecimus D. Thomae Aquinatis … Complectens Expositionem In Omnes D. Pauli Apostoli Epistolas* (Rome 1570) 103C-D. No reference to mixed marriage.

[38] E.g. Furnish, *Second Corinthians* 376.

1 Cor 7:12–14

In these cryptic verses, Paul addresses the situation of a Christian married to a non-Christian, and makes two main points. First, the Christian spouse does not have to separate from the non-Christian spouse; on the contrary, if the two partners agree to continue the marriage, they should remain together. Second, if the non-Christian spouse does not agree to continue the marriage, presumably because s/he objects to the Christian life of the Christian spouse, they should divorce, in which case the Christian spouse is free to re-marry. The first point is apparently directed (as many scholars have noted) at those members of the church of Corinth who were saying that the mixed couple must separate, for the sake of the spiritual health ("holiness") of either the Christian spouse or the community as a whole or both. The second point clearly shows the difference between a Christian marriage and a mixed marriage. In a Christian marriage divorce is prohibited, and if, for whatever reason, the couple separate, re-marriage is prohibited for as long as either spouse remains alive (1 Cor 7:10–11; 7: 39). But in a mixed marriage divorce is possible, and remarriage after such divorce is permissible.[39]

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[39] Origen and Ambrosiaster, among others, deduce that a real marriage is the partnership of two believers; the union of a Christian with a non-Christian is not a marriage but something else (Ambrosiaster calls it a coniugium). See Origen, commentary on 1 Cor 7:12 (Jenkins, *JTS* 9 [1907–1908] 504–505—see note 64 below); Ambrosiaster, commentary on 1 Cor 7:15 in CSEL 81,2.77.

For Tertullian these verses are a problem, for they seem to show that Paul permits, or at least tolerates, mixed marriage. In fact, Tertullian reports that some Christian women, having been married to non-Christian husbands, cite these verses of Paul as proof that they have not violated any law of the church! Tertullian solves the problem posed by 1 Cor 7:12–14 by restricting the applicability of the passage. Paul indeed does permit an already existing mixed marriage to continue, but only if the marriage had originally been contracted before the conversion of the Christian spouse. Thus, two Gentiles marry; one of them converts to Christianity, while the other remains a Gentile—in this case, and in this case only, does Paul permit the couple to remain together. If a Christian were to inquire about the permissibility of joining a Gentile in marriage, surely Paul too, Tertullian says, would prohibit such a union. In other words, Paul's timeless and broadly applicable teaching about mixed marriage is contained in 1 Cor 6:15 and 7:39 (see above), while his tolerance of mixed marriage in 1 Cor 7:14 is not timeless but contingent, not broadly applicable but specific. It is not the rule but the exception.

Tertullian's narrow reading of 1 Cor 7:12–14 has found many followers, both ancient and modern.[40] In Catholic canon law, the so-called Pauline privilege (*privilegium*

[40] Ancient: Ambrosiaster, commentary on 1 Cor 7:13 (CSEL 81,2.75-76); Theodoret, Commentary on 1 Cor 7:14 (PG 82.277); Jerome, *adversus Iovinianum* (PL 23.233-234); John Chrysostom, Homily 19 on 1 Cor 7 (PG 61.155); Augustine, *de adulterinis coniugiis* (CSEL 41.367 and 372-373); Pelagius, Commentary on 1 Cor 7:14 (vol. 2; ed. Souter, 163); Severian of Gabala (d. ca. 409) in Staab, *Paulus Kommentare* 250.

Paulinum), derived from this verse, obtains only in the case described by Tertullian: if one spouse of a non-Christian couple converts to Christianity, and if the other spouse objects to, or interferes with, the Christian life of the newly converted spouse, the Christian partner may divorce the non-Christian spouse and then marry a Christian—all with the blessing of the church.[41]

However, is it certain that 1 Cor 7:14 addresses only this one particular case? This narrow interpretation of 1 Cor 7:14 was advanced by Tertullian solely for the purpose of limiting the applicability of the verse, and thus to maintain that Paul "really" opposed mixed marriage. This is not "innocent" exegesis; this is exegesis with a point. Later in life Tertullian will adopt the same strategy in order to restrict the applicability of 1 Cor 7:39. In his *To his Wife* (written ca. 200 C.E.) Tertullian preached against the marriage of a widow; a life of continence after marriage is far superior to a life of remarriage. In the course of time Tertullian's opposition to remarriage intensifies; he finally arrives at the conclusion that marriage by a widow is prohibited. But does not Paul explicitly permit a widow to marry (if only in the Lord)? How can a prohibition of remarriage be squared with 1 Cor 7:39? In his *On Single Marriage* (written 214 C.E.) Tertullian argues that Paul's permission to remarry applies only to the widow who had been married as a Gentile to a Gentile and who, after the death of her

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Modern: Robertson and Plummer, 141; Fitzmyer, 297; Neither Lietzmann nor Conzelmann comment on this point.

[41] See e.g. ODCC (3rd edn, 1997) 1243 s.v. Pauline Privilege. The details do not concern us.

husband, converts to Christianity. Such a widow may remarry since her new Christian husband is deemed to be not her second husband but her first; but if a Christian woman married to a Christian man becomes a widow, then Paul too, says Tertullian, would surely prohibit her remarriage.[42] Tertullian's interpretation of 1 Cor 7:39 is no less ingenious than his interpretation of 1 Cor 7:14. Each is designed to restrict the applicability of the biblical verse.[43]

Just as there is nothing in 1 Cor 7:39 to suggest that Paul is speaking only about widows once married to non-believers, there is nothing in 1 Cor 7:14 to suggest, let alone require, that Paul is speaking only of mixed marriage brought into being by the conversion of a spouse to Christianity.[44] The verse makes just as much sense if Paul is speaking of a mixed marriage entered into by a Christian who is now troubled by his/her mixed union. If we were not convinced a priori of Paul's unconditional opposition to mixed marriage, we would have no reason to read 1 Cor 7:14 so narrowly.

