

**THE RHETORICAL FUNCTION OF ROMANS 7 WITHIN
THE CONTEXT OF ROMANS 5-8**

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The purpose of this dissertation was to establish the rhetorical function of Romans 7 within the context of Romans 5-8. Chapter 1 involved a survey of the problem that led to the investigation and a discussion of a number of approaches offered as an interpretation for understanding Romans 7. Chapter 2 centred on an investigation into the nature of Paul's audience in Rome. Chapter 3 investigated the purpose of the letter as a help to understanding the rhetorical function of Romans 7. Chapter 4 dealt with the rhetorical function of Romans 7. The *causa* underlying Paul's rhetoric in Romans 7 was a tendency among Gentile Christians to want to return to the law. Paul set out strongly to counter this tendency because it was incompatible with their position in Christ and would foil his plans in respect of the Gentile Christians in Rome and of the Gospel to the West.

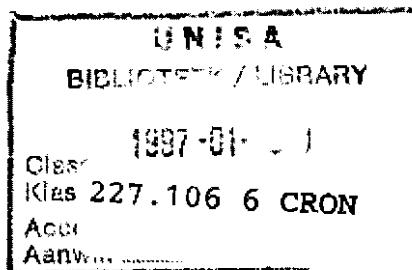
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Romans 7; Paul's audience; Purpose of Romans letter; Rhetoric of Romans 7; Gentile Christianity; Righteousness; Law; Incompatibility; Dissociation; Identification; persuasive strategies; rhetorical criticism; Kennedy; Interactional analysis; Romans 7 and the body.

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CHAPTER 1

DEFINING THE PROBLEM

1 INTRODUCTION

The aim of this study is to answer the question of ‘the rhetorical function of Romans 7 within the context of Romans 5-8,’ that is, ‘What does Paul wish Romans 7 to do?’

To define the problem more closely: In Romans 1-4 Paul communicates with his audience from a given perspective of Judaism (see Vorster 1992:99; 1994a:132).¹ In 1:1-15 he deals with a few preliminaries. In 1:16-17 he presents the theme of his letter: ‘the saving power of the Gospel.’ By the latter he also redefines the righteousness of God for his Gentile Christian audience, that is: ‘Not the law, as the Jews will, but faith defines the righteousness of God’ (1:17; Vorster 1991a:177 [own translation]). This means that the exclusiveness of the Jews is now broken down and the possibility opened for non-Jews to also enter the inner circle (Vorster 1991a:177). In Romans 1:18-32 Paul presents God’s wrath on humanity from a given Jewish perspective (Dunn 1988:51). From the description of the conduct of the group, Vorster (1991a:179) reflects, it becomes clear that it is a general reference to people who confuse reality with a distortion of reality, but are without excuse (1:20a).² Vorster (1991a:180) observes that the impartial norm not only for the fact of God’s judgement, but also the how of his judgement is their conduct (1:32).

In Romans 2 Paul turns his attention specifically to the Jews. In a heated diatribe with an imaginary interlocutor (cf Fraikin 1986:98; Dunn 1988:89; Vorster 1991a:176), he attacks the overconfidence in their election of many of his fellow Jews (Dunn 1988:90-91), showing that their possession of the law is no safeguard for them. Romans 2:1-16 deals with the question of judgement. The underlying principle of Paul’s argument is that the denunciation of people presumes a

loyalty to the truth or the norm for judgement. In the case of the Jews, however, their loyalty to God's truth can be questioned because they do exactly the same as those whom they judge (cf 2:3; Vorster 1991a:174-175). Although they had given themselves an unassailable and superior status, to be inside the covenant meant acquittance from God's judgement and the right to judge others, the truth of the matter is that while they judge those who are outside they themselves are judged (Vorster 1991a:175; cf also Dunn 1988:91).

Romans 2:17-29 shows the requirements for the status of being a Jew, namely, 'a given behaviour' (2:28-29; Dunn 1988:127-128; Vorster 1991a:175). In this respect many of Paul's fellow Jews had fallen short. For while they laid claim to a superior position with regard to the Gentiles (2:19-20), on the basis of their possession and knowledge of the law (2:17-18), their conduct, however, suggests that their adherence to the law is pretentious. Their conduct suggests rather that they have placed themselves outside of the boundaries of the law (cf 2:23; Vorster 1991a:175). Their situation then also shows that while they accord themselves a superior position because of their knowledge, it is exactly they who do not understand and can be held responsible for the fact that the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles (cf 2:24; Vorster 1991a:175).

In Romans 3 Paul shows that God's judgment is on all without exception. The Jews did have an advantage in that the oracles of God were entrusted to them and this advantage cannot be revoked by disobedience (vv 1-3), but for the rest they have no edge on salvation. The law has not helped (cf Stendahl 1976:81). They stood under judgement as much as any other (v 23). In verse 9 Paul also draws them in with the Gentiles under the slogan that all people are sinners (Vorster 1991a:160; cf v 4, 10-19). In Romans 3:20-21, 24-31 Paul, then, again confirms that righteousness comes by faith and not by the law (cf 1:16-17).

In Romans 4 Paul sets Abraham up as an example (cf Dunn 1988:226) of one who had been justified by faith and not by works (vv 2-5) for in him both

uncircumcision and circumcision coincide and because he stands as a representative of a time when no distinction was made between Jew and non-Jew yet (Vorster 1991a:182). In 4:10-12 ἀκροβυστία and περιτομή are, then, used metonymically for Gentile and Jew, showing how only by faith both Jew and Gentile can stand in the posterity of Abraham (Vorster 1991a:160; see also Dunn 1988:210-211, 231-232).

In Romans 5-8 Paul addresses his hearers directly and at the same time assigns them status. Romans 5, then, gives a new perspective on the believer's present and future (vv 1-11; Dunn 1988:244), that is, hope, and on God's righteous purpose for mankind (vv 12-21; Dunn 1988:269). It comes down to that whereas previously Paul's audience, as Gentiles, were in an inferior position from the perspective of the Jews because they did not possess the law, this is no longer so. Christ's death has, in fact, brought an end to the rule of sin and death, and his resurrection has introduced a new era.

In Romans 6 Paul sets out to confirm this newly assigned status of his Gentile Christian audience. He makes sure therefore that they are informed that they (1) have been baptised into Jesus Christ, (2) have been buried with him, and (3) walk with him in newness of life (vv 3-4). In various ways, by contrasting their former life with their present, this new status is, then, also repeated (cf vv 1-2, 6-7, 11-12, 17,-22). Based on the example of Christ that death has no more dominion over him (v 9), but in that he lives, he lives to God (v 10), his audience is exhorted to see themselves now in a similar position (v 11).

As the new life of the risen Jesus of which they are now partakers stands for a challenging discontinuity between the old and the new (cf Brown 1988:51), they are commanded to also now live in accordance with this 'new' status (vv 12-13). Briefly, then, they are also assured that sin shall not have dominion over them because they are not under law but under grace (v 14). This entails the exercise of proper control over their lives. The body previously lent to all manner of

concupiscence - a matter that will be given more attention when dealing with the rhetoric of Romans 7 - was now no longer to enjoy any of the carefree moments of indeterminacy allowed to it by pagans (vv 17-23; cf 1:24-27; Brown 1988:51).³

Romans 7, in turn, argues that (1) the believer is released from the law which condemns to death (vv 1-6), (2) knowledge of sin came by the law (vv 7-12), and (3) trying to live by the law as a means to righteousness is a fruitless effort (vv 13-25). Romans 8 shows the freedom from the condemnation of the law and death; the fulfilment of God's purpose through the Spirit (vv 1-30; Dunn 1988:412); God's triumph; his faithfulness; and the 'assurance' of faith (vv 31-39; Dunn 1988:496). The integration of conduct and status, namely, the justification of a life in which the law has been relativised is reflected on in this latter chapter by various identity markers (see vv 1, 5, 9, 23; Vorster 1991b:111).

With Romans 7, however, the conversation from Romans 5 through Romans 6 to Romans 8 appears to be interrupted. Romans 6 could easily be linked to Romans 8 without the intervention of Romans 7. In Romans 5, 6 and 8, sin rather than the law has the dominant role and Paul does not reach out strongly to the law. In Romans 5 there are only two references to the law (cf vv 13, 20); in Romans 6 also only two (cf vv 14, 15); and in Romans 8 four (cf vv 2, 3, 4, 7). Except for Romans 5:13 and 5:20, which can be seen as general, all the other references significantly look back on Paul's audience's previous life under sin and not on their present life under grace (see also 8:9).

Having dealt with the aspects of law and grace and Christian conduct in Romans 5 and 6, and then in such a manner as not to leave the believer in any doubt as to his/her position in Christ and what it entails, two questions arise. (1) Why the sudden switch to the law in Romans 7 and, then, when some of the aspects dealt with in Romans 7 have basically already been dispensed with in Romans 5 and 6?⁴ (2) Why does Paul tell the members of his audience that sin will not rule over

them because they are not ‘under law’ (6:14) when, as Gentiles, strictly they never were under the law?

Whilst admittedly some of Paul’s audience might previously have been attracted to Judaism and were thus under the law (Dunn 1988:340) in all likelihood many of them had not been. Bearing in mind, too, that it was because as Gentiles they did not possess the law that they were held in low esteem by the Jews (Vorster 1992:102; cf also Moxnes 1988:63), why the statement then? Why, too, does Paul hold before his audience that they have a status, that they are free; that they are corporately included in Christ, but the ‘person’ described in 7:13-24, 25b is anything but free? But when Paul comes to Romans 8, it is all of a sudden again the ‘liberated’ (cf ‘there is therefore no condemnation’; Rm 8:1).

These questions coincide with still another set of questions: Should it be that if they were ‘under law’ that it held a danger for them? If the answer is in the affirmative, what manner of danger then? A loss of status perhaps? If so, why would it be important for Paul to remind his audience of such a possibility? If Paul is holding before his audience the possibility of a loss of status, could we, then, term what we have to deal with here a subtle threat? And, if so, what would Paul want to achieve by a subtle reminder of the disadvantages of a switch to the law (cf Brown 1988:59)? Would a switch to the law mean a condition of ‘sin’ and ‘death’ for them? (cf 5:13, 20-21; 7:8-11; 13-23).

And what, on the other hand, is the possibility that Paul here wishes to affirm his identification with his implied audience? If Romans 7, then, is an attempt at further identification, why would Paul want to have this identification? And, if he wants to identify with them, and we accept, as we have said, that he is writing to a Gentile Christian audience, why is the ‘law’ and the captivity of the will taken as the starting-point? Is the *έγώ*, then, also in 7:7-25, Paul himself or a rhetorical device? If the latter, who then is the *έγώ*, and what does Paul want it to do? In what time also does the scene depicted from 7:8b onwards transpire?

Why the repeated use of the aorist, the vagueness and generality of the framework in which the specific *έγω* is treated in 7:8-11 and, then, the present tense in 7:14-25? It is this enquiry that gives rise to this dissertation.

The problems as set out suggest that attention will have to be given to a number of related matters. One of these is the nature of Paul's audience in Rome. The investigation of the rhetorical function requires not only that the context be construed, but also the way in which Paul presents Romans 7. For this appears to stand in a field of tension of conflict between Jews and Gentiles. For this reason, then, attention will have to be given to the type of audience addressed in the letter.

Another matter that will have to receive attention also is the purpose of the letter. Moreover, the question of the 'why' of a given style, a given selection and arrangement of data is closely related to the purpose of a discourse. The purpose of the letter thus also cannot be overlooked. In addition to the above, a number of approaches for understanding Romans 7 also need to be examined. The reason for this is that Romans 7 has already received much exegetical attention but less from the perspective of different groups in Rome and the possibility that Paul wanted to identify with them.

I have a given thesis, namely, that Paul is writing to a Gentile Christian audience with whom he wants to identify by a redefinition of the Gentiles' position to the law. A commitment to the law implies a regression to a position before the deliverance by Christ. That is to say, a status equal to what the Jews traditionally accorded to the Gentiles. This I hope to clarify in this dissertation. First, however, let us turn our attention to (1) some approaches offered for understanding Romans 7, (2) the character of Paul's audience in Rome and (3) the purpose of the letter, respectively.

2 APPROACHES TO THE INTERPRETATION OF ROMANS 7

Traditionally there have been a number of approaches to the interpretation of Romans 7. Only three of them will be considered here, namely

- (1) the psychological approach
- (2) Law and Gospel
- (3) Israel's history personified

2.1 The psychological approach

The psychological approach has as its matrix the introspective (plagued) conscience of the West. According to Borchert (1986:82), the first great exponent of this approach was Augustine (354-430 CE) and later the reformer Martin Luther (1483-1546 CE). By this approach, and more so from the time of the Reformation, the theological interpretation of the letter to the Romans was predominantly characterised by the tenet of justification by faith. Christianity's move from its womb in Judaism to a European setting, in which Paul's argument in Romans regarding the law was not fully understood, presented the Western world with a 'hermeneutical caricature' for interpreting the letter to the Romans. According to Borchert (1986:82), this resulted in a misinterpretation of the letter in which Paul's real argument was lost, the distinction between Jew and Gentile eliminated, and the law became a general imperative to a greater extent than the law of Moses.

That so many interpretations of the Letter to the Romans take their departure in justification by faith, even though it is only possible to detect this in the letter by great leaps of the imagination, shows the extent to which the Western world had come under the influence of Luther. This situation regrettably and undeniably came as the result of an exaggerated emphasis on justification by faith. Bent under a qualm of conscience, and an encumbered sin-consciousness,

Protestant Christianity, especially under Luther's influence had come to interpret justification by faith soteriologically. Consequently, Paul's calling came to be equated with conversion, weakness confused with sin, love with genuine integrity, and uniqueness with universalism. This takes Paul's argument of justification by faith from its first-century context and reads it in a conscience-encumbered Western context (cf also Stendahl 1976:3; Sanders 1977:442; Moxnes 1988:61; Vorster 1991a:157; 1992:97).⁵

Stendahl (1976) was the first to come out strongly against this 'hermeneutical caricature' of the Western world. He points out that Paul's chief concern was not with the individual, that is, how he was to find salvation, but with the relation between Jews and Gentiles. One of Paul's arguments developing this concern was the idea of 'justification by faith' (Stendahl 1976:3). According to Dunn (1988:xii), Paul also never speaks of his encounter with Christ as a conversion, but only as a calling and commissioning. Thus, rather than 'being converted,' Paul was called to a special task and his experience was not that inner experience of conversion which Western theology has taken for granted (Stendahl 1976:7, 12).

But if this is so, where did the Westerners go wrong? The problem, Stendahl (1976:12) points out, is that 'we all in the West and especially in the tradition of the Reformation, cannot help reading Paul through the experience of Luther and Calvin.' And this is the chief reason for most of our misunderstandings about Paul. Stendahl (1976:23) also remarks that if we were to read Paul as the called - not the converted - apostle among Jews and Gentiles and not simply concentrate on Paul as the greatest theologian of the New Testament and the Protestant hero of deep theological thought, we might even be able to read the Bible and come to a more accurate understanding of what he wrote in his own time and own situation.

But would Romans 7 not be the proof text for Paul's deep insight into the individual human predicament (Stendahl 1976:92)? In the history of Christianity, says Stendahl (1976:78), the Apostle Paul has been hailed as the hero of the introspective conscience. For here was the man who grappled with the problem of 'I do not the good I want, but the evil I do not want to do is what I do' (7:19). But is it not possible to justify a reading in respect of the individual, that is, a psychological reading from Romans 7? For what could witness more directly to a deep and sensitive introspective conscience? Would this not reflect Paul's own predicament (Stendahl 1976:92)? The answer is 'no.' According to Stendahl (1976:92),

While much attention has been given to the question whether Paul speaks here about a pre-Christian or Christian experience of his, or about man in general, little attention has been drawn to the fact that Paul is involved here in an argument about the Law; he is not primarily concerned about man's or his own cloven ego or predicament.

It is clear that Paul does not argue a case that the law must convict of sin to bring one to Christ. The observation that 'I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want to do is what I do,' says Stendahl (1976:92-93), does not lead directly to the exclamation: 'Wretched man that I am' but, on the contrary, to the statement, 'Now if I do what I do not want, then it is not I who do it, but the sin which dwells in me.' Paul thus transfers the blame for the good that the *έγώ* could not do from blame for the *έγώ* to sin. The argument, Stendahl (1976:93) continues, is one of acquittal of the *έγώ* and not one of utter contrition. Such a line of thought would be impossible if Paul's intention were to describe a person's predicament.⁶

Contrasting Luther with Paul it becomes clear that in Luther we have a man labouring under the threatening demands of the law, a man in despair, one for whom the theological question was how to find a gracious God. But in Paul we have a different man, one who is happy and successful, a man who, when he thinks of righteousness under the law from a Christian perspective, could say 'I

was without blame' (cf Phlp 3:6).⁷ Paul has no qualms of conscience and no feelings of shortcoming. The only concrete sin which was sin to him in his life, and which he mentions, is that he had persecuted the church of God (1 Cor 15:9; cf Gl 1:13, 23). Stendahl (1976:44) correctly observes that to recognise such a sin requires no introspection. In respect of the question of justification by faith, the difference between Paul and Luther is that Paul's view was not one of conversion but about the place of the Gentiles in the church and in the plan of God (Stendahl 1976:84).