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[42] Tertullian, *De Monogamia* 11; see esp. 11.10 (15): "Itaque et mulier, si nupserit, non delinquet, quia nec hic secundus maritus deputabitur, qui est a fide primus" (CCSL 2.1246). Text in *Tertullien Le mariage unique (De Monogamia)* (ed. Paul Mattei; Paris: du Cerf, 1988; SC 343).

[43] Students of rabbinic literature will be familiar with this rhetorical strategy.

[44] Several ancient scholars observe that Paul does not say "If anyone should marry a non-believer," but rather "if anyone has a non-believer," implying that the marriage already exists, and that 1 Cor 7:12–14 should not be taken as permission to enter into a mixed marriage. This is a good argument as far as it goes, but it does nothing to support what I have been calling the "narrow" reading of 1 Cor 7:12–14. See Tertullian, *Ad Uxorem* 2.2.2 (CCSL 1.385); and the commentaries of Theodoret, Pelagius, Chrysostom, and Jerome, referenced above note 40.

Evidence for this comes from the commentary on 1 Corinthians by Origen (ca. 185–ca. 253). Alas, the commentary is extant only in fragments and as a result its argument is sometimes hard to follow.[45] If I have interpreted him correctly, Origen understands 1 Cor 7:12–14 as permission from Paul to contract a mixed marriage. Origen knows nothing of Tertullian's "narrow" reading. Paul simply is talking about the marital union of a Christian with a non-Christian. Like Tertullian, however, Origen is not happy with these verses as they stand and adopts a triple strategy by which to dilute their message. First, he argues, this ruling derives from Paul himself, not the Lord. "It is better to obey laws from God than to obey laws of Paul the apostle. For even though he is holy, his laws are much inferior to the laws of the Lord." Christians need not follow Paul when he is speaking on his own authority. Second, Origen disagrees with Paul. Origen observes that the consequences of mixed marriage are not necessarily as Paul depicts them. Paul says that the non-Christian spouse is "sanctified," that is, won over to Christ by the Christian spouse, but there can be no guarantee that this will happen (as Paul himself admits, 1 Cor 7:16). "For [the Christian spouse] will either succeed or fail, and will either destroy his [own] soul or, after much toil, scarcely be able to win over [the non-Christian spouse]." Third, Paul himself, says Origen, "has permitted us to think otherwise," for Paul has elsewhere clearly stated his preference that we not marry at all (1 Cor 7:40) or, if we do, that we marry "in the Lord" (1 Cor

[45] See the appendix to this article for the text and translation of Origen's commentary.

7:39). This argument strongly suggests that Origen understands 1 Cor 7:12–14 as Pauline permission to a Christian to enter into a mixed marriage, not merely permission to continue an already existing mixed marriage. 1 Cor 7:39 is an alternative to 1 Cor 7:12–14.

In sum, according to Origen, in 1 Cor 7:12–14 Paul permits mixed marriage but this is Paul's own opinion, no more. A little further along in the same chapter Paul shows that he does not fully approve of marriage at all, and reluctantly approves only of marriage "in the Lord," which Origen seems to interpret as "to a Christian." "Therefore, it is a good thing," says Origen, "that a person, before being surprised, carefully examine not only the present but also the future, and, having examined it, either not to marry or, if to marry, to marry in the Lord." In other words, according to Origen, on the subject of mixed marriage, indeed on the subject of marriage itself, Paul sends out mixed signals.

Whatever we may think of his criticism of Paul, Origen shows that Tertullian's narrow exegesis of 1 Cor 7:12–14 is neither inevitable nor necessary. Like Tertullian Origen sees 1 Cor 7:12–14 and 1 Cor 7:39 as opposed to each other; Tertullian solves that opposition through exegesis, but Origen allows it to abide in creative tension.

As I intimated above 1 Cor 7:12–14 also stands in opposition to 1 Cor 6:15–17. Tertullian and his many followers cite 1 Cor 6:15–17 as further evidence of Paul's opposition to mixed marriage, and further evidence of the need to interpret 1 Cor 7:12–14 narrowly. However, if 1 Cor 6:15–17 is speaking about mixed marriage, there is not

just opposition but contradiction between those verses and 1 Cor 7:12–14. I shall now argue, aided by patristic exegesis, that 1 Cor 7:12–14 shows that 1 Cor 6:15–16 cannot be speaking about mixed marriage, because for Paul mixed marriage does not come under the prohibited category of *porneia*.

Exegetes ancient and modern agree that the key to 1 Cor 7:14 is the root *hagios* ("holy" or "sacred") which appears in the verse twice in a verbal form (variously rendered as "has been consecrated" or "has been sanctified" or "has been made holy"), with reference to the non-Christian spouse, and once as an adjective, with reference to the offspring of the mixed marriage.[46] What might these words mean in context? How is a non-Christian spouse made holy "in" or "through" a Christian spouse? And in what sense are the offspring of a mixed marriage "holy? Exegetes have long struggled with these questions but have not achieved consensus—far from it.[47] But we can make a few points with confidence.

In this verse the word *hagios* and its derivatives do not have their usual Pauline meaning. In the letters of Paul, and indeed elsewhere in the NT, "the holy ones" (or "saints," *hoi hagioi*) and "the sanctified ones" (*hoi hêgiasmenoi*) are synonyms for "the members of the holy community," people who would later come to be called

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[46] I say "offspring," because the English word "children" invariably suggests youngsters, but the Greek term *tekna* (as many scholars have noted) can refer to people of any age, hence "offspring."

[47] Our four sample commentaries give ample bibliography; the most recent detailed discussion is perhaps Gillihan, "Jewish Laws on Illicit Marriage," who also gives (731–741) a full survey and summary of recent scholarship.

"Christians."[48] Thus, for example, 1 Corinthians is addressed "to the church of God which is at Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints" (1 Cor 1:2). But surely that cannot be the meaning of these terms here in 1 Cor 7:14—Paul is speaking of non-believers! Further, v. 16—"Wife, for all you know, you might save your husband. Husband, for all you know, you might save your wife"—clearly implies that there is still a step that awaits the non-Christian spouse beyond "sanctification" if he or she is to be "saved." That step, of course, is to accept Christ and join the church.

Not "members," then, but "sanctified" (the spouse) and "holy" (the offspring). Many ancient exegetes thought these words meant "brought closer to Christ," that is, either the spouse or the offspring or both are candidates for conversion. A Christian spouse is in a good position to "win over" the non-Christian spouse, whether by preaching or by exemplary behavior. Many exegetes cite or allude to 1 Peter 3:1 in support of this idea: "Wives … accept the authority of your husbands, so that, even if some of them do not obey the word, they may be won over without a word by their wives' conduct." A Christian parent can instill Christian beliefs and values in a child, even if there is a non-Christian parent in the house. The child is "a candidate for faith and salvation."[49] Most modern scholars are not convinced by this exegesis, objecting

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[48] See e.g. BDAG s.v. *hagiazô* 2 and s.v. *hagios* 2dβ. List of passages in Gillihan, "Jewish Laws on Illicit Marriage," 715 n. 13.

[49] "designatos sanctitatis ac per hoc etiam salutis" is how Tertullian puts it, *De Anima* 39.4 (CCSL 2.842-843), in J. H. Waszink, *Quinti Septimi Florentis Tertulliani De Anima Edited with Introduction and Commentary* (Amsterdam: Meulenhoff, 1947) 56, paraphrase of text 440, commentary 446–447. Waszink cites Jerome's discussion of this

that the notion of sanctification by a spouse and holiness by birth would seem to be distinct from the process of education, but they have not been able to agree upon anything better. As a minimum we can say that the non-Christian spouse and the offspring are made sacred, to one degree or another, by one means or another, by virtue of their proximity to the Christian spouse and parent.

The "holiness" of this relationship means that *porneia* is absent. The *hagios* language of 1 Cor 7:12–14 contrasts markedly with the *porneia* language of 1 Cor 6:13–19. Marriage (1 Cor 7:2–6), even mixed marriage (1 Cor 7:12–16), provides a licit outlet for sexual desire. In contrast, sexual relations with a prostitute (1 Cor 6:15–16) exemplify *porneia* (1 Cor 6:13; 6:18–19).[50] John Chrysostom asks why a (male) believer is prohibited from remaining married to his adulterous wife (his understanding of "prostitute" in 1 Cor 6:15[51]) but is permitted to remain married to his non-believing wife

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text in his Epistula 85 (ad Paulinum).5 (PL 22.753–754) (CSEL 55.137–138): "Tertullianus … disseruit, asserens, sanctos dici fidelium filios, quod quasi candidati [this is the text of PL; CSEL prints candidatae which I cannot construe] sint fidei, et nullis idololatriae sordibus polluantur." The phrase "candidatus fidei" also appears in Jerome, *Adversus Jovinianum* 1.10 (PL 23.234 top). Same idea in Pelagius, commentary on 1 Cor 7:14 (vol. 2; ed. Souter; 163–164), cited by Augustine, *De Peccatorum Meritis* 3.12(21) (PL 44.198–199) and *De Sermone Domini in Monte* 1.16(45) (PL 34.1252). The same idea appears in John Chrysostom (see below).

[50] *Porneia* and a *hagios*-word form a contrasting pair in 1 Thess 4:3; *porneia* and *akatharsia* (absence of cleansing) form a contrasting pair in 2 Cor 12:21, Gal 5:19, Eph 5:3, and Col 3:5. Other related passages listed by Gillihan, "Jewish Laws on Illicit Marriage," 715 n. 11. In rabbinic literature too *qadosh* frequently refers to sexual propriety; see e.g. Y. Megillah 3:2 74a (R. Judah the Patriarch is called "the holy one" because he never looks at his sexual organ).

[51] Cf. Tertullian (note 26 above).