This truth has not only been recognised by Stendahl, but by Sanders (1983) and others. Sanders (1983:19) observes that Paul's view was that the Gentiles were to be brought into the people of God without being required to accept the law of Moses but by faith in Christ alone and it was his mission to bring them in. Paul's argument of justification by faith, then, was given impetus by the question of the relation between Jews and Gentiles in the plan of God, which totally differs from that of Luther.

Moxnes (1986) shows great appreciation for Stendahl's insights. Moxnes (1986:61) establishes that the main points of Stendahl's criticism are that Paul's statement about 'justification by faith' has been hailed as the answer to the problem which faces the ruthless man in his practice of 'introspection.' This, however, is a reading of Romans in a context determined by concern about the individual and the individual's religious beliefs. Instead, says Moxnes (1986:61), Stendahl finds that Paul's real problem is concern with the community and the group. It is the question of the place of the Gentiles in the church and in God's plan with the Jews/Gentiles or Jewish Christians/Gentile Christians.

Moxnes (1988:61) maintains that it is worthwhile to push Stendahl's insights a bit further, however, in the direction of a social and cultural paradigm for Paul's theology as a whole. The reason is that when Stendahl wrote, attempts to apply cultural and social anthropology to biblical studies had not yet been undertaken.

Moxnes (1988:62) says that Stendahl 'points to "introspective conscience" as an element of Western culture, significantly linked to "existential self-understanding." This fits into a larger cultural pattern, typical of some Western cultures, especially North European ones, in which guilt and guilt-feelings predominate as a response to wrongdoing.'

But, as Moxnes observes, cultures differ from one another, and in this respect, especially, that of the Mediterranean and Latin America. In these cultures, honour plays a crucial role in establishing a sense of worth (see also Vorster 1994:143). Honour is public esteem rather than private and individual esteem; a culture of this type is public and group-oriented.

This being so, it is clear that Romans 7 should be seen as collective or as referring to a group. A Gentile Christian group (cf 1:5-7, 11, 13) with whom, to my mind, Paul wants to identify by a redefinition of their position to the law in respect of his concern about their position together with the Jews in God's purpose and plan (cf 7:4, 6; 15:10; see also again Stendahl 1976:3; Sanders 1983:19; Moxnes 1988:61).

Notwithstanding the foregoing, presuming that we were to accept that Paul before his conversion(?) did have the same experience as Augustine and Luther and we tried to find support for this in Romans 7, where would it leave us? We would undoubtedly be faced with questions to which we have no answers, namely: What would Paul be telling his audience in Romans 7 in the light of the fact that:

- (1) they were already at peace with God (5:1); (2) the love of God had already been poured out into their hearts by the Holy Spirit (5:5); (3) they were already reconciled to God by the death of Jesus Christ (5:10); (4) they were already dead to sin (6:2); (5) sin shall not have dominion over them as they were not 'under law' but 'under grace' (6:14); (6) by faith strictly they were dead to the law

(7:1-6; cf 8:2, 4); (7) they were, at the time when Paul wrote to them, already walking in newness of life (6:4; 7:6) and (8) more than conquerors through Christ (8:37)?

In the light of the foregoing it is clear that the psychological approach as an interpretation for understanding Romans 7 does not hold.

In respect of the psychological approach I have shown how Romans 7 came to be interpreted as reflecting Paul's pre-conversion experience, that Paul's chief concern, however, was not so much with the individual, namely, how he/she was to find salvation, but with relations between the Jews and the Gentiles. I have also shown that in developing this concern Paul used 'justification by faith' as one of his arguments. Moreover Paul's argument must be seen against the cultural background of the Mediterranean world in which 'honour' played a crucial role. Furthermore should we assume that Paul did have an experience similar to that of Augustine and Luther, and seek support for this from Romans 7, we would be faced with questions to which we had no answers.

This raises the question of where the proponents of the psychological approach went wrong. Their failure clearly is that they did not take cognizance of both the historical background of the text (cf Scharlemann 1988:30; cf also Deist & Burden 1986:10) and the wider context of Romans 7, namely, Romans 5, 6 and 8. By this failure they read their own understanding into the text (cf again Deist & Burden 1986:33-41; Scharlemann 1988:29). This will become more evident when we deal with the purpose of the letter and the rhetorical function of Romans 7 in the context of Romans 5, 6 and 8. Now we turn our attention to another approach for understanding Romans 7, namely, Law and Gospel.

2.2 Law and Gospel

Here we shall consider Segal's thesis (1986). Essentially Segal's thesis is that the problem in Romans 7 relates to the Jewish 'dietary laws' in Paul's post-conversion period. Segal (1986:371) states that Romans 7 'describes neither a psychoanalytic nor existential predicament. Rather it is the *apologia* of a reasonable man who formulated a radical solution to the problem of the food laws in Christianity, but who, as an apostle was willing to compromise when his solution was not accepted by the more conservative members of the Christian community.'

For Segal, Romans 7:22-23 makes an impersonal reading impossible. According to him (1986:362), the most obvious place to begin the inquiry into Romans 7 is that Paul is speaking personally. Segal does not perceive Paul as writing to either a Jewish Christian or Gentile Christian audience, but as addressing both. A large part of the letter is directed to Gentiles, cautioning them not to be proud towards the Jews and Jewish Christians because they have understood the obsolescence of the Jewish ceremonial laws (1986:362). However, at the beginning of Romans 7 he defines a special audience. He speaks first of all to his ἀδελφοί, fellow Christians, and furthermore 'to those who know the Law' (7:1), so at this point he is primarily addressing Jewish Christians.

Segal (1986:362) contends that Paul's basic point is in 7:4-7, where he says that since the Jewish Christians have entered the Christian community, they are discharged from the *Torah*; dead to that which held them captive so that they now have a new freedom. Segal has a problem with 7:9-12 though, which he contends, appear to state that Paul gave up the *Torah* at a particular point and then returned to it. Romans 7:9 may thus be reflecting Paul's personal experience after giving up serious allegiance to the ceremonial *Torah*. Paul still sees a reason to return to various customs afterwards as a courtesy to those whose sensibilities might be offended by his private beliefs. That was the crucial

moment when sin again entered his actions, which, then, is the cause of his troubles within the Jewish and Jewish Christian community (Segal 1986:365).

Segal (1986:372) holds that Paul jumps into the deep end (*in medias res*) as a convert not under law (vv 9-12; cf 6:14). The law's deceiving him began, not when he lived without the law, namely, after his conversion, but afterwards when he compromised it because he had been so active in achieving Christian unity by trying to heal the breach between Jewish and Gentile Christians. Previously Paul virtually equated the law with sin and the flesh (Gl 3:19; Rm 3:20; 5:15; 5:20; 6), in keeping with a strictly apocalyptic view of the fallen world and its depraved inhabitants. But this crucial passage, based on Paul's personal post-conversion experience with the law, represents another intuition about the place of the law.

The law is good but the flesh brings about the law's failure to give life. It is likely, says Segal, that the mixed audience, consisting of Jewish and Gentile Christians, presents Paul with an opportunity to try to unite the Roman Christian community with a more thorough treatment of the issue of law and Israel's place in the plan of God. Paul's attempt to mediate between the different customs in the early church, he continues, had created misunderstandings that put him in danger. Placed in this position Paul's conclusions are breath-taking. He shows that his personal difficulty is neither accidental nor abstractly existential. It is the predicament of all Christians under the law. The good they wish to do in attempting to follow the ceremonial law inevitably leads to sin, intentional or not (Segal 1986:372).

According to Segal (1986:372-373), Paul reiterates that the law is good and that he enjoyed fulfilling it, but Christ has saved him from observing these laws after he died and was reborn in Christ. Though the law is holy and good, the ceremonial laws, which are literally and metaphorically the laws of his members, had brought him under sin's sway. The law, for whatever reasons, was not a means to his salvation though it is good and holy and points out what sin is.

Paul's perception that the law of sin dwells in his members arises from his diplomatic struggle to accommodate ceremonial laws in the Christian community. Paul wanted to unite two communities together, but with the result that he himself was brought into danger.

The question is: 'Is Segal's thesis tenable?' The answer is 'no' for several reasons. In the first place Segal (1986:362) is misreading the identity of Paul's audience. The text does not support his move from a Gentile audience to a Jewish Christian audience either (see 1:5-7, 13; 11:13, 23, 28, 31; 15:15f). The question of Paul's audience will be dealt with in more detail in the next chapter. Suffice it to say at this point that it is clear that Paul is addressing only a Gentile Christian audience throughout the letter (cf e g, 1:5-7, 13; 11:13, 23, 28 and 31). Secondly, as evidence that Paul did change his observance of *Torah*, Segal draws on I Corinthians 9:20-22, 'to the Jews I became as a Jew...to those outside the law I became as one outside the law...to the weak I became weak...I have become all things to all men, that I might by all means save some.' Segal (1986:364) maintains that the context of Paul's statement is crucial for understanding his referents. Paul is not just discussing *Torah* in general or how to honour local customs while missionizing. He is discussing the issue of the 'weak' and the 'strong', technical terms for parties in the controversy about things sacrificed to idols, the same issue that Paul takes up again in Romans.

A question that arises here is, why Segal draws on the Corinthian passage to support his contention. Does this mean that what counted for the Corinthian congregation must necessarily count for the Roman households as well? If so, where do we ascertain this in Romans 7? And if not in Romans 7, at least, then, in the wider context of Romans 7, that is, Romans 5, 6 and 8? But we do not.

Paul undeniably accommodated himself to his audience. But does this have to mean that when he became a Jew to the Jews and observed their ceremonial laws, the law deceived him and caused him to sin (Segal 1986:372)? Hardly! But if so,

where do we find this in Romans 7? Or is that perhaps the sum total of the *ἐπιθυμία* of 7:8? That is highly unlikely because words derive their meaning in context and unless the context of Romans 7:8 calls for *ἐπιθυμία* to be understood as the Jewish ‘dietary laws,’ there is no justification for it. In the absence of a stated object in Romans 7:7-11 we have no choice, then, but to see all kinds and objects of wrong desire included here in principle and not merely a specific item or items⁸ (cf Ziesler 1986:46; Moo 1986:123). Segal, therefore, has no warrant to carry the Jewish ‘dietary laws’ into Romans 7.

If, as Segal maintains, Paul had wanted his Roman audience to understand *ἐπιθυμία* in 7:8 as the Jewish ‘dietary law,’ and Romans 7:9 as reflecting Paul’s personal experience after giving up serious allegiance to the ceremonial *Torah* with a return to it afterwards again, Paul certainly does not say so in Romans 7. Contrary to Segal’s view (1986:372), it should be noted that nowhere does Paul say that it was the *law*, ceremonial or not, that deceived him, but *sin* taking ‘occasion by the commandment’ that deceived him (see 7:8-11).

Segal does not leave the Jewish ‘dietary laws’ at verse 9, but carries them into 7:17, 23b and 25, too. In respect of 7:17, he says that it may be an admission by Paul to his listeners that he did not mean to recant his position on law and did not at first foresee that the effects of his compromise might be tragic for him (7:15) though obviously he sees no need to feel guilty. At the same time he reiterates that the *Torah* is good and that he enjoyed fulfilling it and adds that Christ had saved him from observing those laws after he had died and was reborn in Christ. He represents a new struggle: ‘For I delight in the law of God in my inmost self but I see in my members another law at war with the law of my mind and making me captive to the law of sin which dwells in my members’ (7:23b). Though the law is holy and good, the ceremonial laws, which are literally and metaphorically the laws of his members, have brought him under sin’s sway (Segal 1986:373).

Segal's thesis no doubt presents serious difficulties. For if we read the Jewish ceremonial law into Romans 7:9, as Segal does, how would we accommodate this in the wider context of Romans 7, that is Romans 5, 6 and 8? How would we bring it in line with Romans 5:13, 20; 6:14-15 and 8:2-4? Can we deny that these passages be read likewise? The law in these passages refers unquestionably to moral law. A reading such as what Segal proposes for Romans 7:9 'for I was alive without the Jewish "dietary law" once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died' cannot be accommodated.

This being so what are we to do with Romans 7:9? How are we to see this text? Suffice to say at this juncture that contrary to Segal's (1986:363) denial that this text can refer to prelapsarian times, it is the only point of view that can do justice to this verse (see Watson 1973:28; Cranfield 1975:351; Dunn 1988:401; Garlington 1990:207-208). For, clearly, only in the case of Adam is it possible to make such a clear distinction between a 'before' and an 'after' of the law: before the commandment came, it was life; after the commandment, sin and death. And a reversal of the situation to the former again (7:4), after which to be not under law, but under grace (6:14) is not dictated or influenced by the Jewish dietary law.

In the light of the above, what conclusions can be drawn in respect of Segal's interpretation of Romans 7? Segal correctly says that Romans 7 does not describe a psychoanalytic predicament. The question of whether an existential predicament is involved, or not, will become clear when we deal with the rhetoric of Romans 7. But he is wrong when he says that it is the 'apology of a reasonable man who formulated a radical solution to the problem of food laws in Christianity,' but who was willing to compromise when his solution was not accepted by the more conservative members of the Christian community. Admittedly, Paul was a man who, for the sake of winning people for Christ, would compromise (1 Cor 9:20-22), but he is not that man in Romans 7.

But if this is so, to what are we to ascribe Segal's failure then? First, he failed to correctly identify Paul's audience. If he had not failed here he would surely have arrived at a different conclusion. Secondly, he took the 'dietary laws' of Judaism as a premise in his approach to Romans 7 and thereby read his own understanding into it (see Deist & Burden 1986:37-41). Finally, he failed to give due consideration to the wider context of Romans 7, that is, Romans 5, 6 and 8.

Admittedly, Segal does touch on Romans 5, 6 and 8, but only cursorily: once with respect to Gentile Christians in Rome (1986:362), once with respect to Jewish Christians (1986:364) and once with respect to Paul (1986:371). For the rest he merely rushes on. Had Segal read Romans 7 against its wider context, he would have realised that just as the 'dietary laws' cannot be read into any of the verses in Romans 5, 6 and 8 which mention the law, this can also not be done in Romans 7 because Paul is speaking of the same law in Romans 5, 6 and 8 that he speaks of in Romans 7. Segal would thus have been forced to re-evaluate his thesis.

For against the background of Romans 5, 6 and 8, what transpires in Romans 7, to my mind, clearly is not a problem to do with the Jewish 'dietary laws' but a polemic as a result of a tendency among Gentile Christians who wished to side with Judaism and thereby return to the law (cf Brown 1988:59). A return which Paul, then, also wanted to counter by (a) identifying with his audience (cf Vorster 1992:99) and (b) redefining their position with reference to the law (cf 7:1, 4, 6a-b, 6d; 8-11; 14-25). We shall show the reason for this when dealing with Paul's purpose with the letter and the rhetorical function of Romans 7.

In respect of the Law and Gospel approach, as an interpretation of Romans 7, I have shown (1) that Segal believes that Paul's address is directed to a mixed audience, but beginning with Romans 7 he primarily addresses Jewish Christians, (2) that Segal proposes that the problem in Romans 7 relates to the Jewish 'dietary laws' in Paul's post-conversion period and (3) that Romans 7 does not

describe a psychoanalytic nor existential predicament, but is the apology of a reasonable man who formulated a radical solution to the problem of the ‘food laws’ in Christianity. But that he was nevertheless willing to compromise when his solution was not accepted by the more conservative members of the Christian community.

Segal’s thesis is not tenable because (1) he incorrectly identifies Paul’s audience, (2) takes as his premise the Jewish ‘dietary laws’ which he reads into Romans 7 to arrive at an understanding thereof, and (3) neglects the wider context of Romans 7, namely, Romans 5, 6 and 8, which, if he did not, would have brought him to a different conclusion to the one which he proffers for an understanding of Romans 7. I have also said that what transpires in Romans 7, to my mind, does not relate to a problem with the Jewish ‘dietary laws’ in any way, but is a contention by Paul against a return to the Law by Gentile Christians (cf again Brown 1988:59).

We shall attend to this when we deal with Paul’s purpose with the letter, and the rhetorical function of Romans 7 within the context of Romans 5 to 8 *per se*. Next we shall consider two other approaches to understanding Romans 7, under the heading: ‘Israel’s history personified.’

2.3 Israel’s history personified

Let us consider Karlberg and Moo’s theses (1986). Karlberg’s (1986:68-69, 73) thesis, basically, is that the *εγώ* of Romans 7:7-13 is a personification of the ‘old man’ man in Romans 6:6, describing Israel corporately under law, and that of 7:14-25, Paul’s experience as a Christian. Moo (1986:73, 123), in turn, contends that the *εγώ* in 7:7-12 represents Israel’s encounter with the law at Sinai and in 7:14-25 Israel’s subsequent struggle under the law. According to Moo (1986:123), the first person style strongly implies some degree of autobiographical reference also. As both these scholars locate Israel in this second part of Romans,

notwithstanding the fact that they part ways on 7:14-25, we will deal with them concurrently.

Karlberg observes that Paul's teaching on the law is highly complex. In recent years, he says, a vast amount of material has been produced to unravel the various strands of thought in Paul's writings concerning the nature and function of God's law (1986:65). The problem facing us, he finds, is of understanding the positive and negative statements about the law, statements that appear to be mutually exclusive and contradictory. With the arrival of the Kingdom of God, the semi-eschatological fulfilment of the Old Testament messianic hope having come in the person of Jesus, there is both a continuity and a discontinuity between the two covenantal transactions: the old mediated through Moses and the new mediated through Christ.

Contrary to much classical Protestant interpretation, the prominent theme of justification in the letter to the Romans and in Paul's writings as a whole is expounded primarily in terms of the history of redemption rather than of the application of redemption to the individual. With regard to the exegesis of Romans 7, Karlberg (1986:73) contends that it is essential to give adequate attention to the redemptive-historical structure of Paul's theology of the law. The doctrine of Christ's reconciliation as set forth in Romans 5 through to Romans 7, as elsewhere in Paul, is inextricably bound up with the doctrine of justification by faith, but with the emphasis unmistakably on reconciliation. For Karlberg (1986:73), Romans 7:1-6 serves as support for Paul's thesis in respect of 7:7-13 while 7:14-25 depicts the post-conversion experience of the apostle himself as the representative of every believer.

Moo (1986), in turn, proposes that the close relationship between sin and the law, a recurring theme in Romans 1-4 (cf 3:19, 4:15; cf also 5:20), is given clearest expression in 7:1-6. In language reminiscent of the discussion of sin in Romans 6, the law is sketched as a power from whose lordship believers find

release in Christ (vv 4, 6) and as an instrument in the arousing of sinful passion which leads to death (v 5). No wonder, then, says Moo (1986:122), that Paul feels it necessary to defend the Law from the charge that it is sin, offering an explanation of the relationship between sin and the law which exonerates the latter.

While the general intent in Romans 7:7-12 is clear, according to Moo, this is not so with regard to whose experience is represented in the narrative. The problem is the use of the first person singular *εγώ* in the passage. Moo's (1986:129) eventual conclusion is that Romans 7:7-12 employs a vivid narrative style to give a theological interpretation of Israel's encounter with the law at Sinai.

Both Moo and Karlberg run aground in their arguments. I shall only deal with their observations regarding Paul's audience and the *εγώ* of Romans 7:7-25 because of the crucial role these play in a correct understanding of the rhetorical function of Romans 7 within the context of Romans 5-8.

2.3.1 Paul's audience

As a lengthy discussion of Paul's audience follows in chapter 2, I shall only comment here on Paul's audience with reference to Moo and Karlberg's theses. In regard to Paul's audience, Moo only says that the temporal limitation of the *Torah* is a key element in Paul's theology, a lynchpin in his conception of redemptive history and a critical point in his polemic with Judaism. In addition, it is far too basic and significant a belief for Paul to have contradicted it without explanation in one of his most important discussions of the law (Moo 1986:124).

Not only that but also that Paul, while agreeing with Judaism that the law had a positive lifesecuring purpose (*εἰς ζωήν*; cf 7:10), he emphatically denies that this was its effect. But who are the addressees? Before whom is Paul defending the law from the charge that it is sin, and why? On the basis of Moo's statements, it

would appear that he identifies a Jewish audience (cf also Moo 1986:131 [end note 11]). But this is not conclusive, however, for a defence, such as Moo claims Paul is doing, might serve as well before a Gentile Christian audience as before a Jewish one (cf Fraikin 1986:98).

But whatever point of view Moo holds in respect of Paul's audience, his position is nonetheless precarious. For should Moo hold that Paul's address is directed to Jewish Christians, he has missed identifying Paul's audience correctly (cf 1:5-7, 13; 11:13). As a result, Moo has also missed Paul's purpose in the letter as well as the function of Romans 7 in that purpose. If, on the other hand, Moo believes that Paul is writing to a Gentile Christian audience, which appears less likely, he has correctly identified Paul's audience but because of his thesis in respect of who the $\epsilon\gamma\omega$ is, has still missed Paul's aim in the letter (1:11-13; 15:24), together with the related role of Romans 7. That this is so will become clear when we deal with Moo's thesis in respect of the $\epsilon\gamma\omega$ of 7:7-25. We now turn to Karlberg's observation in respect of Paul's audience.

Whilst Moo's presentation of Paul's audience, to my mind, is vague, Karlberg's is not. Although it is true, Karlberg (1986:68) says, that the letter to the Romans embodies the fullest exposition of the Gospel to the Gentiles, it is also true, but often overlooked, that Paul presents the greater part of his exposition with more immediate reference to Jewish believers, that is, those who are the spiritual as well as the natural descendants of Abraham. For this Karlberg directs our attention to Romans 2:17, particularly to Romans 3:19, 29, and 4:1ff. The Gospel, Karlberg (1986:68) contends, has primary reference to the Jews and only secondary reference to the Gentiles who had been grafted into the olive tree (Rm 11). Together spiritual Jews and Gentiles comprise the 'New Israel,' the elect of God.

From this, then, flows the question that faces the apostle in Romans 6 and 7, that is, whether we, the elect Israel in particular and the elect of God more generally,

shall continue in sin in order that grace may abound. Paul has no choice but to answer ‘no.’ In Romans 6 and 7, and again in Romans 9-11, Karlberg (1986:68) claims, the apostle pleads with national Israel to find her true spiritual identity as the people of God by way of individual baptism into Christ.

But can Karlberg’s thesis hold? If not, why? The answer is that it cannot hold simply because Karlberg has failed to follow the indicators from 1:5-7 and 13 with regard to the character of Paul’s audience. Importantly while it is true that the Jews appear in a number of places in the letter, as Karlberg also rightly shows (Rm 2:17; 3:19, 29; 4:1ff), it is also true that it does not follow that whenever a reference is made to Jews in the letter, that they are the addressees (cf again Fraikin 1986:98). This Karlberg has evidently overlooked.

Furthermore if Karlberg (1986:68) wished his argument to hold, namely, that the epistle to the Romans embodies the fullest exposition to the Gentiles, but that Paul presents the greater part of his exposition with more immediate reference to the Jewish believers, he should have shown where this takes place. But this he does not do. If Karlberg had undertaken such an exercise he would, I believe, have been forced to review his thesis, finding that a change of audience such as he suggests is not supported by the text (cf 1:5-7, 13; 11:13; cf also Fraikin 1986:94). We shall show this clearly when we deal with Paul’s audience in greater detail. For now we turn our attention to Moo’s and Karlberg’s observations in respect of the *έγώ* of Romans 7:7-25.

*2.3.2 The *έγώ* of Romans 7:7-25*

In respect of the use of the *έγώ* in 7:7-12, Moo (1986) lists four general approaches, namely, the *έγώ* refers (1) to Paul, who describes his own experience with the law as exemplary, (2) to Adam or to mankind in Adam, the Genesis narrative being viewed as paradigmatic, (3) to Israel in its encounter with the law

at Sinai and (4) to man in general, or to the Jewish people in general, the narrative style being treated as an idealised picture of human experience.

Despite the unpopularity of the third view and the ease with which it is dismissed, Moo (1986:122-123) says that he nevertheless elects that Paul's language applies to Israel in its encounter with the law at Sinai. Notwithstanding this Moo (1986:122-123) does concede that the first person style also strongly implies some autobiographical reference.

Consequent to his stand on the Έγώ of Romans 7:7-12, Moo believes that the Έγώ of 7:13-25, then, depicts Israel's subsequent struggle under the law. Paul, he says, writes here with more subjectivity because the struggle is one he has, to some extent, personally experienced. Its ability to explain the perplexing combination of objective narrative and subjective confession in Romans 7, Moo (1986:129) says, is a further strength of the view he had presented. We now turn to Karlberg's presentation of the Έγώ of 7:7-25.

Karlberg (1986:68) maintains that the key to the interpretation of Romans 7, is found in two expressions in Romans 6; the 'old man' (6:6) and 'under law' (6:14). In the Old Man/New Man contrast the former is Paul's metaphor for Israel under law. Stated more precisely, the Old Man is fallen humanity represented by Israel under law whereas the New Man is redeemed humanity. Based on this Karlberg (1986:68) claims that the 'I' of 7:7-13 is the Old Man of Romans 6:6 personified and the Old Man of Romans 6:6 is a metaphor for Israel under the law. In respect of the 'I' of 7:14-25, Karlberg (1986:73) says that Paul changes his subject in Romans 7 from Israel personified (7:7-13) to his personal experience as representative of every believer.

At this point we must stop to ask whether either of these interpretations is tenable? If the answer is 'yes,' which one? And to what extent? And if not, why? My answer to these questions is: In respect of Moo's (1986:129) thesis that the

'I' of 7:7-12 is a rhetorical device, Moo is correct (cf also Watson 1973), but he is wrong in saying that in 7:7-12 it portrays Israel's encounter with the law at Sinai, and in 7:14-25 Israel's continuing struggle under the law. In respect of Karlberg's (1986:68) thesis that the 'I' in 7:7-13 is a personification of the Old Man in Romans 6:6, I contend that he is wrong.

Karlberg's (1986:73) thesis that the 'I' in 7:14-25 depicts Paul's personal experience as representative of every believer needs modification. The identity of the *έγώ* and its function as a rhetorical device will be covered when dealing with the rhetorical function of Romans 7 within the context of Romans 5-8 *per se* in chapter 4.

But on what basis do I contend that Moo and Karlberg's theses are not tenable? On the basis that Paul is writing to a Gentile Christian audience with whom he wants to identify by a redefinition of the Gentile Christian's position with reference to the law (cf Vorster 1992:99), in terms of preventing a return to the law by Gentile Christians (cf Brown 1988:59). Neither Moo nor Karlberg make any allowance for this. Moo ties the 'I' of 7:7-25 to Israel, Karlberg, in turn, the 'I' of 7:7-13 to the Old Man of Romans 6:6 and the 'I' of 7:14-25 to Paul as the experience of every believer. Nowhere in 7:7-25 in respect of both Moo and Karlberg, is Paul's audience explicit. In 7:14-25 Karlberg's 'I' is sure to include Gentile Christians, but the question of Paul identifying with his Gentile Christian audience (cf Vorster 1991a:159; 1991b:31-33; 1992:99-100) and redefining their position with reference to the law in terms of the Gospel (7:4, 6a-b, 6d) is not covered.

If this is so, to what, then, are we to ascribe Moo's and Karlberg's failure? Whilst I cannot clearly indict Moo of wrongly identifying Paul's audience, I can do so in respect of Karlberg (1986:68). Notwithstanding this, however, it is evident that in their respective interpretations of Romans 7 both have failed to take into account the wider context of Romans 7, that is, Romans 5, 6 and 8.⁹ Had Moo

and Karlberg taken their departure from Romans 1:5-7, 13, accepted simply that Paul addresses a Gentile Christian audience and taken cognizance of what Paul says in Romans 5, 6 and 8, they were bound to have realised that the *έγώ* of Romans 7:7-25 will not fit the role in which they cast it (cf Watson 1973:28). Consequently they were sure, in turn, to have arrived at a different proposal for an understanding of Romans 7.

In conclusion, then, whilst both Moo and Karlberg make some apt observations in the preambles to their arguments, I would confine myself only to their observations in respect of Paul's audience and the 'I' of Romans 7:7-25. These are important for a correct understanding of the rhetorical function of Romans 7 within the context of Romans 5-8.

Nowhere does Moo (1986) explicitly identify the nature of Paul's audience but his statements incline more towards a Jewish audience than otherwise. Karlberg posits that Paul addresses Jewish Christians. With regard to the *έγώ* of Romans 7, Moo asserts that the *έγώ* of 7:7-12 depicts Israel's encounter with the law at Sinai, and in 7:13-25 Israel's subsequent struggle under the law. For Karlberg, in turn, the *έγώ* of 7:7-13 is a personification of the 'old man' in Romans 6:6, and the *έγώ* of 7:14-25, Paul's personal experience as representative of every believer.

I have also shown that I find neither Moo, nor Karlberg's theses tenable for an understanding of Romans 7. I trust, however, that the approach I am about to offer for understanding the rhetorical function of Romans 7 within the context of Romans 5-8 will help to put the matter right. Let us now establish the nature of Paul's audience in Rome and then the purpose of the letter.

Endnotes

1. Kraemer's (1989:36-37) observation that 'I perceive Judaism in this time to have been extremely varied and diverse,' substantiates this.
2. In this respect Dunn's (1988:70) observation that the 'evil against which the divine wrath is initially directed is described in the most general and all embracing terms: against all disregard or contempt for God and for the rights of our fellow beings,' is also pertinent.
3. With regard to this see 'Within the walls of a great rambling house, filled with young servants over whom the master ruled supreme, fidelity to one's wife remained a personal option. Despite harsh laws punishing married women for adultery, infidelity by their husbands incurred no legal punishment and very little approbation (Brown 1988:23).' Further too: 'Nature itself develops a young man's desire. If these desires break out in such a way that they disrupt no one's life and undermine no household [by adultery], they are generally regarded as unproblematic: we tolerate them (Brown 1988:28).'
4. See, for example, Romans 5:6-8: 'at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly.' Romans 7:4: 'you also died to the law through the body of Christ' (NIV). Confer also Romans 5:13 with Romans 7:8-11; Romans 6:4c with Romans 7:6c; Romans 6:8 with Romans 7:4, and Romans 6:11 with Romans 7:4c).
5. Dunn (1988:ix) has also not missed this, saying that it was precisely Paul's theological conviction regarding the eschatological fulfilment of the purpose of God in Christ for Gentile as well as Jew which provided Paul's motivation as a missionary.
6. Sanders (1977:443), in turn, says that this chapter describes rather the pre-Christian or non-Christian life as seen from the perspective of faith. It may be observed on the basis of Philippians 3 that Paul did not, while 'under the law,' perceive himself to have a 'plight' from which he needed salvation.
7. Sanders (1983:3) supports this, saying that the law, it would appear from Paul's own testimony, had been his life before God revealed his son to him (Phil 3:4-6; Gal 1:13-15).
8. Watson (1986) and Gundry (1980), for their part, ascribe the connotation 'sexual lust' to ἐμθύμia in Romans 7:8.
9. Admittedly, Moo (1986:127) does refer to certain texts from the wider context of Romans 7, namely Romans 5:12, 13-14, 15, 17, 18, 20; 6:14. The only verses he comments on though are Romans 5:12, 13, 14 and 20. In respect of verse 12 he says very little save that verses 13 and 14 are apparently intended to substantiate or explain something in verse 12 (1986:127).

CHAPTER 2

PAUL'S AUDIENCE IN ROME

1 INTRODUCTION

For many today the correct identity of Paul's audience in Rome is still a question of great uncertainty: 'Is it a Jewish Christian audience, a Gentile Christian audience, a combination of both?' For this reason, the importance of a correct identification of Paul's audience for understanding Romans 7 cannot be overestimated (cf Martin 1971:311-313). This is so because of its inseparable link with the rhetorical function of Romans 7 within the context of Romans 5-8, and of the whole. In approaching the letter to the Romans we are faced with a number of questions.

If we were to read the letter on the assumption that Paul's audience were Jewish Christians, what aspects of Romans 7 would make an understanding thereof difficult? Or is it perhaps precisely that reading the letter addressed to Jewish Christians would make understanding it easy? But how, then, are we to account for the expounding of the Jewish marriage law in Romans 7:2-3 following on the question in Romans 7:1? Surely, in writing to a Jewish Christian audience, such an explanation would be entirely unnecessary? Moreover, if Paul's address was directed to a Jewish Christian audience, there should surely be something in Romans 7 that can be connected to such an audience? But we do not find this.

Further still, if we assume that Paul is addressing a Jewish Christian audience, how are we to explain what he says in the *exordium* of his letter, namely, 'we have received apostleship, for obedience to the faith among all the Έθνη, for his name: Among whom you are also' (1:5-6). And, then, also 'that I may have some

fruit among you also, even as among the other ἔθνη' (1:13; cf also 9:3; 10:1-3; 11:13, 23, 28, 31; 15:15-16). And further, why in the *peroratio* of his letter does Paul once again connect his apostleship to the Gentiles (cf 15:15-20)? For these passages clearly depict Paul's audience in Rome as Gentile Christians. Admittedly Romans 7:1 does for a moment make it tempting to see Paul's audience in Rome as Jewish Christians and what follows in the analogy, then, as just by way of a reminder. But how are we to get past the passages referred to when, notwithstanding the other problems raised above, we have no record of a change of audience anywhere in the letter?

Presuming though that we read the letter on the assumption that Paul's audience was composed of both Jews and Gentiles (Karlberg 1986:68; Segal 1986:362), what then? Would this make understanding it easier? If we say 'yes,' by what avenue, then, are we to arrive at such a conclusion? Where in Romans 7 are we to divide what is said between the two? Would we not, then, be faced with even greater problems than those facing us should we read the letter on the assumption that Paul's Roman audience was composed of Jewish Christians? I hardly think it otherwise.

Again presuming though that we assume that Paul's address in Romans 7 is directed to a Gentile Christian audience (Dunn 1988; Pelser 1989; and others) how, then, are they to understand the question of the law, for example: 'I speak to them that know the law'? (Rm 7:1). How would this fit our assumption?