(1 Cor 7:14). Is not the sin of unbelief greater than the sin of illicit sex?[52] To this question John gives a series of answers which boil down to three: an adulterous marriage is no longer a marriage, while a marriage between a believer and a non-believer is still a valid union; a husband who remains with his adulterous wife sins with her (i.e. has sexual relations with her) precisely in the arena in which she herself had sinned, not so a faithful Christian married to a non-Christian; the adulterous wife is too far gone to be reclaimed for the faith, but in a mixed union there is every hope that the Christian spouse will win over the non-believing spouse.[53]

Whatever we may think of Chrysostom's answers, his excellent question highlights the difference between 1 Cor 6:15–16, a case of *porneia*, condemned and prohibited by Paul, and 1 Cor 7:12–14, a case of holiness (described with *hagios* language), tolerated, perhaps even permitted outright, by Paul. Mixed marriage for Paul is not *porneia*. We cannot be sure exactly what Paul meant when he called the spouse "sanctified" and the offspring "holy," but we can be sure that he meant as a minimum that the sexual relationship between this husband and wife is not *porneia* and

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[52] Several modern scholars have asked the same question: see e.g. Michael Newton *The Concept of Purity at Qumran and in the Letters of Paul* (Cambridge University Press, 1985; SNTSMS 53) 105–106; Dale Martin, *The Corinthian Body* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995) 250–251, as cited by Gillihan, "Jewish Laws on Illicit Marriage," 741; J. Ayodeji Adewuya, *Holiness and Community in 2 Cor 6:14-7:1* (New York: P. Lang, 2001) 145.

[53] John Chrysostom, Homily 19.2–3 on 1 Cor 7, PG 61.154–155. Apparently Chrysostom did not know the *pericope adulterae* ([John 7:53–8:11]).

that their offspring does not suffer any taint of *porneia*.[54] Hence we must conclude, against Tertullian, that 1 Cor 6:15–16 has nothing to do with mixed marriage.[55]

Chrysostom argues that the *hagios* language here should be understood minimally; the spouse is not "really" sanctified, and the offspring is not "really" holy. All Paul means is that the spouse and the offspring are candidates for salvation and that the relationship is licit. Chrysostom argues as follows (I add some explanations in brackets):[56]

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[54] I do not understand Gillihan's statement "There is no hint of a moral judgment *of the children* in Paul's claim that they are holy instead of impure" ("Jewish Laws on Illicit Marriage," 715; also 737 n. 80). It seems obvious that there is a moral judgment, based not on the offspring's actions but on their origin.

[55] Tertullian, *Ad Uxorem* 2.2.9 (CCSL 1.387) writes of mixed marriage according to Paul (trans. Le Saint), "Whatever is unclean has no part in what is holy. It can do nothing except defile it out of its own filth and kill it" (quod immundum est cum sancto non habet partem nisi ut de suo inquinet et occidat). Similarly, Hayes, *Gentile Impurities* 98, writes, "What is strongly implied in Paul's writings – that intermarriage is *zenut* [the rabbinic Hebrew equivalent of *porneia*] which unites holy and impure persons as one flesh or body, resulting in the defilement of the holiness of the former and of Christ himself – becomes explicit in the writings of the church fathers." Hayes, misled by Tertullian, is wrong about Paul, who nowhere implies, strongly or otherwise, that mixed marriage is *porneia*; he says precisely the opposite in 1 Cor 7:14. Gillihan's critique of Hayes is too gentle; see Gillihan, "Jewish Laws on Illicit Marriage," 728 n 52.

[56] Homily 19.3 on 1 Corinthians, PG 61.155: *Ἡγίασται γὰρ,* φησὶν, *ὁ ἀνὴρ ὁ ἄπιστος ἐν τῇ γυναικί.* Τοσαύτη ἡ περιουσία τῆς σῆς καθαρότητος. Τί οὖν; ἅγιός ἐστιν ὁ Ἕλλην; Οὐδαμῶς· οὐ γὰρ εἶπεν, Ἅγιός ἐστιν, ἀλλ', Ἡγίασται ἐν τῇ γυναικί. Τοῦτο δὲ εἶπεν, οὐχ ἵνα δείξῃ ἐκεῖνον ἅγιον, ἀλλ' ἵνα ἐκ περιουσίας τὸν φόβον ἐξέλῃ τῆς γυναικὸς, κἀκεῖνον εἰς ἐπιθυμίαν ἀγάγῃ τῆς ἀληθείας. Οὐ γὰρ τῶν σωμάτων τὸ ἀκάθαρτον, ὧν ἐστιν ἡ κοινωνία, ἀλλὰ τῆς προαιρέσεως καὶ τῶν λογισμῶν. Εἶτα καὶ ἀπόδειξις· εἰ γὰρ ἀκάθαρτος μένουσα γεννᾷς, τὸ δὲ παιδίον οὐκ ἀπὸ σοῦ μόνης, ἀκάθαρτον ἄρα τὸ παιδίον, ἢ ἐξ ἡμισείας καθαρόν· νυνὶ δὲ οὐκ ἔστιν ἀκάθαρτον. Διὸ καὶ ἐπήγαγεν, *Ἐπεὶ τὰ τέκνα ὑμῶν ἀκάθαρτά ἐστι· νυνὶ δὲ ἅγιά ἐστι·* τουτέστιν, οὐκ ἀκάθαρτα. Αὐτὸς δὲ ἅγια ἐκάλεσε, τῇ περιουσίᾳ τῆς λέξεως πάλιν ἐκβάλλων τῆς τοιαύτης ὑποψίας τὸ δέος.

Paul says (1 Cor 7:14) that "the unbelieving husband is made holy through his wife" – so great is the abundance of your purity [that you, the Christian wife, can sanctify your husband]. What then? Is the Greek [the unbelieving husband] holy [*hagios*]? Of course not. Paul said not "he is holy" but "he is made holy through his wife." He said this not in order to show that he is holy, but in order through overstatement[57] to remove from the wife the fear [that she ought not remain with her non-Christian husband], and in order to lead him to a desire for the truth. For impurity is not of the bodies and the communion of bodies, but of the mind and the thoughts. [Consequently she may remain with her husband.] And then the proof: If you were to remain impure [because of this relationship] and bear a child, the child, not being from you alone, would be impure, or [at most] half pure. But now, [since your relationship is not impure,] the child is not impure. Therefore he added "Since [otherwise] your children would be impure, but now they are holy," that is, not impure. He called them "holy" in overstatement [lit. by the abundance of the expression], again in order to cast out the dread of such suspicion [that she might be impure through remaining with her husband].