Then, too, on what kind of audience would we be able to argue that Romans 5-8 forms a unity? A Jewish Christian or a combined audience? Or would a Gentile Christian audience not perhaps give us a stronger case? And what about a visualised Gentile Christian audience? Would this in the final analysis not be our best option? And, then, presuming we were to choose the latter option,

does it lend itself to reconciliation with Paul's understanding of himself as apostle to the Gentiles? We need to find an answer to these questions.

For my part, in the introduction to this work and my argument against Segal (1986) and Karlberg (1986), I have maintained that Paul's audience in Rome was a Gentile Christian audience. I have done, so, however, without specifying that I particularly hold the view that Paul's audience in Rome was an *envisioned Gentile Christian audience* (cf Fraikin 1986:95; Vorster 1989:24, 27; Vorster 1990:122). But before qualifying this point of view, let us briefly turn our attention to a number of other arguments in respect of Paul's audience in Rome. We commence by posing the question once again: What was the nature of Paul's audience in Rome: Jewish Christian, Gentile Christian, or a combination of both? Or was it a visualised (implied) Gentile Christian audience?

2 THE CHARACTER OF THE CHURCH AT ROME

2.1 Preamble

According to Denney (1974:561-567), the traditional opinion held that the church in Rome was Gentile-Christian in character. The idea that it was Jewish Christian was apparently first broached by Koppe in 1824 (Denney 1974:561). This belief gained currency through Baur and commanded wide assent among critics for a generation after his essay (1836) (Denney 1974:561). Throughout a strong protest in favour of the traditional approach was maintained, but it was not until Weizsäcker (1875) that a conclusive response was brought out in its favour, claiming that the great majority of the church must have been of Gentile-Christian character, with the provision though that there was no doubt about the presence of a Jewish Christian minority (Denney 1974:561). Beyschlag, in turn, held that the church consisted mainly of proselytes. This

assumption, then, would explain why Paul addresses the readers as if they were Gentiles, on the one hand and argues with them as Jews, on the other (Denney 1974:561).

According to Denney (1974:561), Schürer still made an attempt with respect to the character of the church at Rome by holding that the church was both non-Jewish and non-Pauline. The Hellenistic Jews of the diaspora would make Christians comparatively free in their relations to the ceremonial law, but with insufficient comprehension of the Pauline freedom, in principle, from law in every sense. It is an audience like this Paul is trying to elevate to his own standpoint. Holtzmann, on the other hand, gave up trying to realise the character of the church at Rome, saying that Paul had never been to Rome, did not really know the situation there, and had no idea of the audience (Denney 1974:561). In Paul's explanation of the reason for writing to them, he thinks of them as Gentiles. But when their previous culture and spiritual history, sympathies, antipathies and mode of responding to the Gospel generally are in question, then, they are Jews.¹

Denney (1974) does not tell us how Koppe, Beyschlag, Baur, Schürer and Holtzmann arrived at their conclusions. But the question that inevitably presents itself is where have they missed the point? Ignoring the text (Rm 1:5-7, 13 etc) and the fact that in a rhetorical situation the audience is a construction of the speaker (Fraikin 1986:95; Vorster 1989:24, 27; Vorster 1990:122), on the basis of the historical situation alone we would at least expect them to arrive at the same conclusion as Bartisch (1972:331), Tenny (1973:303), Kümmel (1975:309), Griffith Thomas (1976:17), Dunn (1988:liii), Pelser (1989:43), and Weizsäcker (Denney 1974:561), namely, that Paul's audience in Rome was mainly Gentile Christian, with a minority of Jewish origin. But this they did not do and as Denney (1974) has not indicated how these scholars arrived at their conclusions we can only speculate. Now let us turn our attention to a number

of arguments that particularly contend that Paul's audience in Rome were Jewish Christians.

2.2 Paul's audience in Rome were Jewish Christians

2.2.1 Watson (1986) and Fahy (1959)

Koppe, Beyschlag, Baur, Schürer and Holtzmann (Denney 1974:561) are not the only ones who are amiss on Paul's audience though. Watson (1986) and Fahy (1959) and others (e.g. Segal 1986; Karlberg 1986) are still in a similar situation. Both Watson and Fahy hold that Paul wrote to Jewish Christians, but how they arrive at this conclusion is novel. Watson bases his argument on Romans 1:5f and 1:13-15. He maintains that Romans 1:5f is a crucial passage for determining whether or not the primary addressees of Romans were Jewish Christians (1986:103). Watson interprets Romans 1:5 'for obedience to faith among all the nations, for his name: among whom you are also the called of Jesus Christ,' to mean that Paul is addressing Jewish Christians who are residing among Gentiles (so Fahy 1959:183).² And in respect of Romans 1:13-15:

Paul expresses his desire to undertake a mission to the Gentiles in Rome. He wishes to come to Rome 'so that I may reap some fruit among you just as among the rest of the Gentiles' (1:13; cf 1:15). In 1:13 and 1:15, καὶ ἐν ὑμῖν and καὶ ὑμῖν are used somewhat loosely: Paul does not mean that his readers are themselves to be the objects of his missionary activity (cf 1:8), but is simply addressing them as inhabitants of Rome.

In respect of 1:5f, such a reading, however, is not valid, for ἐν οἷς τοτε καὶ ὑμεῖς (1:6) belongs to Εθνη, the meaning of which, namely, 'gentiles' and not 'nations' is to be taken by Paul's conception of his own vocation (see 11:13; 15:15-16; Gl 1:16; 2:8; cf Denney 1974:587; Kümmel 1975:305). Clearly, then, the designation Εθνη here means Gentiles as opposed to Israel and therefore

not nations generally. It can thus only refer to Gentiles (cf Denney 1974:562; Fraikin 1986:94; Dunn 1988:16).³ In respect of 1:13-15, in turn, we have just shown the meaning of έθνη. A proper reading of καὶ ἐν ὑμῖν (v 13) and καὶ ὑμῖν (v 15) puts a corrective on Watson's interpretation of 1:13-15 for these words are particular to the έθνη and can therefore only refer to them.

What transpires here clearly is that Paul is expressing the wish to gain 'some fruit' among the Romans just as he had among the other Gentile peoples. The same applies to Romans 15:15-24 (Kümmel 1975:309). This no doubt places the Christians in Rome on the same level as the rest of the έθνη (cf Denney 1974:562; cf also Vincent 1972:666; Tenney 1973:303).⁴ The word καρπός (fruit) denotes the result of labour. This may, then, either mean new converts or the furtherance of the Gentile Christians in their new life (cf 1:11). The phrase 'as also among the remaining Gentiles' (v 13c) therefore cannot be read as 'Jews among the Gentiles.'⁵

Both Watson (1986:94-98) and Fahy (1959:182) claim that there were two congregations in Rome at the time when Paul wrote the letter: a Jewish Christian assembly and a Gentile Christian one. Watson and Fahy differ though on how these congregations came into being. Watson (1986:91-93) does not attempt to say how the Jewish Christian congregation came about save that it was established in Rome from a very early period, probably as far back as Claudius's reign. The Gentile Christian congregation was most probably founded by Paul's converts and fellow-workers (1986:104; cf also Stifler 1960:11-12). Fahy (1959:182), in turn, claims that it is generally admitted that Mark's gospel was written for the Gentile Christians whom Peter had converted. And it is most likely that there was a second Christian community, too, probably composed exclusively of Jews, likewise converted by Peter and his assistants.

Watson's and Fahy's arguments do not hold, however, for two main reasons. (1) Both theories are as yet unproven despite the fact that Paul did have friends in Rome (Robertson 1931:320; Tenney 1973:303), even some who had been his co-workers (16:3-16). Though our evidence is very circumstantial (Tolbert 1976:396), if we seek to establish Paul's audience from a historical point of view, which is what I believe, Watson and Fahy, are trying to do, it is best to accord with the view that the Gentile Christian community had first formed part of a community which was Jewish Christian and which as a result of Claudius's expulsion of the Jews was then left to become predominantly Gentile Christian (Dunn 1988:Iii; cf Pelser 1989:42). (2) Watson's and Fahy's theses that there were two congregations in Rome and that Paul is writing to one of them is negated by Romans 1:7 which clearly reads: 'to *all* that be in Rome' (italics mine).

Supposing that Watson is correct that the Roman Gentile Christians were converts and fellow-workers of Paul, a question that would naturally arise is why Paul did not merely write to these converts and fellow-workers (as he did in the case of Timothy and Philemon) to pave the way for a visit to Rome and for further assistance. And furthermore, why such a lengthy treatise to them when they would already be conversant with his teaching and the grace afforded to him for the Gentiles? Watson's argument does not tally.

Watson (1986:104) further attempts to strengthen his argument by referring to 15:20, namely, 'not to build on another man's foundation.' But, as Vorster (1991:184-188) correctly observes, Paul's 'non-interference policy' only poses a problem when individual statements are taken out of the immediate and the wider context. This pertains to Romans 15:20. A problem of discrepancy in the letter to the Romans is only valid when 15:20 is taken out of its immediate and 'apostolate' context and rigoristically interpreted as a missionary strategy.

Vorster (1991:187) notes that Romans 15:19b-20 shows the way in which Paul's role had been executed in the past from Jerusalem to Illyricum. This role is depicted in 15:16 as to the advantage of the Gentiles. These same benefits, however, have not yet been experienced by the Gentiles in Rome. The past still sets the scene in 15:19b-21. However, concurrent with the temporal delineation is a spatial demarcation. Paul's role in the past coincided with the regions between Jerusalem and Illyricum. As far as both time and space are concerned, Paul's audience was excluded from this part or fragment of Paul's role (cf 15:20a).

Paul aspired to proclaim the Gospel where the name of Christ was not known. Although the audience was not situated in the regions between Jerusalem and Illyricum, they would also have been excluded from Paul's role in the past because the name of Christ was known among them. This part of Paul's role, confined to a specific time and space which excluded the implied audience, seems to clarify why Paul was as yet unable to visit them.

By distinctively distinguishing between the past and the present, Paul indicates that a new period has begun, which will have Rome as its point of departure. A new spatio-temporal division has therefore been made, which legitimises the adaptation of old policies and the creation of new ones. In the reality Paul thus creates for his audience, they and he stand on the brink of a new era corresponding to a new geographical area (Vorster 1991a:167-168; 1991b:188). This new era and new geographical area do not have the Jews as target, however, but the Gentile Christians in Rome and beyond. Whilst Paul undoubtedly would preach the Gospel to Jews at any of the places he might light upon (1:16) should the occasion arise, they are not his main objective (cf 1:5-7, 11, 13; 15:16, 24). Watson's argument in respect of 15:20, then, will also not hold. From these observations we now turn our attention to some further

passages and arguments enlisted in support of the contention that Paul's audience in Rome was of a Jewish Christian character.

2.2.2 Further passages and arguments used to argue that Paul's audience in Rome was a Jewish Christian one

A number of other texts and arguments are used in support of the contention that Paul's audience in Rome were Jewish Christians, including Romans 3:9; 4:1; 7:1-6; 9-11; 13:1-7 and the arguments of the nature of the argumentation in the letter and the use of the Old Testament in the letter. Whilst these passages and arguments may not be the only ones that argue for a Jewish Christian audience, we will nevertheless confine ourselves to them.

We commence with Romans 3:9 and 4:1. According to Denney (1974:561) there are passages in which Paul includes himself with his audience in the first person plural. These are then taken as proof that Paul is addressing a Jewish Christian audience. Among these passages are Romans 3:9 as can be seen by προεχόμεθα and Romans 4:1 as in τὸν προπάτορα ἡμῶν. One wonders, however, whether a case can be made on the basis of προεχόμεθα for a Jewish Christian audience (Watson 1986:124-125) for προεχόμεθα comes at the end of a summing up of Paul's indictment of Jew and Gentile (1:18-3:8) and thus includes both (cf Dunn 1988:156; Vorster 1990:160). It is not tenable to take the first person plural as 'we Jews,' for this, as Dunn (1988:146) correctly observes, is to narrow the discussion back into the terms of 3:1, with either the speaker again imagined as 'the Jew,' but now speaking in the plural, or the speaker as Paul identifying himself with his own people (cf Stifler 1960:54; Denney 1974:563).

The first person forms in verses 5-8 precisely broaden the scope of the discussion beyond the more narrowly Jewish perspective; the immediately following first person plural (προηγιασόμεθα) maintains this broader

perspective since the ‘we’ (contra Alford 1968:340; Vine 1972:679; Denney 1974:563; Watson 1986:124-125) is set against ‘both Jews and Gentiles’ and is clearly not intended to be identified with either group as such (Dunn 1988:146). Stifler’s (1960:54) observation is also pertinent here, ‘Paul has both parties in view, both Jews and Gentiles.’

In the light of the argument in 1:18 to 3:8, I believe we may safely agree with Dunn (1988:147) that Dahl’s rendering, namely: ‘What then do we have in defence’ (cf also Stifler 1960:54: ‘Is there any refuge for man?’), with the reply, ‘None at all’ or ‘In no wise’ (Stifler 1960:54) is entirely in order. It is not a question of Jew or Gentile, but of humanity in its totality. The argument that Paul is addressing a Jewish Christian audience here with *προεχόμεθα*, then, also fails.

Turning to Romans 4:1, namely, to τὸν προπάτορα ἡμῶν, it is argued that Paul is addressing a Jewish Christian audience here. Whilst I have not come across an argument to this effect from any source except Denney (1974:563-564), although he also does not show where this argument derives from, it should nevertheless be said that a Jew speaking of Abraham as the ‘forefather’ of the Jewish nation cannot be taken as conclusive evidence that Paul is addressing Jewish Christians. Whilst not denying the possibility of this, in the letter to the Romans the weight of evidence bears against it. But if this is so, what, then, are we to make of Paul’s words ‘our forefather’?

Dunn (1988:199) has a problem that when Paul speaks of ‘our forefather,’ it is not entirely clear whether he was thinking in exclusively Jewish terms, having resumed his dialogue with the Jewish interlocutor of the earlier diatribe (2:1-3:8) or intended to include Gentiles as well, as the immediately preceding argument and the subsequent exposition of Genesis 15:6 would suggest. Dunn finds that such transitions in Paul’s thinking are fairly typical (cf Gl 3:10-14;

Rm 4:1-5), indicating the extent to which he both thought of himself as a Jew and still regarded the debate in which he was involved as intra-Jewish.

Whilst there is a temptation to include Paul's audience in the ήμῶν in verse 1 (cf 4:11, 16; 9:7) I do not think it proper. Following on the rhetoric from 3:1 we need not read any more into 4:1 than 'our forefather' referring categorically to the Jewish race as shown by κατὰ σάρκα. Including the Gentiles as children of Abraham comes later.⁶ Romans 4 forms part of a debate that Paul had started with an imaginary Jewish opponent as far back as Romans 2. And which, contra Cranfield (1975:227),⁷ transpires before a Gentile Christian audience (cf Fraikin 1986:95). The underlying question in the letter to the Romans is how is a person justified, 'by faith or...by works'? The issue is clear, namely, 'by faith.' As proof for this Abraham is brought forward as a test case (cf 4:2-5; Gn 15:6; Rm 4:10f; 4:13; 4:16f; Sanders 1983:33-34; Vorster 1991a:182).

The term 'our forefather' here, therefore, does not make the audience Jewish Christians. By τὸν προπάτορα ήμῶν Paul is simply connecting himself to his race and showing his imaginary Jewish opponent, in front of a Gentile Christian audience (cf again 1:1-5, 13ff), that their forefathers were not justified by works but by faith. Definite strands of the argument that Paul will later, then, also vigorously debate in Romans 7, namely, to steer his audience away from the law (cf again Brown 1988:59), are already clearly evident here (cf 4:1-5, 15ff). From these observations we now turn our attention to Romans 7:1-6.

Denney (1974:564-565) points out that those passages which speak either in the first or second person plural of the relation of the audience or of Paul and the audience alike to the law are not so simple. The most important of these is Romans 7:1-6. Fahy (1959:185) correctly observes that the law here refers specifically to the Mosaic Law. But, says he, the Gentiles could hardly have been expected to have known it. Notwithstanding that Robertson (1931), Alford

(1968), Cranfield (1975), Louw (1975), Sanders (1976) and Dunn (1988) all take *vopoc* in 7:1 to refer to the Mosaic law, none of them supports the view that Paul's readers in Rome were Jewish Christians. Whilst this question will receive fuller treatment when the rhetoric of Romans 7 receives attention, suffice it to say at this juncture that Paul's reference his audience's knowledge of the law here is a 'politeness strategy' (cf Dunn 1988:Iviii, 866; Vorster 1990:115-117) rather than a standard by which to determine the nature of his audience. Romans 7:1-6 cannot therefore serve as support for a contention that Paul's audience was composed of Jewish Christians.

Turning now to Romans 9-11, Fahy (1959:181) contends that these three chapters are devoted to the Jewish questions and prove that God was not unjust in excluding the Jews from his Kingdom. Reflecting on the way Stephen addressed his audience: 'stiffnecked race you are forever resisting the Holy Spirit' (Ac 7:51-53), Fahy says that Paul is very careful to avoid giving such offence to his audience. And while he mercilessly castigates the Gentiles for their immoral lives, he is quite apologetic and milder when speaking about the Jews (10:2-3) or when dealing with them directly (9:22-23). Fahy's argument will not hold, however, because it is precisely and unambiguously to the Gentiles that this section is addressed.

In 9:3 and 10:1 Paul speaks of the Jews, to wit, 'my brethren...my kinsmen according to the flesh' (9:3), and 'my heart's desire and my request to God is on behalf of them' (i e Israel; cf 10:1). In 11:1-2 we have another instance where Paul speaks in the third person, namely: 'I say then, hath God cast away his people? God forbid. For I am also an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham.' Paul clearly cites himself, and not his audience, as proof that God had not cast off his people, something unlikely had they also been Jewish Christians. Two further passages that oppose Fahy's thesis are Romans 11:13 and Romans 11:31. In respect of 11:13, 'For I speak to you Gentiles, in as much as I am the apostle

of the Gentiles,' it is evident that Paul is addressing the whole congregation as Gentiles (cf Denney 1974:562).

According to Kümmel (1975:309), in 11:13 Paul is writing to the Gentiles and in so doing he addresses his audience as Gentiles as distinct from the unbelieving Jews and in 9:3ff; 10:1f; 11:23, 28, 31, Paul speaks to non-Jews concerning his own people (see also Alford 1958:429). In respect of 11:31, Sanders (1983:194) tenably amplifies it to read 'by means of the mercy shown to you (the Gentiles) they, the Jews, will now receive mercy.' It should also be observed that Paul does not shrink from using the fate of the natural branches (the Jews) to warn his audience (the Gentiles), grafted into the tree contrary to nature, against contempt, pride and unbelief (Denney 1974:566-567). Paul is thus clearly speaking to Gentiles about Jews and not to Jews about Gentiles. In the light of plain scriptural testimony that Paul's audience in Rome was a Gentile Christian audience one can only wonder how Fahy overlooked this. Let us now turn to Romans 13:1-7.

According to Denney (1974:567), the argument put forward here (Rm 13:1-7) for a Jewish Christian audience is that the Jews were a rebellious and turbulent race and inherited theocratic ideas which brought them into conflict with paying tribute to Caesar (cf Dt 17:15; Mk 12:13-17). That the Jews did rebel against Roman authority on numerous occasions is true (Stambaugh & Balch 1986; Thiessen 1987), but this does not necessarily prove that Paul's audience were Jewish Christians. The reason for this statement is that Christianity in itself is an idealism which raises the question of God's kingdom in comparison with the kingdoms of this world (cf Denney 1974:567). This entailed that Christians themselves were inclined to be hostile toward society, believing in the near approach of the kingdom of Christ. Accordingly, then, they not only refused to have anything to do with pagan divinities but also to participate in the public life of their communities (Vogel 1983:101-102).

The Pauline authorship of this passage (13:1-7) has also been questioned (Munro 1990:161-165; cf also Dunn 1988:758), but this idea can be dispensed with and, contrary to Munro (1990:161) who proposes that 'Romans 13:1-7 is part of an overall redaction of the Pauline letters connected with the Pastoral Epistles,' these verses can be accepted as a continuation of the preceding exhortation (Dunn 1988:758). Dunn (1988:769, 705) is correct when he says that what stands out here is how a redefined people of God, no less than ethnic Israel, are to address the question of how they should relate to the power structures within which they still have to live in the present age.⁸

What faced the Christians now was not only the issue of their political status, but also what it meant in the reality of their daily existence, and that particularly in Rome, the very seat of imperial government (Dunn 1988:769; cf also Vogel 1983:101). Paul's opening words were merely the common-sense wisdom of the great multitude of the powerless living within the power structures of the corporate state. Small gatherings of Christians who lived in the imperial city, without political power, relying upon the benevolence of the authorities, who could be very arbitrary and unpredictable in their rulings in so far as minority ethnic or religious groups, needed to be prudent if they sought to avoid giving cause for offence (Dunn 1988:770).

Moxnes (1988) brings us to an even clearer understanding of Paul's exhortation in Romans 13:1-7. The exhortation in question, he indicates, is best understood against the social and cultural background of Paul's world related to the question of honour and shame in the Mediterranean societies of which patron-client relationship is still an important institution with its emphasis on honour. As far back as Homer, society was characterised by the quest for honour. This quest continued to play an important role in later Greek and Hellenistic periods as well as in Roman society. Paul was a Jew and a Roman

citizen living in the Graeco-Roman world and honour and shame were pivotal in forming Paul's understanding of this society and of the Christian community.

Paul's concern with relationship between Jews and non-Jews and the question of the people of God fits well within the concerns of an honour society. The early Christians found themselves within an honour society and had to define themselves in this context. This is most easily seen in relation to the Graeco-Roman society at large. In Romans Paul concerns himself with two areas of great importance in honour societies: power structures and gender roles (Moxnes 1988:65). Of these, however, only the former concern us at this point.

In Romans 13:1-7 Paul addresses the issue of the Christian's attitude to powers and authorities of Graeco-Roman society. Romans 13 presents us with a very useful description of a society in which honour is the most prominent value. Paul's address is best understood in terms of a patron-client relationship, which is a relationship between unequals, but with the quest for honour as the common bond (Moxnes 1988:65). In the public sphere, Christians found themselves in a stratified society with rulers and subordinates unified by a common quest for honour and praise. Paul thus makes a strong case that Christians should accept the obligations of their society. He recognises traditional societal values of 'good' and 'bad' as well as this mutually reinforcing system of honour and praise. His exhortation served to strengthen the integration of Christians into this society (Moxnes 1988:66).

Moxnes, I believe, is pertinent in so far as Romans 13:1-7 is concerned. What he says does not detract from what Dunn (1988) says but serves to highlight it. As for the audience to whom it is addressed, Paul's exhortation would hold equally well whether he was addressing a Jewish Christian audience, having shaken off its ethnic identity, or a Gentile Christian audience, which had

separated itself from heathenism. Romans 13:1-7 thus cannot serve as proof that Paul is addressing a Jewish Christian audience. This having been said we now turn our attention to the arguments that 'the character of the argumentation in the letter' and 'the use of the Old Testament in the letter' (cf Denney 1974:565-567) which we said earlier are held as proof that Paul is writing to Jewish Christians. Let us start with 'the character of the argumentation in the letter.'

How are we to answer this contention? Denney (1974:565) says that we cannot deny, that in the dialectical development of his gospel, Paul often states and answers such objections that would naturally occur to one who represents the historical and legal standpoint of the religion of the Jews (see 3:1; 6:1; 6:15; 7:7; 9:1).

The two most obvious reasons that present themselves are that (1) Paul is himself a Jew and justifies his gospel against the *prima facie* objections that arise in his mind instinctively as he goes along, and (2) Paul had heard most of the objections to his gospel already in other places which he answers in this letter. We have one express reference to this in the letter ('as we are slanderously reported as saying'; cf 3:8).

Paul knew all too well that his gospel as well as his apostleship were perseveringly and vigorously opposed (2 Cor 3:1; 10:10, 18; 12:11-12; Gl 3:1; 4:2, 7). Added to this, Paul might also have heard from some source that his opponents were forestalling him at Rome. While these reasons may explain the nature of his arguments, and in view of the direct evidence for the Gentile character of the church, Denney (1974:566) correctly observes that they prove nothing on the other side.

In respect of the use of the Old Testament in the letter, to say that to resort to this is evidence for a Jewish Christian character of the church at Rome' cannot hold. Scriptures of the said nature, for example, 'the reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me' (15:3) do not bear on the nationality of the audience. All the New Testament writers held the Old Testament as revelation and, in a sense, Christian revelation. Denney (1974:567) correctly observes that none of these passages can be held as sufficient proof that the church as a whole was Jewish Christian or even that it was strongly influenced by Jewish ideas (cf also Alford 1968:446).

This does not in any way preclude the existence of a Jewish minority in it, however, for it would be difficult to conceive a church without such an element in the lifetime of the apostles. Pelser (1989:43) observes that its composition could hardly have differed from the other congregations in the Hellenistic world which comprised Jewish Christians, former proselytes and converts from paganism. That would account for the prevailing tendency to look upon the church as mainly Gentile Christian, but with a minority of Jewish origin (Klijn 1967:76; Bartisch 1972:331; Tenny 1973:303; Denney 1974:563-567; Kümmel 1975:309; Griffith Thomas 1976:17). From a historical point of view the foregoing, I believe, is unassailable.

But can we carry this into the letter? We have negated the contention that Paul's audience in Rome were Jewish Christians, but what about a mixed audience? Do we not perhaps have any evidence for that? The answer is 'no.' But if so, what then? What does the letter tell us? On the basis of the evidence in the letter (see again 1:5-7, 13; 9:3; 10:1f., 23, 28, 31; 11:13; 15:15-20), we must conclude that Paul's audience in Rome was a Gentile Christian audience. But what kind of Gentile Christian audience? It is to this that we now turn our attention.

2.3 Paul's audience in Rome was an envisaged Gentile Christian audience.

I said earlier that in a rhetorical situation the audience is a construction of the speaker (cf Fraikin 1986:95; Vorster 1989:24, 27; Vorster 1990:122; 1992:99) and that I specifically hold the view that Paul's audience in Rome was a visualised Gentile Christian audience. But can this thesis hold? I believe it can. On what basis though? On the basis of the textual evidence. Let me qualify this by pointing out that in the *exordium* of Paul's argument in the letter (1:1-15; cf Wuellner 1976:335; Fraikin 1986:94-95) firstly, we have no indication either of a Jewish Christian, or of a mixed audience, but only of a Gentile Christian audience.

Secondly, whilst Romans 1:14-16 speaks of both Jews and Gentiles, Paul does not equate the two, but places the emphasis on the Gentiles. That this is so is clear both from the fact that pre-eminence is accorded the Greeks in 1:14 and the use of the term 'barbarian.' By the use of the term in question Paul both identifies himself with the Gentiles and situates the Jews under the 'Barbarians' (see Vorster 1991a:168). We observe, then, from the *exordium* that the audience envisaged by Paul is a Gentile Christian audience (cf Fraikin 1986:95). It should be noted that the rest of Romans 1 (vv 17-32) also cannot possibly be either for a Jewish Christian or a mixed audience (cf e g 1:18, 21, 23, 25, 28, 30, 32).

Thirdly, Romans 2-4 is a debate with a Jew in front of a Gentile Christian audience (cf 2:17; 3:1; 4:1; Fraikin 1986:95). Karlberg (1986:68) claims that in the letter Paul is addressing a mixed audience but with the greater part of his exposition with more immediate reference to Jewish believers. Assuming that Karlberg is correct, Paul was faced, then, with a serious problem for if Romans 2-4, and especially Romans 2-3, was directed at a mixed audience there was sure to have been disharmony rather than harmony between the Jewish and

Gentile Christians after the receipt of the letter. For there is no question that the Jews would have taken offence to what Paul had said. The strong way in which Paul criticises the Jews (cf especially 2:17-29; 3) therefore clearly testifies to a Gentile Christian audience. Paul's argument in Romans 2 and 3 can be seen as a further attempt, then, to also identify with his Gentile Christian audience (cf 3:9, 20-22, 27-30; cf also 4:2, 4-25).

Fourthly, in Romans 5-8 the question of status is spelled out. Whose status? Clearly that of the Gentile Christians! The Jews because of certain identity markers (e.g. circumcision, the sabbath, the law) had accorded themselves a certain status. Paul shows his audience that they have already received this status of the Jews. They are already part of the 'New Israel' of God. For since Christ has come the law has been relativised (cf 3:20-22; 5:1-2, 20-21). For this reason Paul, then, also takes them through the whole process of baptism and so on to show them that they now have that status which the Jews would have had (cf 6:3-7, 11-13, 17-22). If they now wish to attach this status to the law, they are sure to slip back into a position in which they formerly were - a Romans 1 position - as the law is no safeguard for them (cf 5:13, 20; 6:14, 20-21; 7:4-5, 8-11, 14-24, 25b; 8:2-14). The only safeguard they have is Christ (5:1, 8-10, 17, 21; 6:4, 6-7, 14, 17, 22-23, 7:4-6, 25a).

Fifthly, with Romans 9-11 we have a situation similar to that in Romans 2. Once again it concerns the position of the Jews and once again the diatribe comes into play (cf 9:19-33). Whilst the situation here in the first place though does not so much have to do with the Roman situation itself, it does have to do with the relation between the Jews and Gentiles, however: firstly, that of the Jews to the Gentiles and, secondly, that of the Gentiles to the Jews. In respect of the first, notwithstanding the fact that the Jews accord themselves a given status because of their possession of the law, they have no boast against the Gentiles.

This for the reason that election is of God who calls and not of works (cf 9:11, 15-16, 24-26, 30-33; 10:4-13, 20-21; 11:1-12).

In respect of the second, the Gentiles, in turn, are not to boast against the Jews (cf 11:18, 20, 21, 25) for their position also is because of God's goodness and mercy (cf 11: 22, 30-31) through faith (11:20). What we have here once more, then, is a scene played out before a Gentile Christian audience. In this scene Paul speaks both to his implied Gentile Christian audience about the Jews (cf 9:1-5; 10:1-3; 11:1-12) and directly afterwards to them. In the latter instance he not only strictly addresses them as *ξθνη* but also connects his apostolate once again to them (11:13-32; cf 1:5-6).

Then, in the parenetic section, Romans 12:1-15:13, we have a problem that could have been upheld amongst the Jews, but could also have had a been a power of attraction for a Gentile Christian audience. If one reads Romans 12:1-15:13, it appears that Paul strongly identifies with Gentile Christians in this section. Romans 14:1-15:13 is, then, also one of the portions in the Roman letter used to postulate a mixed audience, consisting of Jewish and non-Jewish Christians. On the basis of the reciprocal pronoun *ἀλλήλοις* (cf 14:13, 19, 15:5, 7, 14) and of 14:3b-4 where the attitude of the 'weak' and the 'strong' is brought to bear, a mixed audience here is argued for (cf Vorster 1992:113).

In 14:1 the implied audience is made explicit and an appeal made to them to accept the 'weak.' Once again, in 15:1, as he has done throughout the letter, Paul identifies with the implied audience and here they are explicitly characterised as the 'strong' (cf again Vorster 1992:113). Accepting that the letter was addressed to a mixed audience, there was sure to have been chaos upon receiving it. And that because a Jewish Christian in such an audience would surely take offence at Paul's identifying with the Gentile Christians as the 'strong,' leaving the Jewish Christians to be identified with the 'weak' (cf

14:2). It is more likely therefore that the audience that Paul visualises here is a Gentile Christian and not a Jewish Christian, or a mixed audience.

Finally, in Romans 15:15-16 Paul once again couples his apostleship to the Gentiles (cf 1:5-7). Not only that but he also speaks of his past ministry among them (15:17-20). The logical consequence must therefore be that these are Gentile Christians. This line, commencing with 1:5, then, also runs clearly throughout the letter. Without denying that there were undoubtedly Jews and Jewish Christians in Rome at the time when Paul wrote the letter (cf again Bartisch 1972:331; Denney 1974:563-567; Griffith Thomas 1976:17), the letter itself clearly presents just a Gentile Christian audience.

We conclude now, then, by observing that at the outset we asked about the nature of Paul's audience in Rome, that is, whether it was a Jewish Christian, a Gentile Christian or a mixed audience. Accepting that it was a Gentile Christian audience, we were faced with the further question of what kind of Gentile Christian audience then? I believe we have answered these questions. We also highlighted certain problems provided, in turn, by each type of audience. I trust that in the course of our argument we have also dispensed with them.

There is just one question though that we posed at the outset that has not yet specifically been answered, namely, what kind of audience would enable us to argue that Romans 5-8 forms a unity? On the basis of the textual evidence though, that is, that Paul's audience in Rome was a visualised Gentile Christian audience, I believe we need not pursue this matter any further as the answer is evident. In Romans 5-8 this is made clear. For following on the argument from Romans 1-4, the encouragement, admonition and exhortation from Romans 5 through to Romans 8 testifies to but a single Gentile Christian audience.¹⁰

Having thus established the nature of Paul's audience in Rome let us turn our attention to the purpose of the letter.

Endnotes.

1. See Klijn (1976:76): 'At the time when this letter was written...the members of the church were evidently of mixed origin. It is impossible to determine which group formed the majority.' Cf also Segal (1986) who believes that Paul is writing to both Jews and Gentiles; Karlberg (1986:68), who also believes that Paul is writing to Jews, but with the fullest exposition to the Gentiles.

2. See here also Fahy (1959:183), 'The Romans, to whom this letter is addressed...were Jews, as is indicated by the internal evidence.'

3. See Liddell and Scott (1976:226) ἔθνη = 'all but Jews and Christians'; Vorster (1991b:102): 'ἔθνη...not...all nations per se, but...all non-Jewish nations'; Tenney (1973:304): 'Paul stated that he was an apostle to the Gentiles'; Alford (1968:314): 'The Jews do not here come into account' and Vincent (1972:665): 'Gentiles distinctively, for whom Paul's apostleship was specially instituted.'