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[57] The translator in the Nicene Post-Nicene Fathers 1st series vol. 12 (available online at http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/npnf112.iv.xx.html and various other sites) translates ἐκ περιουσίας "as completely as possible," but I think that the phrase looks ahead to the τῇ περιουσίᾳ τῆς λέξεως at the end of the paragraph (note the πάλιν, "again"). Chrysostom means the following: when Paul tells the wife that her non-Christian spouse "has been made holy," and, again, when he tells her that her children are "holy," in each case he is overstating the matter in order to reassure her.

According to Chrysostom, when Paul says that the non-Christian spouse is sanctified and the offspring is holy, he does not really mean what he says; after all, neither one is a Christian and neither one is "saved," consequently neither is really "holy" at all. In this verse "holy" means "not impure." The rhetorical function of 1 Cor 7:14 explains the overstatement: Paul said what he said solely for the purpose of reassuring the Christian wife that she may remain in her relationship with her non-Christian husband.

Chrysostom suggests that the *hagios* language in 1 Cor 7:14 should not be taken literally; Paul is deliberately overstating his case for the purpose of rhetorical effect. This suggestion was taken up by other exegetes of the Antiochene school, Theodoret of Cyrrhus and Theodore of Mopsuestia. Theodoret writes, "Paul set these things down with some measure of hyperbole, in order to persuade [the Christian partner] not to abandon the union." The ever-remarkable Theodore says that the holiness language here is simply Paul's way of indicating approval, that is, approval of the perpetuation of the marriage. "Paul said this because [the believers] were afraid that the unbelievers would contaminate them through sexual contact."[58] If Chrysostom's influence were as strong today as it was in fifth century Antioch, modern scholarly discussions of 1 Cor 7:14 would be shorter and fewer.

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[58] Theodoret, commentary on 1 Cor 7:14 in PG 82.277; Theodore of Mopsuestia apud Staab, *Paulus Kommentare* 182. Κατὰ τὸ ἡμέτερον δηλονότι ἀγόμενον βούλημα ἅγιον εἶναι δύναται. Ἡγίασται ἀντὶ τοῦ κεκάθαρται. ταῦτα δὲ εἶπεν, ἐπειδὴ ἀμφέβαλλον μὴ μιαίνοντες τῇ τῶν ἀπίστων κοίτῃ οἱ ἄπιστοι. (These two sentences are not a unit; each of them derives from a different catena.)

Conclusions

This essay has focused on the question: does Paul prohibit mixed marriage, that is, a marriage between a believer (what we might call a Christian) and a non-believer (a non-Christian)? According to many ancient church writers, and according to many modern scholars, the answer is yes. Tertullian is the first to argue that Paul prohibited the marriage of a Christian to a non-Christian—he was also the first Christian to argue that Christians are prohibited from marrying non-Christians—and he was widely followed, especially by writers in the Latin west.[59] However, an examination of the Pauline passages cited by these writers reveals that Paul has little to say on mixed marriage and much of that is ambiguous.

Tertullian and his followers, ancient and modern, cite 1 Cor 6:15–19 and 1 Cor 7:39 to prove that Paul prohibits mixed marriage. The first of these is a dramatic denunciation of illicit sexual relations (*porneia*), on the grounds that the body of a Christian is the body of Christ and the temple of the holy spirit. The second of these is a command from Paul to a Christian widow that, if she is to remarry, she is to remarry "only in the Lord." Neither of these verses unambiguously addresses mixed marriage.

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[59] Why Greek churchmen were so much less interested than their Latin brethren in documenting a prohibition of mixed marriage, I do not know. An excellent summary (to which I am much indebted) of the Western Latin tradition on the prohibition of mixed marriage is provided by Robert Bellarmine (1542–1621), *De Sacramento Matrimonii caput XXIII de cultus disparitate* in his *Opera Omnia* (vol. 5; ed. Justinus Fèvre; Paris 1873; repr. Frankfurt: Minerva, 1965) 116–120.

To argue that Paul's concept of *porneia* includes mixed marriage is to assume what needs to be demonstrated; such an argument also contradicts what Paul says in 1 Cor 7:14, according to which a non-Christian spouse is "sanctified" by his or her Christian spouse. The meaning of the command to marry only in the Lord is not at all clear. Perhaps it includes a prohibition of mixed marriage, perhaps not; many ancient commentators thought that it did not.

Some ancient writers, and their modern continuators, also cite 2 Cor 6:14 as evidence that Paul prohibited mixed marriage. This verse opens a paragraph that encourages believers in Christ to keep their distance from non-believers. Certainly marriage with a non-believer would seem to be a violation of this exhortation, but it is important to note, yet again, that marriage is not explicitly mentioned, and, if Paul (or whoever the author is) meant to include mixed marriage, he did so only obliquely. Some commentators, ancient and modern, see this verse as a prohibition of mixed marriage, others do not.