4. Cf here also Alford (1968:318): 'among the Romans as among other Gentiles' and Dunn 1988:32: 'the strongly Gentile composition of the Roman congregation is clearly implied.'

5. See here also Dunn (1988:559): 'he addresses them precisely as one who is apostle to the Gentiles.'

6. See also Cranfield (1975:227): κατὰ οὐρανού is to be connected not with μπονάτωρ but with ἡγεῖν.

7. Cf. here also Fraikin (1986:99): 'Paul presents to the Gentiles the kind of argument he would have with another Jew when arguing for a gospel of justification by faith and not by works.'

8. See here also Alford (1968:446): 'some special reason must have given occasion to these exhortations. We can hardly attribute it to the seditious spirit of the Jews at Rome...But disobedience to the civil authorities may have arisen from the mistaken views among the Christians themselves as to the nature of Christ's kingdom and its relation to existing powers of this world. And such mistakes would naturally be rife where the fountain of earthly power was situated and there also best and most effectually met by these precepts, coming from apostolic authority.'

9. Fahy (1959:191) maintains that 'the liberal quotation throughout from the Old Testament suggests that St. Paul was dealing with an audience which had a thorough knowledge of the Scriptures. In 15:3, for instance, a text from the Old Testament prophecy rather than facts from the New Testament is quoted to illustrate Christ's self-sacrificing charity.'

10. See, for example, 'we/us/our' (5:1-3, 5, 6, 8-11; 6:1-6, 8, 15; 7:4-6, 7, 14; 8:4, 16-18, 22-26, 28, 31-32, 34-35, 37, 39).

CHAPTER 3

THE PURPOSE OF THE ROMAN LETTER

1 INTRODUCTION

As regards the purpose of the letter, it is evident from the many articles on the subject that scholars have not found this question easy to answer. In fact, Boers (1982:85) found the matter so difficult that he says that the problem of the interpretation of Romans remains unresolved.¹

Given the fact though that the 'why' of a given style, a given selection and arrangement of data is closely related to the purpose of a discourse, it is difficult to understand why a conclusion in respect of Paul's purpose in his letter to the Romans should cause such a problem. I said earlier that Paul is writing to a Gentile Christian audience with whom he wants to identify by a redefinition of the Gentile Christian's position to the law. Paul's identification with his implied audience serves his purpose, namely, both to visit them, minister to and work fruitfully among them (1:11-13) and be helped on his way to Spain (15:24).

Questions we have to ask though are: How will what we have said contribute to our understanding of Romans 7? Alternatively, how does what Paul says in Romans 7 stand to contribute to the purpose of the whole? Is Paul writing to a single household or to more than one (cf Rm 16)? That it is not a question of a conflict between parties in Romans 7 is clear. But what then? If it is true that Paul wants to identify with his Gentile Christian audience by a redefinition of their position to the law, why? What can he benefit thereby? If not to deal with a conflict in Romans 7, what function, then, does he wish it to perform? Furthermore, if Paul writes to Gentile Christian households, why, then, does he

draw his problem from Judaism? It is questions such as these that we need to answer. In searching for the answers a number views on the purpose of Paul's address to the Romans are listed below. This is done in order to see whether or not, or to what degree, if at all, these points of view might help to clarify the function of Romans 7 within the context of Romans 5-8. And to this we now turn our attention.

2 VARIOUS VIEWS ON THE PURPOSE OF THE LETTER TO THE ROMANS

2.1 Donfried (1974)

Donfried (1974:333) holds the view that Paul wrote the Letter to the Romans to address a concrete situation in Rome (so Bartisch 1972; Campbell 1973; Wedderburn 1978/79, 1988; Boers 1982:194; Watson 1986). The main argument is about the question of whether the parenetic portion of Romans (12:1-15:13) requires a specific or concrete situation or not. Donfried says it does. Given the lack of consensus among scholars at the time, Donfried (1974:333) aimed to clarify the matter by proposing 'two-methodological principles'; by selected questions about current methodologies at the time employed in the study of Romans; by questions about possible false presuppositions implicit in those methodologies which could prohibit an 'accurate' understanding of Paul's intention in writing.

The first methodological principle is that any study of Romans should begin with the initial assumption that Paul wrote the letter to deal with a concrete situation in Rome.² The second is that any study of Romans should proceed on the assumption that Romans 16 is an integral part of the original letter (1974:333). Donfried (1974:349) supports his first methodological principle by saying that every other authentic letter of Paul (without mentioning which these

are) *without exception* is addressed to the specific situation of the churches or persons involved,³ and refers to a discussion by Bultmann about rhetorical devices found in the diatribe and Pauline letters and comments:

What he has shown is not that Paul was influenced by the diatribe, but that he was influenced by rhetorical usages which were common in the Greco-Roman world. The use of such rhetorical patterns was so widespread that one cannot deny that Rom was addressed to a specific situation on the ground that it was influenced by such patterns.

In respect of his methodological principles, Donfried, however, declines attempt at proof, but places the onus on those exegetes who wish to demonstrate that it is not possible, or at least not likely, that Romans addresses a concrete set of problems in the life of the Christians in Rome and that Romans 16 is not an integral part of the original letter (1974:333). We wish to make two observations in respect of Donfried's argument. First, Donfried's second methodological principle, that any study of Romans should proceed on the assumption that Romans 16 is an integral part of the letter, does not justify a debate since consensus among scholars lends more weight to Romans 16 having belonged to the letter from the outset than to the contrary.⁴ Secondly, Donfried's methodological principle, that Paul wrote the letter to deal with a concrete situation in Rome, fails for several reasons.

In the first place, how, as Käsemann (in referring to the special parenthesis of Rm 14:1-15:13; see Wuellner 1976:347) correctly asks, is it possible to perceive the Pauline intention for the whole of his letter on the basis of this section? That in Romans 14:1-15:1 Paul does ask the 'strong' to accept the 'weak' is true, but can we proceed from there and say that the purpose of the letter is 'to assist the Gentile Christian majority who are the primary addressees of the letter, to live together with the Jewish Christians in one congregation, thereby putting an end to their quarrels about status' (Donafried 1974:335)?

Moreover, to take Paul's use of the rhetorical patterns of the Graeco-Roman world and then say that Paul's letter was written to address a concrete situation in Rome is, to my mind, begging the question (cf. Wuellner 1974:331; Perelman 1982:21-23). Donfried's contention that similar rhetorical influences appear in the Galatian and Corinthian correspondence (1974:349) and that in those letters Paul is addressing himself to a specific set of problems does nothing to alter the situation. There are two aspects that clearly must not be lost sight of here, namely: (1) Paul did not, unlike the Galatian and Corinthian congregations, establish the congregations in Rome, and (2) what applied to Galatia and Corinth need not necessarily apply to Rome. A baffling question here is how Donfried arrives at the Gentile Christians in Rome being the *primary* addressees of the letter (1974:335 [italics mine]) when, as we have shown, Paul is addressing only a Gentile Christian audience. Donfried does not tell us nor do we know how he does so.

In the second place it would be strange, too, if after the preceding long debate (i.e. Rm 1-13) Paul were only now to turn to the purpose of his letter for the first time. In the third place, if we were to accept Donfried's thesis that Paul is addressing a concrete situation in the life of the believers in Rome, (1) where do we find this in the letter?, (2) how are we to relate it to what Paul says in Romans 1:11-13 and 15:24? and (3) how are we to tie this in with Paul's argument in Romans 7, that is, Paul's exhortation to the 'strong' to accept the 'weak' in Romans 14:1-15:3 to the freedom from the law (7:1-6), the role of the law to sin (7:7-13) and the inability of a person in 7:14-15 to fulfil the demands of the law? Then, too in seeking to establish a link between Romans 7 and Romans 14-15, are we to work backwards or forwards? Is it not only logical to work forwards? Is that not how a letter is read? The answer must surely be 'yes.'

Donfried's thesis presents us with even more problems. Saying that there were different establishments in Rome (1974:335) and moving from there to the diversity of beliefs and religious practices among these different establishments thereby having an interpretive matrix to explain Romans at hand is problematic (cf Karris 1974:357).¹ Looking at these households historically, their basic social values would surely differ considerably from those of a decided organisation (cf Bruce 1982:340-341; Murphy-O'Connor 1983:153-161; Stowers 1986:27; Stambaugh & Balch 1986:138-143; Dunn 1988:lii; Craffert 1992:207). And if, as Donfried and others (Bartisch 1972; Campbell 1973; Wedderburn 1978/79; Watson 1986) would have us believe that Paul was addressing a concrete set of problems in Rome, and there were a number of households, did the same problem, then, pertain in every household? That is most unlikely!

Notwithstanding the foregoing, presuming there was in fact a concrete historical situation in Rome, would it have been ethical of Paul in such circumstances to bear down on them? By what avenue would he have had the right to address households relatively unknown to him on such an issue? (cf Vorster 1992:101). In this respect Vorster's (1991b:161) observation that were it true that Paul was addressing this letter to an assembly where such a conflict reigned, there was sure to have been a general schism after the receipt of the letter is very apt. Donfried's claim is clearly not entirely without merit but must be seen in the context of the whole.

In respect of the passage in question we have already said that (1) if one reads Romans 12:1-15:13 it appears that Paul is identifying strongly with Gentile Christians in this section, (2) in 14:1 the implied audience is made explicit and an appeal is made to them to accept the 'weak' and (3) that as Paul identifies with his implied audience throughout the letter, he does so once again in 15:1 and here they are, then, also explicitly characterised as the 'strong.' While there is no denying that Paul's exhortation in 14:1-15:7 does call for the Gentile

Christians to accept Jewish-Christians (cf Campbell 1973:268; Jewett 1982:13; Dunn 1988:Ivii) who probably wanted to hold on to their traditions (cf Wedderburn 1978/79:138, 141; Vorster 1984:65), it cannot stand as a reason *per se* why Paul addressed the letter to the Romans (cf also Pelser 1989:45).⁶

Paul's identifying with his implied audience as the 'strong' and his exhortation to them to accept the 'weak' has more to it than merely to bring about a conciliation between Gentile and Jewish Christians returning to Rome. But if this is so, what is the purpose then? Is it to further win their favour for a plan he has in mind? Could it be that united households, if perhaps there were one or two who were not united, would give added strength to Paul's plans? I believe so.

In this respect too Vorster (1992:116) aptly observes that cooperation between Jews and Gentiles in Rome was important for Paul in the light of his future plans. For this reason also, then, he identifies with the non-Jews time and again confirming their superior position and by literally redefining the non-Jews in terms of the Jews' flattering identity markers. How, then, does this relate to Romans 7? Is it possible to find a connection between Romans 7 and 14:1-15:7? If so, how? Paul's argument in Romans 7 is bent on steering his Gentile Christian audience away from the law (cf 7:4-6, 8-11). The same people with whom he identifies here, saying 'you also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ...that *we* [italics mine] should bring forth fruit unto God' (v 4), he designates as 'the strong' in Romans 14:1-15:13.

The designation 'the strong' evidently rests upon 'freedom' from the law and that of 'the weak' of attachment to it. It is important to note here that while acceptance of those who still wanted to observe the dietary law is encouraged (cf 14:1, 13, 19), there is no intimation here that Paul expected members of his implied Gentile audience to observe any of these laws. As the designation 'the

'strong' particularly signals 'freedom' from the law, there is no tension to be found between Romans 7 and 14:1-15:13. Just as Romans 7 serves Paul's intention (cf again Rm 1:11-13; 15:24) so does Romans 14:1-15:13.

At the outset it was stated that (1) Paul is writing to a Gentile Christian audience with whom he wishes to identify by a redefinition of the Gentile Christian's position to the law and (2) he is identifying with them for the purpose of visiting, ministering to and working fruitfully among them, and then being helped on his way to Spain. Taking his premise from Romans 14:1-15:13, Donfried, for his part, contends rather that Paul's purpose in writing the letter was to deal with a concrete situation in Rome. We have shown that Donfried's thesis is not tenable and have argued that Paul's rhetoric in Romans 14:1-15:13 must be seen in the context of the whole. By doing so we have found, then, that there is no tension between Romans 14:1-15:13 and Romans 7. These passages therefore do not stand in isolation from one another, each performing a function entirely removed from that of the other, but together serve what Paul wished to achieve (cf again 1:11-13; 15:24).

From what has been said so far I question how Donfried missed the point. Evidently Donfried started out on the wrong notion and in doing so also overlooked a number of important issues, the most important being that the purpose of the letter to the Romans should not be seen in a would-be situation in the life of the Christians in Rome, but rather in terms of Paul's aim among other things of being helped on his way to Spain (15:24). The importance of a correct premise cannot be overestimated. For this will guard against fanciful interpretations. Let us now consider what Wuellner (1976) has to say about Paul's purpose in writing the letter.

2.2 Wuellner (1976)

Having summed up what has popularly become known as the Donfried-Karris debate, Wuellner (1976:330) points out that the question of whether the purpose of the Roman letter is situated in Paul's situation or the Romans' leads us nowhere. Wuellner provides an alternative, namely, that we consider Paul's letters primarily as argumentative (1976:330).⁷ This, he (1976:330) says, will help us to overcome the impasses of fixation with form and genre, on the one hand, and the specific social or political situation, on the other. Traditional theology, even biblical or Pauline theology, Wuellner (1976:330) argues was based on the traditional model of logic and dialectic. He contends that the approach to Paul's letters as literature was based on traditional or modern theories of literature or poetics (1976:330). Paul's letters, however, are to be regarded as argumentative, that is, on the understanding of argumentation as the use of discourse 'to influence the intensity of an audience's adherence to certain theses' (cf also Fraikin 1986:93).

Rediscovering the nature and purpose of argumentation as a basically rhetorical process will provide a more satisfactory way of accounting for the dialectical and logical dimension and the literary dimensions in Paul's discourses as well as the situational and social dimension presupposed in Paul's letters (1976:330-331). What we need to understand, thus, is the situation to which the letter is addressed. Unlike Donfried for whom situation means something that includes social and political history, for Wuellner (1976:333) 'situation' means 'the argumentative situation itself.' If we accept this what, then, is the 'argumentative situation' to which the letter is directed? Wuellner (1976:335) says we should turn to the text for the answer, which is to be found in the expansions of the *exordium*. It is precisely here, he (1976:335) observes, where close relations between the prescript and various parts of the body of the letter are found. These expansions, he says, express two major concerns of Paul: Paul

as agent of the Gospel for the nations which relates to his travels to Jerusalem and to the ends of the earth, to Spain and Paul as agent of the Gospel to the congregations at Rome (which relates to claim for support and for authoritative teaching). This, then, is the argumentative situation (1976:335). The apparent judgement, or role, then also, which Paul expects the Romans to fulfil is to uphold the communal values which Paul and the Romans share in being agents of faith throughout the world (1976:337; cf also Fraikin 1986:92). In respect of Wuellner's observations, we agree that the letter to the Romans is argumentative (cf Vorster 1991b:2) but feel that his view that the expansions of the *exordium* of the letter express two major concerns of Paul, namely, as agent of the Gospel for the nations and as agent of the Gospel to the congregations in Rome, is vague.

But notwithstanding the fact that Wuellner's observation, in respect of Paul being agent for the Gospel, is vague, in reading Romans 7, we observe that Paul time and again identifies with his Gentile Christian audience (cf 7:1, 4-6, 7, 14). For that reason Romans 7 thus also contributes to it as if to say, 'I am your agent for the Gospel' and 'for this reason it is important that I come to you' (cf 1:5-6, 11-13, 15; 15:24). Wuellner's observation is thus not out of line, but it has to be taken further though, that is, in the direction of the argumentation strategies in respect of the purpose of the letter (cf Perelman 1982). This Wuellner (1976), unfortunately, does not do and this then possibly accounts for why he does not show how Paul goes about persuading his audience to uphold the communal values that they together hold as agents of faith throughout the world (Wuellner 1976:337). Wuellner's observation that Paul's letter to the Romans is argumentative has nonetheless surely turned the tide and as Vorster (1991b:2) observes 'paved the way for a new march on the unconquered problem of the letter to the Romans.' This road, too, no serious reader of the letter to the Romans can afford to neglect.

I have indicated that (1) Wuellner shows that the question of whether the purpose of the letter is situated in Paul's or the Romans' situation leads us nowhere, but that the letter to the Romans is to be seen as argumentative, that is, on the understanding of argumentation as the use of discourse to influence the intensity of an audience's adherence to certain theses. (2) Wuellner believes that the argument in the letter centres on two major concerns of Paul (a) as agent of the Gospel to Jerusalem and to the ends of the earth, to Spain and (b) as agent of the Gospel to those in Rome. With regard to the foregoing, namely, that the argument in the letter centres on Paul's concern as the agent for the Gospel, we have sanctioned this by showing that Romans 7 also contributes to it.

In respect of the first of these, namely, that the letter to the Romans must be seen as argumentative, we have endorsed the validity thereof by seeing it as smoothing the way for a new advance on the problem of the purpose of the letter to the Romans. As for the use of discourse 'to influence the intensity of an audience's adherence to certain theses,' however, the question remains, do we find any argument or arguments to this effect in Romans 7? The answer is clearly 'yes.' Paul does so in a number of ways. One of the strategies to influence the intensity of an audience's adherence to certain theses is identification.