So, what are we left with? Not a single verse in the Pauline corpus explicitly and unambiguously prohibits a believer from marrying a non-believer. On the other side stands 1 Cor 7:12–14, the only passage in the Pauline corpus to talk about mixed marriage. No matter how we interpret this cryptic and enigmatic passage, one thing is certain: these verses do not prohibit anything. Just the opposite. Paul declares mixed marriage, at least after the fact and perhaps before the fact, at least in some circumstances and perhaps in all circumstances, to be licit; the believing spouse is to

remain with the non-believing spouse in sanctioned wedlock. Anyone who argues that Paul prohibits mixed marriage has to come to terms with the plain meaning of 1 Cor 7:12–14. I conclude that Paul did not prohibit mixed marriage, and that such a prohibition was the work of formative Christianity only in the second century C.E.[60]

And so, at last, the question of why: why does Paul not oppose mixed marriage? We can only speculate, of course; for whatever they are worth, here are three speculations, presented in order from the less to the more plausible.

First, perhaps the reason is practical. Perhaps Paul noted the demographic realities of the early Christian communities. There were still so few believers in the world, whom else could they marry but non-believers? A shortage of eligible spouses within a community can result in marriages with outsiders. Such was the situation, for example, in Spain in the early fourth century. There was an "oversupply of (Christian) girls," with the result that they were being given in marriage to Gentile men. Canon 15

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[60] Paul is the only Jew of antiquity who argued on principle against a prohibition of mixed marriage. In the pages of Philo, Josephus, and rabbinic literature we can occasionally hear the voices, and see the actions, of Jews who enjoyed sexual relations with gentiles, but no other Jew of antiquity said anything as radical as 1 Cor 7:12–14. (For two runners-up see: Josephus AJ 4.145–149; Y. Sanhedrin 2.4[6] 20c statement of R. Yosi on the wives of Solomon.) Hence I am not persuaded by those who want to explain the rulings of 1 Cor 7, at least 7:12–14, by appeal to halakhic (Jewish legal) reasoning and terminology. For such attempts see Gillihan, "Jewish Laws on Illicit Marriage," and Peter Tomson, "Paul's Jewish Background in View of his Law Teaching in 1 Cor 7," in *Paul and the Mosaic Law* (ed. J.D.G. Dunn; WUNT 89; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1996) 251–270.

of the Council of Elvira (306 C.E.) prohibited the practice.[61] Perhaps Paul estimated that there was an undersupply of potential brides (and grooms) within the fold, but unlike the canonists of Elvira, did not try to solve the problem through legislation. He yielded to the inevitable and did nothing to discourage the members of his flock from seeking mates outside the fold.

Second, perhaps the reason is eschatological. Paul believes that the world is passing away, that the end time is at hand, and that as a result everyone should remain in place.[62] Those who are unmarried should remain unmarried, and those who are married should stay married. The intermarried couple too should remain as they are and, if possible, not divorce. This explanation makes all the more sense if we construe 1 Cor 7:12–14 as permission after the fact: Paul is addressing mixed couples who already are couples. Unmarried believers should not marry non-believers—they should not marry anyone. Mixed marriage is not a problem that will bother the church for long, thinks Paul.

Third, perhaps the reason is theological. Paul believes that there is no longer Jew or Greek in Christ, that ethnic distinctions no longer matter, that all people are alike the children of God. Paul believes that the old Jewish rules of table fellowship no longer

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[61] Friedrich Lauchert, *Die Kanones der wichtigsten altkirchlichen Concilien* (repr. Frankfurt: Minerva, 1961) 16: "Propter copiam puellarum gentilibus minime in matrimonium dandae sunt virgines Christianae, ne aetas in flore tumens in adulterium animae resolvatur." Was there an oversupply of brides or an undersupply of grooms?

[62] This point is brought out nicely by O. Larry Yarbrough, *Not Like the Gentiles: Marriage Rules in the Letters of Paul* (SBLDS 80; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1986) 113.

obtain, and that believers may freely sup with unbelievers (1 Cor 10:27; cf. Gal 2:12–14). If Paul believes all this, surely he could believe too that the followers of Christ may freely marry non-believers. Perhaps he thought that mixed marriage was a fine way to spread the light of truth and the knowledge of Christ. The Jewish prohibition of mixed marriage was irrelevant to Paul, and the Christian prohibition was a century or more in the future.

Appendix: Origen on 1 Cor 7:12–14

Fragments of Origen's commentary on 1 Corinthians (preserved in the catena tradition) were published one hundred years ago in an exemplary edition by Claude Jenkins (1877–1959; in 1934 he became Regius Professor of Ecclesiastical History and Canon of Christ Church at Oxford).[63] The text is in bad shape, and a large gap separates what Origen wrote from the fragments now extant. I translate here two paragraphs from that commentary in order to show how I understand how Origen understood 1 Cor 7:14. The logic of Origen's argument is not always clear, or at least is not always clear to me, and I have no doubt that my translation (which apparently is the first) has room for improvement.

§XXXV Τοῖς δὲ λοιποῖς λέγω ἐγώ, οὐχ ὁ κύριος. τοῖς μὲν γεγαμηκόσιν οὐκ ἐγὼ νομοθετῶ, ἀλλ' ὁ κύριος· τοῖς δὲ μὴ γεγαμηκόσιν ἀλλ' *ἑτεροζυγοῦσιν ἀπίστοις* οὐκ ἔχω νόμον δοῦναι ἀπὸ θεοῦ· οὐδὲ γὰρ ἄξιοί εἰσι νόμων θεοῦ· ἀλλ' ἀκουέτωσαν ἡμῶν. καὶ χρήσομαι εἰς τὸ νοηθῆναι τὰ κατὰ τὸν τόπον γεγραμμένοις ἐν τῷ νόμῳ. οἱ νόμοι οἱ κατὰ Μωσέα οἱ μὲν θεοῦ εἰσιν, οἱ δὲ Μωσέως. καὶ τοῦτο ἐπιστάμενος ὁ κύριος διαφορὰν νόμων θεοῦ καὶ νόμων Μωσέως εἶπεν ἐπὶ μὲν τῶν ὑπὸ θεοῦ νενομοθετημένων *Ὁ γὰρ θεὸς εἶπεν Τίμα τὸν πατέρα καὶ τὴν μητέρα,* ἐπὶ δὲ τῶν ὑπὸ Μωσέως *Μωϋσῆς* διὰ *τὴν*