In this respect we have, then, also already said that in Romans 7 Paul identifies with his implied Gentile Christian audience time and again (cf again 7:1, 4-6, 7, 14). This identification, in turn, then, also takes place by a redefinition of the Gentiles' position in respect of the law (see 7:1, 4-6). A fuller treatment of the strategies though that Paul uses for adherence to the values he and his implied audience share will be treated in the section dealing with the rhetoric of Romans 7. Let us next consider Jewett's (1982) observations in respect of the purpose of Paul's letter to the Romans.

2.3 Jewett (1982)

While crediting Wuellner for his observations, Jewett (1982:6-7) believes though that Wuellner's endeavour does not offer sufficient incentive for a settlement and finds certain weaknesses in the 'unfolding' of Wuellner's hypothesis that must be overcome before it can attract wider support. Jewett proceeds from a case made by Beker that Pauline theology provides an interplay between coherence and contingency, and that Romans is, in fact, directed to a set of circumstances as contingent as that of the other letters. Beker, he says, speaks of the convergence of motivations in Romans, to elicit support for the mission to Spain as well as for the Jerusalem offering, to find common ground between Jewish and Gentile Christians, and to clarify the meaning of his gospel. What is now needed, according to Jewett (1982:5), is an answer to the question of the rhetorical genre of Romans which would allow the relation between Paul and his audience to be clarified and the purpose of the letter to be integrated.

Generally speaking, Jewett finds that scholars of both camps have tended consciously or unconsciously to assimilate Romans to one or the other of the two rhetorical genres into which the other Pauline letters fall.⁸ Jewett (1982:6) holds that the route of disentangling Romans from these alternatives was that suggested by Wilhelm Wuellner (cf again Vorster 1991b:2). Jewett (1982:7) tables that Wuellner maintains that the purpose of Romans as stated in Romans 1:9-10 and elaborated in subsequent verses is 'to announce and prepare the way for an apostolic mission "by God's will" to visit the Christians in Rome.'

Jewett proposes as a refinement to Wuellner's epideictic theory that among the letters of Paul, the letter to the Romans is a unique fusion of the ambassadorial letter with several of the other sub-types in the genre: the parenetic letter, the hortatory letter and the philosophic diatribe (cf Fraikin 1986:92-93).⁹ Its

purpose, then, Jewett (1982:10) says is to advocate in behalf of the ‘power of God’ a cooperative mission to evangelise Spain so that the theological argumentation reiterates the gospel to be therein proclaimed and the ethical admonitions show how that gospel is to be lived out in a manner that would ensure the success of this mission.

The content of Paul’s letter to Rome, says Jewett (1982:5), setting forth the equality of Jews and Gentiles under sin and grace and stressing the inclusive reach of faith, can be grasped in its entirety as an expression of missionary diplomacy. Jewett’s concern clearly is with correctly identifying the genre of the letter to the Romans and by which he then hopes to establish the purpose for which Paul wrote the letter. This is therefore also why he proposes a refinement of Wnellner’s epideictic theory.

But can Jewett’s thesis hold? Only in part because it has both merit and shortcomings. The merit is that the ambassadorial letter emphasises diplomatic elements which, in turn, would serve the strategy of identifying. These diplomatic elements can be said to be found in Romans 7 too, not only in the appellations (e.g. ἀδελφοί, γινώσκουσιν γὰρ νόμον λαλῶ; v 1, ἀδελφοί; v 4 etc), but also in the deictics used (cf ‘we’; 7:4, 5, 6, 7, 14).

The shortcomings, in turn, are that Jewett is seeking an ancient example, or letter genre, into which to fit Paul. The ambassadorial letter, however, will not subscribe to this. Such a genre may hold good here and there in the letter to the Romans¹⁰ but cannot help us beyond really understanding the letter. On the contrary it rather fixes our attention merely on a given aspect, and this we cannot afford. For while we do have identification in the letter, we also have dissociation - dissociation by the argument of incompatibility with regard to the Jews’ misunderstanding in respect of their own position to God and the Gentiles (cf Vorster 1991b:174). This element the ambassadorial letter genre

does not help us to show as it only takes us part of the way. For this reason, then, we need to proceed further than merely the ambassadorial letter in our search for the purpose of the letter. And, then, also for the part that Romans 7 has in terms of that purpose.

At the outset we observed that the 'why' of a given style, a given selection and arrangement of data stands in close relationship with the purpose of a discourse. I have shown that neither the thesis that Paul writes to address a concrete situation in the life of the Christians in Rome (Donfried 1974) nor that the letter to the Romans is to be seen as argumentative (Wuellner 1976), and that the purpose of the letter centres on Paul's concern as agent of the Gospel to the nations, nor Jewett's proposal that the answer to the question of the purpose of the letter is to be found in the ambassadorial letter genre (Jewett 1982), is able to satisfactorily answer why Paul wrote the letter to his implied Gentile Christian audience.

Does this leave us lost? In respect of Donfried I have indicated that Romans 14:1-15:13 must be seen in the context of the whole. In respect of Wuellner (1976) that his observation must be taken further, namely, in the direction of the argumentative strategies in the letter. In respect of Jewett (1982) I have indicated that we need to proceed further than just the ambassadorial letter genre for the answer. Next we shall consider Dunn's (1988) view.

2.4 Dunn (1988)

On this subject Dunn (1988:Iv) observes there is a long and seemingly unending debate. The debate arises from two features in the letter, namely, (1) the different reasons that Paul shows for writing the letter in 1:8-15 and 15:14-33 and (2) the problem of how to relate these reasons to the body of the letter (1:16-15:13), since the rationale for providing such a lengthy and involved

discussion to a largely unknown congregation is not immediately obvious. Dunn, for his part, contends that it is likely that Paul had more than one reason for writing the letter, namely, (1) missionary, (2) apologetic and (3) pastoral (1988:Iv-Iviii).

The missionary aspect Dunn finds clear from Romans 15:18-24 and 28. Paul, Dunn says, sees himself as ‘apostle to the Gentiles’ with a crucial role in bringing in the ‘full number of the gentiles.’ He has completed one phase of his foundation-laying work (15:19, 23-24) and is now looking to the northwestern quadrant of the Mediterranean. It is not the problems of a local church but the universal Gospel and Paul’s own mission which provides the point of departure for the theological discussion in this letter (Dunn 1988:Iv).

With regard to the apologetic aspect, in setting out such a full statement of his understanding of the Gospel, says Dunn (1988:Ivi), Paul surely wished to gain acceptance for that understanding among the believers in the capital of the Empire. This, he finds, is certainly consistent with the careful expansions made to his normal opening paragraph (Rm 1:1-6). Romans 3:8, says Dunn (1988:Ivi), in particular certainly notes a sensitivity on Paul’s part for a need for some sort of self-defence against actual misunderstandings of his gospel.¹¹

Bound up with all this and especially important is the clear desire to obtain the support of the Christians in Rome for the hazardous but important journey to Jerusalem (15:25-31). It is not inconsistent, Dunn finds, that with this more specific purpose that Paul should, at the end of a major phase of his life’s work (15:12, 23), set out for the Roman believers a careful statement of his gospel and faith.¹² This not least of all with a view to the self-defence he would probably have to offer in Jerusalem (Dunn 1988:Ivi).

In respect of the pastoral aspect, says Dunn (1988:Ivi-Ivii), assuming that Romans 16 was part of the letter from the outset, another stated purpose was to introduce Phoebe (16:1-2), and the list of greetings that follow intends to name as many individuals for Phoebe to call on as to ensure that the letter receives a favourable response within the different Christian congregations. As an extension to Paul's pastoral purpose, Dunn recognises that Paul had also wished to promote the acceptance by the Gentile Christian majority congregations of individual Jewish Christians into their fellowship notwithstanding their adherence to their 'food' laws (1988:Iviii).

Dunn's thesis, it should be observed, concurs with Wuellner's (1976) and Jewett's (1982) on a number of points, namely, that the purpose of Romans is (1) missionary (Wuellner 1976:335; Jewett 1982:5; Dunn 1988:IV), (2) to elicit prayer support for the offering for the poor in Jerusalem (Wuellner 1976:335; Jewett 1982:14; Dunn 1988:Ivi), (3) to advise them of his desire to visit them in Rome (Wuellner 1976:335; Jewett 1982:14; Dunn 1988:IV),¹³ (4) that Paul (with his purpose in mind) wished to gain acceptance of his gospel by the Roman Christians (Jewett 1982:5; Dunn 1988:Ivi) and (5) that Paul wished to promote acceptance by the 'strong' (Gentile Christians) of 'the weak' (Jewish Christians).¹⁴

Whilst Dunn has made these observations, it must be pointed out, as also done earlier in respect of Wuellner (1976:330) with regard to his observation of Paul as agent of the Gospel, that all of these observations had also already been made by other scholars before Dunn.¹⁵ If this is so, does it mean, then, that what Dunn says is meaningless? Observing that Paul is clearly writing to Gentiles (1988:xIV), Dunn takes his observation further and shows that Paul's argument is set (1) to redefine the Gentiles' position with regard to the law (1988:Ixxi), and (2) point out the Jews' own misunderstanding in respect of their position with God and the Gentiles because of their possession of the law (1988:Ixxii).

It is only when we can take for granted what Paul and his audience took for granted with regard to the law and its functions, Dunn (1988:Ixvii) intimates, that we will be able to hear the allusions he was making and understand the argument he was offering.

The law, Dunn (1988:Ixx) observes, had become a basic expression of Israel's distinctiveness as the people especially chosen by God to be his people (cf also Fraikin 1986:98). In sociological terms, the law functioned as an 'identity marker' and 'boundary' reinforcing Israel's sense of distinctiveness and distinguishing Israel from the surrounding nations. A natural and more or less inevitable converse of this sense of distinctiveness was the sense of privilege, precisely in being the nation chosen by the one God and favoured by the gift of covenant and law (Dunn 1988:Ixx).

A sociological perspective, says Dunn (1988:Ixxi), also helps us to see how the conviction of privileged election and the practise of what had come to be termed 'covenantal-nomism' - 'the maintenance of status' among the chosen people of God by observing the law given by God as part of that covenant relationship (Dunn 1988:Ixv) - almost inevitably comes to expression in focal points of distinctiveness, particular laws and especially ritual practices which reinforced the sense of distinctive identity and marked Israel off most clearly from the other nations (Dunn 1988:Ixxi). In this case three of Israel's laws, namely, circumcision, food laws and sabbath, gained particular prominence as being especially distinctive. These were not the only beliefs and practices which marked out Jews, says Dunn (1988:Ixxi), but from the Maccabean period onward they gained an increasing significance for their boundary-defining character, and were widely recognised both within and outside Judaism as particularly distinctively characteristic of Jews.

The Jews, proselytes, and God-worshipping Gentiles amongst his audience (cf Pelser 1989:41-43) would hear what Paul said about the law in the light of this interconnection in Jewish theology of Israel's election, covenant and law (Dunn 1988:Ixxi). They would recognise that what Paul was concerned about was the fact that the covenant promise and law had become too inextricably identified with ethnic Israel as such, with the Jewish people marked out in their national distinctiveness by the practices of circumcision, food laws and sabbath in particular. They would recognise that what Paul was endeavouring to do was to free both promise and law for a wider range of recipients, freed from the ethnic constraints which he saw to be narrowing the grace of God and diverting the saving purpose of God out of its main channel, namely, Christ (Dunn 1988:Ixxi).

Paul, then, also regularly warns against 'the works of the law' not as 'good works' in general or as any attempt by the individual to amass merit for himself, but rather as the pattern of obedience by which 'the righteous' maintain their status within the people of the covenant, as evidenced not least by their dedication and such sensitive 'test cases' issues as sabbath and food laws (Dunn 1988:Ixxii).

An important hermeneutical key to such crucial passages as Romans 3:27-31, 7:14-25 and 9:30-10:14 is precisely the recognition that Paul's negative thrust against the law is against the law taken over too completely by Israel, the law misunderstood by a misplaced emphasis on boundary-marking ritual, the law become a tool of sin in its too close identification with matters of the flesh, the law sidetracked into a focus for nationalistic zeal. Freed from that too narrowly Jewish perspective, the law still has an important part to play in 'the obedience of faith' (Dunn 1988:Ixxii).

The parenetic section (12:1-15:6) Dunn (1988:Ixxii) observes further can be seen as Paul's attempt to provide a basic guideline for social living, the law

redefined for the eschatological people of God in place of the law misunderstood in too distinctively Jewish terms, with the climax focussed on two test cases, ‘food laws’ and ‘sabbath’ (1988:Ixxii).

But now having set forth Dunn’s observations, what are we to make of them? Do they have any merit? Dunn’s observations, I believe, are much to the point. What he makes clear is that Paul is not setting up two groups, that is, Jewish Christians and Gentile Christians against each other. Paul’s concern is rather to bring Christianity into the fold of Judaism so that together they may be the one people of God (cf Rm 2:5; 15:8-12; Dunn 1988:xIv; cf also Fraikin 1986:96). But what hinders, however, are issues such as sabbath, food laws and circumcision (see 14:2-3, 5-6). In respect of the foregoing, Dunn (1988:Ixv) observes that Paul, then, also had in mind the type of ‘covenantal-nomism’ which, as we have said, specifically had to do with the issues of sabbath, food laws and circumcision. Notwithstanding that a given Jewish group¹⁶ laid claim to status on the basis of these identity markers, Dunn (1988:Ixxii) shows that Paul contends against such things as being able to give status to a person (cf also Vorster 1992:103-104).

Not only so but also that Paul wished to lay the identity of a ‘Jew’ differently (cf Dunn 1988:xIv).¹⁷ Whilst the identity markers of sabbath, food laws and circumcision gave a Jew his identity, they did not necessarily do that for a Gentile, but on the contrary in a certain degree rather kept him out of Judaism (see Dunn 1988:Ixxii). This Paul correlates with a number of things within the Roman letter. Paul therefore does not busy himself trying to establish Christianity but rather to see whether he can draw the Gentiles into the covenant without making them subject to the Jews’ identity markers (see Rm 3:27-31; Brown 1988:59).

Not only so but also to keep those already under grace from turning to the law (see 4:1-6, 15 etc). This observation is, then, also very important for our understanding of Romans 7. For here we find Paul continuously as it were saying to his audience: 'If you really want to be a Jew, you do not need these things' (see 7:1, 4-6, 8-11, 14-25). The latter section (vv 14-25) showing, then, also how wrong it is to think that by trying to keep the law one can become a 'real' Jew (cf 7:18, 21, 23-24). I have earlier shown that Dunn had also recognised this (see again Dunn 1988:Ixxi). In terms of the thesis that Paul is writing to a Gentile Christian audience with whom he wants to identify by a redefinition of the Gentile Christian's position over against the law, I will also in Romans 7, then, show how Paul redefines or dissociates the law in terms of the Gentile Christian.

I have said in respect of Wuellner's and Jewett's theses, that while they both make a valuable contribution in respect of the purpose of the letter to the Romans, we would nevertheless have to proceed further than their observations. For this we turned to the thesis of Dunn (1988). Whilst at the outset Dunn seems to say no more than what other scholars before him had already said, by his further observation he shows that whilst Paul stood in the same tradition as a given section of Judaism (cf Kraabel 1987:49-50, 54-58; Kraemer 1989:36-37),¹⁸ he seeks to bring the Gentiles into the covenant without any of the identity markers which identified one as a Jew.

In presenting his argument Dunn, then, not only confirms my own thesis, that is, that Paul is writing to a Gentile Christian audience with whom he wants to identify by a redefinition of the Gentile Christian's position to the law, but also brings to our attention what we have found Jewett to have failed to recognise, namely, that we also have redefinition or dissociation in the letter. Dissociation by the argument of incompatibility with regard to the Jews' misunderstanding of their own position in respect of God and the Gentiles because of their

possession of the law. Both these aspects feature very prominently, then, in Paul's rhetoric in Romans 7. Before arriving at that, however, let us turn to Vorster's (1991a, 1991b, 1992) thesis whom, I believe, has much to contribute in so far as the purpose of the letter and Paul's argument in pursuance of his aim.

2.5 Vorster (1991a, 1991b, 1992)

Vorster sees the purpose of Romans as two-fold, namely: (1) It is a response to a need to effect cooperation between non-Jewish believers in Rome and to consolidate them with non-Jewish believers of his past under his authority. Not only does Paul wish to use Rome as an operational base for his future expansion, but also wants to enlist the support of the Christians in Rome in a material sense. In addition Paul also seeks to bring about the cooperation of the non-Jewish Christians with reference to their relationship with the Jewish Christians. The possibility exists that the power base of the non-Jewish followers of Christ can be expanded (1992:99).

(2) The letter serves to abjure a credibility crisis with reference to the status of the non-Jews. Paul writes to the non-Jewish believers in Rome to confirm their credibility, and he uses the Jews, namely, the problematic issue between Jews and Gentiles, to establish the value system of non-Jewish believers, to show them that they enjoy the same status position. It is not a question of an inner-congregational conflict, however, but a conflict on a universal level (1992:99-100; cf also 1991a:159; 1991b:31-33).