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[63] Claude Jenkins, "Origen on I Corinthians," *JTS* 9 (1907–1908) 231ff, 353ff, 500ff and 10 (1908–1909) 29ff. The text presented here (digitized by the TLG) was published by Jenkins in *JTS* 9 (1907–1908) 505–506 lines 57–72 and 1–20. In *JTS* 10 (1908–1909) 270 C. H. Turner wrote "I do not think that the *Journal of Theological Studies*, in the nine years of its existence, has published any contribution to theological learning more solid and more valuable than the edition of the fragments of Origen on St Paul's epistles to Ephesus and Corinth."

σκληροκαρδίαν ὑμῶν ἐπέτρεψεν ὑμῖν ἀπολῦσαι τὰς γυναῖκας. τηρήσας γοῦν τὰ τοῦ *βιβλίου* τοῦ *ἀποστασίου* εὑρήσεις οὐκ ἐκ προστάγματος κυρίου τὸν νόμον γεγραμμένον. Μωϋσῆς μὲν οὖν ὑπηρετῶν θεῷ νόμους ἔδωκεν δευτέρους παρὰ τοὺς νόμους τοῦ θεοῦ· Παῦλος δὲ ὑπηρετῶν τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ νόμους ἔδωκεν δευτέρους τοῖς ἐκκλησιαστικοῖς μετὰ τοὺς νόμους τοὺς ἀπὸ θεοῦ διὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ. καὶ καλόν ἐστιν ἀκούειν νόμων ἀπὸ κυρίου ἢ ἀκούειν νόμων Παύλου τοῦ ἀποστόλου. κἂν γὰρ ἅγιος ᾖ, ἀλλὰ πολλῷ ὑποδεεστέρους ἔχει νόμους τῶν νόμων τοῦ κυρίου.

§XXXVI [**Ἡγίασται γὰρ ὁ ἀνὴρ ὁ ἄπιστος ἐν τῇ γυναικί, καὶ ἡγίασται ἡ γυνὴ ἡ ἄπιστος ἐν τῷ ἀδελφῷ.]**

Ὡς κρᾶσίς τις γίνεται τῶν δύο, ἀνδρὸς καὶ γυναικός, *εἰς σάρκα μίαν* ὥσπερ οἴνου καὶ ὕδατος· καὶ ὥσπερ μεταδίδωσιν ὁ πιστὸς ἁγιασμοῦ τῇ ἐθνικῇ γαμετῇ, ἢ τὸ ἐναντίον ἡ πιστὴ τῷ ἀπίστῳ ἀνδρί, οὕτω καὶ ὁ ἄπιστος μεταδίδωσι μολυσμοῦ τῇ πιστῇ γυναικὶ ἢ τῷ πιστῷ ἀνδρὶ ἡ ἄπιστος γυνή. διὰ τί γὰρ φησὶν **Ἡγίασται ἡ ἄπιστος** ἢ **ὁ ἄπιστος** τ<ῷ> λαμβάνειν τι ἀπὸ τοῦ πιστοῦ ἢ ἀπὸ τῆς πιστῆς, καὶ οὐχὶ βεβηλοῦται τ<ῷ> λαμβάνειν τι ἀπὸ τοῦ ἀπίστου μέρους; ἕκαστος γὰρ *ἐκ τοῦ περισσεύματος τῆς καρδίας* διαλεγόμενος τῷ ἑτέρῳ ἢ μεταδίδωσιν ἢ μεταλαμβάνει, καὶ τῷ χρόνῳ πάντως νικᾷ τὸ ἕτερον. καὶ τίς χρεία, φησί, τοιούτου ἀγῶνός τε καὶ κινδύνου; ἢ γὰρ ἐπιτεύξεται ἢ ἀποτεύξεται, καὶ ἤτοι τὴν ψυχὴν αὐτοῦ προσαπολέσει ἢ πολλὰ καμὼν μόγις κερδῆσαι δυνήσεται. διὰ τοῦτο καλόν ἐστι πρὶν προληφθῆναι ἄνθρωπον ἐπιμελῶς οὐ μόνον τοῦτο ἀλλὰ καὶ τὸ μέλλον σκοπεῖν, καὶ σκοπήσαντα ἢ μὴ γαμεῖν ἢ γαμοῦντα *ἐν κυρίῳ* γαμεῖν. *γυνὴ* γὰρ *δέδεται ἐφ᾽ ὅσον χρόνον ζῇ ὁ ἀνήρ· ἐὰν δὲ* ἀποθάνῃ *ὁ ἀνήρ, ἐλευθέρα ἐστὶν ᾧ θέλει γαμηθῆναι,*

μόνον ἐν κυρίῳ. οὐκ ἀκούομεν τοῦ *μόνον ἐν κυρίῳ,* ἀλλὰ τὸ *ἐλευθέρα ἐστὶν ᾧ θέλει γαμηθῆναι* ἀναγινώσκομεν, οὐκέτι δὲ συνετάξαμεν τὸ *μόνον ἐν κυρίῳ.* καίτοι γε κἀκεῖ ὅτε εἶπεν *μόνον ἐν κυρίῳ,* πάλιν ἀνέκρουσεν τὸν λόγον εἰπὼν *μακαριωτέρα δέ ἐστιν ἐὰν οὕτως μείνῃ, κατὰ τὴν ἐμὴν γνώμην.* τὸ οὖν εὐφημότερον εἰπὼν ὁ ἀπόστολος, τὸ **Ἁγιάζεται γάρ,** ἀφῆκεν ἡμῖν τὸ ἄλλο νοεῖν.

(Section 35) *To the others I say – I, not the Lord* (1 Cor 7:12). To those who are married it is not I (Paul) who legislate, but the Lord. In contrast, to those who are not married but who are mis-yoked with non-believers (2 Cor 6:14), I do not have a law to give from God, for they are not worthy of the laws of God.[64] Let them, however, listen to us (Paul). In order to make the contents of this passage understood I (Origen) will use what is written in the Law. The laws according to Moses—some derive from God, others from Moses. The Lord, understanding the difference between the laws of God and the laws of Moses, said concerning the laws legislated by God, *God has said, Honor your father and mother* (Matthew 15:4, citing Exodus 20:12), but about the laws set down by Moses, *Moses, on account of your hardness of heart, permitted you to divorce your wives* (Matthew 19:7–8, citing Deuteronomy 24:1–3). Considering carefully what scripture says about t*he bill of divorce,* you shall find that the law was written not in accordance

[64] In the previous paragraphs (504–505) Origen explained that only a marriage between Christians was a real marriage, whereas the union of a Christian with a non-Christian is not deemed a marriage. See note 39 above. On 504 line 44 Origen again, as here, refers to the mixed married as those who are "misyoked."

with a commandment of the Lord. This shows that Moses, in serving God, gave additional [lit. second] laws beside the laws of God.[65] Paul too, in serving the Gospel, gave to the people of the church additional [lit. second] laws beyond the laws from God through Jesus Christ. It is better to obey laws from the Lord than to obey laws of Paul the apostle. For even though he is holy, his laws are much inferior to the laws of the Lord.

(Section 36) *The non-believing husband is sanctified in the wife, and the non-believing wife is sanctified in the husband* (1 Cor 7:14). Like a mixture of wine and water, the two, husband and wife, become *one flesh* (Matthew 19:5 and 1 Cor 6:16, citing Genesis 2:24). And just as the male believer shares sanctification with his Gentile wife, or, in the opposite case, the female believer with her unbelieving husband, thus too the male unbeliever shares pollution with his believing wife, or the unbelieving wife with her believing husband. Why then does Paul say that the unbeliever, whether female or male, is sanctified, by taking something from the male or female believer?[66] Why is the believer not profaned by taking something from the unbelieving part? Each spouse, discussing with the other *out the abundance of the heart* (Matthew 12:34), either gives or

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[65] The idea that most of the laws of the Torah are "additional" (lit. second) laws, promulgated by Moses in order to counteract Israelite tendency to sin, and consequently not binding on Christians—this idea (summed up by the word *deuterosis*) will be much developed in the third century by the Didascalia and in the fourth century by the Apostolic Constitutions.

[66] Origen asks this question not to explain Paul but to disagree with him, or at least to limit the applicability of 1 Cor 7:14. The previous paragraph establishes the fact that Paul's own legislation is not authoritative.

receives, and in time completely wins over the other. And what is the need, he (Paul) says, for such a struggle and such danger?[67] For [the Christian spouse] will either succeed or fail, and will either destroy his [own] soul or, after much toil, scarcely be able to make a profit [that is, win over the non-believing spouse, 1 Peter 3:1]. Therefore, it is a good thing that a person, before being surprised, carefully examine not only the present but also the future, and, having examined it, either not to marry or, if to marry, to marry *in the Lord* (1 Cor 7:39). *A wife is bound for as long as her husband lives; if the husband die, she is free to be married to whomever she wishes, only in the Lord* (1 Cor 7:39). We do not obey the verse *only in the Lord* [if we marry a non-believer]; but when we read that *she is free to be married to whomever she wishes,* we have not yet connected it with *only in the Lord*.[68] However, even there [in connection with that verse], when he (Paul) said *only in the Lord*, he then restricted that utterance by saying *she is more blessed if she remain as she is, according to my opinion* (1 Cor 7:40).[69] Therefore, although the apostle has

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[67] I think this means: Paul himself in 1 Cor 7:16 implies that the outcome of the debate between the believing spouse and the non-believing spouse is in doubt. Why, then, should a Christian put himself (herself) into such a dangerous situation? Origen uses 1 Cor 7:16 as evidence against Paul's optimistic statement in 1 Cor 7:14 that the Christian spouse will win over the non-believer. Not necessarily, says Origen.

[68] The logic of the argument seems to be that the restriction of *only in the Lord* offsets both the permission of 1 Cor 7:12–14 to marry a non-believer as well as the permission of the first part of 1 Cor 7:39 that a widow may be married to anyone she pleases.

[69] The logic of the argument seems to be that the permission to marry in the Lord is offset by Paul's preference that a widow not marry at all. If I understand Origen correctly, he is arguing that Paul presents three possibilities: not to marry at all (most preferred option); to marry in the Lord (that is, to a fellow Christian); to marry a non-

spoken this rather well-turned phrase *The non-believing spouse is sanctified*, he has permitted us to think otherwise.

Christian, in the uncertain hope that the Christian will be able to win over the non-Christian (least preferred option).