Can this thesis hold? If so how, then, is Vorster's observation to be evaluated? Vorster clearly focuses once again on what Wuellner (1976), Jewett (1982) and Dunn (1988) have recognised as the purpose of Romans, but with three added aspects namely (1) to effect co-operation between non-Jewish believers in

Rome and to consolidate them with non-Jewish believers of his past under his authority, (2) that Paul wished to use Rome as an operational base for the expansion of his gospel to the West and (3) to abjure a ‘credibility crisis’ with reference to the status of the non-Jews.

In respect of the first of these, namely, that the letter is a response to a need to effect a cooperation between non-Jewish believers in Rome and to consolidate them with non-Jewish believers of his past under his authority (Vorster 1992:99), it is to be observed: (1) In the light of Paul’s calling and separation as minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles specifically (1:5, 13; 15:16), and (2) with the Roman households wide open, both as far as apostolic authority, and as part of the greater $\xi\thetav\eta$ (1:5-6), such a possibility cannot be excluded.

Not only so, but also I believe, and that notwithstanding the fact that Campbell (1973:265), Donfried (1974:332), Kümmel (1975:313), Watson (1986:90), Dunn (1988:Iv), and Vorster (1991:186) himself rightly deny Klein’s view, which he bases on Romans 15:20, that the Roman households lacked an apostolic foundation, and that Paul’s purpose was to provide them with such a foundation and authority,¹⁹ that 1:11c carries such an undertone.²⁰ The nature of the $\chi\rhoi\sigma\mu\alpha$, as shown by $\pi\nu\epsilon\nu\mu\alpha\tau\iota\kappa\omega\zeta$, being exactly that which would secure for them a firm founding. Should Vorster recognise this, it might very well strengthen his argument. Mosher (1979:96) attempts to build a case on Romans 15:22-24, saying, that the Romans already had a firm foundation. But Mosher’s attempt fails for the reason that to read $\psi\mu\epsilon\iota\zeta$ hardly requires more than two people. If Mosher had perhaps taken Romans 16 as a departure for his claim, he worked anachronistically.

Exactly what $\chi\rhoi\sigma\mu\alpha$ in 1:11c entails is not all that easy to say, being left unqualified also by the indefinite pronoun ($\tau\iota\zeta$). The phrase $\tau\iota\chi\rhoi\sigma\mu\alpha$, to my

mind, is but a restrained statement of Paul's full intention - a *maxim* of tact to avoid the notion of overbearing (cf Vorster 1991b:199). Paul was undoubtedly aware of the safety in limiting the expression of his full intention as opposed to the danger of overplaying his hand (see Craffert 1992:202). Dunn (1988:30) comments on Romans 1:11 and says that Paul had sufficient confidence in God's grace working in and through him (1:5) that he could hold out the firm promise that God will use him in some way for their benefit, but 'not necessarily in a specifically apostolic way.' In the light of Romans 15:29 though²¹ Dunn's argument, I believe, can hardly hold. And that for the reason that it is hard to see that Paul's visit would not have been in a specifically apostolic way (cf 1 Cor 2:4; 2 Cor 12:12).

In respect of the second, namely, that Paul had wished to use Rome as a base for future expansion (Vorster 1992:99), this is entirely tenable. It is believed that the congregation in Rome already enjoyed a particular prestige (15:24) by the time Paul wrote to them. It could therefore have rendered him much assistance in his task (Pelser 1989:45-46). Not only so, but members of Paul's audience might even themselves have become partners in the endeavour. Whilst not explicitly stated in the text, contra Campbell (1973:265) who labels Rome as but 'a stepping-off place' for Paul on the way to Spain, and Elliott (1990:87) who sees it merely as Paul's anticipated 'stopover' for refreshment, that Paul had wished to use Rome as a base, is underwritten alike by Bartisch (1972:330), Bruce (1982:351), Dunn (1988:Iv) and Beker (1988:373). In this respect, possibly also by Jewett (1982:17) who contends that Paul, 'having established "beachheads" in the provinces as far as Illyricum...is finally in a position to move on to Rome and Spain.'

Vorster (1991a:192), for his part, has also argued for this question in one of his earlier works, saying, amongst other things, that 'if assistance is needed, Rome no longer has the role of a thoroughfare.' In addition to Rome being a base,

Paul might even have hoped to be accompanied on his journey by someone from the Roman households who knew Spain - προπεμφθῆναι not merely signifying to be sent off, but also escorted (cf Robertson 1931:422; Vincent 1972:752; Dunn 1988:872).

Regarding the question, then, also that the support of the non-Jewish believers was going to be needed in a material sense, Vorster, like Wuellner (1976), Jewett (1982), Dunn (1988; so Mac Gorman 1976:41), has the support of the text (see 15:24) and whilst Vorster (1991b:239) contends that Paul's primary purpose was not to give his Gentile audience in Rome something, but rather to ask something of them (cf also 1991a:162), I believe it is more tenable though, that is, against the background of the hospitality of the first century Mediterranean world society in which honour and shame played a great role (Moxnes 1988) that we see the matter as reciprocal.

In this respect Craffert's (1992:203) observation is pertinent:

The principle of reciprocity is closely bound up with patronage and obligations of honour....By contrast with the custom of *free* gifts in some societies, gift exchange in the first century world (as in many other cultures) was a reciprocal action; 'no one gave anything in goods, services, or honours without proper recompense to himself or his kin'....Gifts 'implied obligations and were made culturally with strings attached'....refusing a gift was no easier, since refusal incurred the burden of enmity.

It can be expected, then, that inasmuch as Paul wished to get something from his implied Roman readers, he would need to give them something in exchange, or alternatively, give them something at the outset or during his stay, to get something in return. In this respect, then, I believe, a comparison of 1:11b and 15:29 with 1:12, 15:24d, and 15:32 is in order (cf Stambaugh & Balch 1986:138). Imparting to them some χάρισμα, establishing them, and coming to them in the 'fulness of the blessing of the Gospel of Christ,' it is highly likely that that is

what would secure for Paul what he wished his Roman Gentile audience to supply in return.

The fact, as Paul indicates, that he had 'fully preached the Gospel of Christ' from Jerusalem and surroundings to Illyricum (15:19b) and the way he sets that gospel before them may very well serve a dual purpose, namely, both to open the door for his reception, and to pave the way for him to consolidate them with the rest of the Gentile world, under his leadership.

In respect of Vorster's observation that Paul also sought to bring about the cooperation of the non-Jews with reference to their relationship with the Jews (1992:99), Vorster, quite rightly, asks whether Paul had the right to request the cooperation of the non-Jews since (1) he was not responsible for the coming into being of the Christian fellowships in Rome and (2) up to the point of writing this letter, had had no previous contact with them. In reply to his own question, Vorster points out that, with this purpose in mind, Paul resorts to (1) an identification with the non-Jewish believers in Rome, (2) connects his personal past to the *εθνη* (1:5-6, 13-15; 15:16-21), (3) shows them that they hold the same value system (1:1-4, 8, 14, 16-17) and (4) by the use of various politeness strategies marks them as his co-workers (1992:99). Paul further also identifies with them by taking their side in the tension between the Jews and non-Jews (1992:99).

This latter aspect, then, also, brings us to the third of the issues that we have listed above, the second component of the problem in the Roman rhetorical situation as Vorster (1992:99-100) has it, namely, 'to adjure a credibility crisis with reference to the status of the non-Jews.' But can this argument hold? I believe it can. In this respect Fraikin's (1986:104-105), observation who also gives attention to the rhetorical situation of the Roman letter, is pertinent. He writes:

The situation is that of a reform movement which fails to win the majority. Its values and social credibility derive from the main body, the truth of which it claims to represent. As the new movement meets with the resistance of the old, there comes a point when it has to conclude that the mother body will not follow.

The reform movement is rejected and does not succeed in becoming part of the group that can be reckoned as being ‘inside.’ The Roman letter is written in this inter-phase, in which the tension between the two groups can be observed, but before breaking away from each other (Fraikin 1986:104; Vorster 1991a:159; 1992:100).

That there was, in fact, such an inter-phase can be seen from Paul’s accentuation of the priority of the Jews as well as the way in which he repeatedly takes his departure from the Jewish traditions (Vorster 1991a:159 cf also Vorster 1992:100). Given the situation, Paul writes to the Gentile Christians in Rome to confirm their credibility (1991a:159; 1992:100).

Endorsing Fraikin’s observation, Vorster (1991a:160) correctly finds, though, that the situation needs further qualification. The conflict observed in the letter (*contra* Donfried 1974 and others) is not to be interpreted as an inner-congregational conflict. Instead of the Jewish and the Gentile Christians in Rome being in conflict with each other, for Paul it is about the role and position of the Jews and Gentiles with respect to each other in the framework of God’s history with the world (cf 1:16-17; 2:9-10; 3:29-30).

That this is so has already also been observed before Vorster by Stendahl (1976:3-4), Keck (1979:84), Sanders (1983:19) and Moxnes (1988:61). We have, then, also already encountered elements of this in Dunn’s (1988:Ixxii) observation. In this respect Godsey’s (1980:3) contribution is also to the point, that while Romans is not a systematic treatment of the apostle’s theology, it

does illuminate his central theological and ethical concerns as he focuses on the burning issue of the relationship of the Jew and the Gentile in the economy of salvation (see also Jewett 1982:5).

By confirming their mutual value system, says Vorster (1991b:32), it serves to show that they occupy a position of honour. This, Moxnes (1988:63), in turn, points out is best understood against the background of the ancient value system of the Mediterranean world. Paul's concern with relations between Jews and non-Jews, and the question of the people of God, fits well within the concerns of an honour society: 'honour is based on the recognition and approval of others and therefore the group is more important than the individual' (Moxnes 1988:63).

People, Moxnes (1988:63) notes further, perceive themselves first and foremost in terms of their relations to other persons and groups. Although honour also represents a person's value in his or her own eyes, it is ultimately dependent on evaluation and confirmation by society. A person makes claim to honour, but it only truly becomes honour when the claim is recognised by the 'significant others.' When a claim to honour is rejected, the result is shame.

The picture Paul gives us of the Jews, correctly, then (Vorster 1992:102), is a picture of a people who had given themselves a 'status of honour' at the cost of the non-Jews (see 2:17-20). In terms of the Jewish ideology, the Jews occupy a position of honour and therefore also of a God-given power (cf also Alford 1968:333-334; Dunn 1988:108, 116-117). The position of the non-Jewish implied audience, on the other hand, is that of shame and therefore also of powerlessness (Vorster 1992:102).

Paul responds to this 'national pride' of the Jews (see also Dunn 1988:117) by questioning them on their superior position, and by literally redefining the

non-Jews in terms of the flattering identity markers of the Jews. This redefinition still takes its departure from the Jews' perspective. For this reason there is a stated paradoxicality attached to the status of the implied audience (Vorster 1992:102). On the one hand, they are in an inferior position, powerless and oppressed, yet on the other, it is exactly they who are now embued with status and, on the basis of faith, characterised as the 'strong.' As Paul has identified himself with the implied audience in numerous ways throughout the letter, he identifies with them again in Romans 15:1 and here with the appellation δυνατός (Vorster 1992:113; cf also Robertson 1931:417; Alford 1968:458; Denney 1974:708; Griffith Thomas [1974] 1976:380; Dunn 1988:837).

The Jewish Christians trickling back to Rome following the expulsions of some years earlier, undoubtedly, were in a vulnerable position both in number and socio-political circumstances (see also Dunn 1988:812). The issue which confronted Paul here was a serious one. The breaking down of the barrier between Jew and Gentile, which was so much of Paul's mission, Dunn (1988:811) correctly observes, had resulted in an abandoning of the hitherto characteristic hallmarks of the Diaspora Jew (see again Kraabel 1987:54-58). The abandonment of or refusal to adopt such important identity markers probably caused few problems for the Gentiles. But for the Jewish Christians or Gentiles who had long been associated with Judaism (cf again Vorster 1984:65) before they heard the Gospel, much more was at stake. It was nothing less than an identity crisis (cf Dunn 1988:811) and Paul was forced to intervene (see also Vorster 1984:65).

It is from this position, then, that is, of the non-Jewish implied audience as the 'strong,' that the appeal is made to them to accept the 'weak' (the Jews and adherents of Jewish customs relegated to this position from Paul's perspective on the basis of 'faith'; 15:1). In this respect, the parenetic section 14:1-15:13, which we have denied as a reason *per se* for Paul's writing the letter (Donfried

1974), strongly comes into focus. That the ‘strong’ implied audience can be identified with the non-Jews and the ‘weak’ with the Jews (Vorster 1992:114, so Dunn 1988:831) means that the position has been reversed. And while it is granted that previously the non-Jews were rejected by the Jews on the basis of the perspective of their priority, the danger now exists that the non-Jews may resort to reprisal and, in turn, reject the Jews. Such a situation could only have led to friction and conflict, especially where the balance of power had been disturbed and immeasurably in favour of the one group.

It is with this situation in mind that an appeal is made to the ‘strong’ implied audience not to lose their ability at judgment (14:4, 10, 13, 19) but to act accommodately (15:1-7).²² In this respect Vorster’s argument is supported, then, also by Dunn (1988:837) who says that ‘the appeal probably has in view the too confident Gentile Christians in general’ (cf 11:18; 12:3, 16). Although Paul clearly indicates that the ‘weak’ must be receptive, the request to conform is nevertheless directed to the ‘strong.’

It is important that while it is true that the implied audience as a homogenous group could pass under the name Εθνη and be viewed as an inner group, that at no time did Paul wish to sever the bond with Judaism (1992:116). Paul’s energy was clearly directed at working a conciliation rather than a separation between persons holding opposite views. In this respect Dunn’s (1988:Ivii) observation is relevant:

Watson’s attempt...to argue from 14:1-15:13...that Paul’s objective was ‘to persuade members of the Roman Jewish Christian congregation to separate themselves from the Jewish community and to recognise and unite with the Pauline gentile Christian congregation...is misdirected’....Paul is arguing to maintain the bond between covenant people and Christian congregation (e.g., 3:25-26; 4:16; 11:1-32; 15:27), not for a divorce.

The appeal to mutual acceptance is based on Christ as example (15:4, 8; see Robertson 1932:417-418; Alford 1968:458; Denney 1974:709; Boers 1982:192; Dunn 1988:835; Vorster 1992:114). In this respect, 5:1-11, where it is shown how Christ accepted the implied readers in spite of the fact of their inferior status at that stage, especially comes into focus. In 14:15 and 14:20-21 the implied audience is again brought to bear and once more associated with the 'strong' ones (Dunn 1988:837) who could hold the faith (Vorster 1992:114). Vorster's observations and of those who support him, undoubtedly are keen and, to my mind, entirely to the point.

At the outset we intimated that in order to understand Romans 7 we would of necessity first have to establish the purpose of the letter as a whole. In pursuance of this aim we have presented the views of Donfried (1974), Wuellner (1976), Jewett (1982), Dunn (1988) and lastly of Vorster (1991a, 1991b, 1992). Donfried's (1974) view while not entirely without merit we have shown must, however, be seen in the context of the whole. In respect of Wuellner (1976), Jewett (1982) and Dunn (1988), these scholars have each, in turn, made a valuable contribution not only to the understanding of the whole letter but also in particular that of Romans 7. Following on this we presented the view of Vorster (1991a, 1991b, 1992).

Vorster (1991a, 1991b, 1992), we have shown, focuses our attention once again on what Wuellner (1976), Jewett (1982), Dunn (1988) and other scholars of the same persuasion, before him had recognised as the purpose of Romans. Not only so, but also that Vorster, for his part, added three further aspects, namely (1) to effect the cooperation of the non-Jewish believers in Rome and to consolidate them with non-Jewish believers of his past under his authority, (2) to use Rome for a base for his future expansion of his gospel to the West, and (3) to adjure a credibility crisis in respect of Gentile Christian believers with reference to the status of the Jews. This we have shown, Vorster (1991a, 1991b,

1992) points out, Paul does by (1) literally redefining the non-Jews in terms of the flattering identity markers of the Jews, and (2) by questioning the Jews on their superior position (Vorster 1992:100). Vorster's observations we have, then, also accepted as tenable.

But having done so, what conclusions are we to draw for the understanding of Romans 7? The answer is not complex. It clearly undoes the shackles of the 'hermeneutical caricature' (Borchert 1986:82) to which we have long been bound by the conventions of traditional theology, and gives us the freedom to approach Romans 7 without any predetermined biases. This means that we can eavesdrop on Paul's conversation with his implied Gentile Christian audience in Rome and hear what he was saying to them in *their time* in respect of their position over against the law.

Vorster we have also shown, observes that in pursuing his aim, Paul identifies himself with his implied Gentile Christian audience in Rome, connects his personal past to the Gentiles (1:5-6, 13-15; 15:16-21), shows them that they hold the same value system (1:1-4, 8, 14, 16-17) and by using various politeness strategies (cf Jewett 1982:5) marks them as his co-workers (1992:100). Not only so but also takes their side in the tension between the Jews and non-Jews (1991b:32). We find that Romans 7, in turn, is also replete with these strategies etcetera.²⁹ Only in Romans 7 specifically in respect of the relation of the law to the flesh as a matter of great significance in respect of the new life of the believer in Christ. This, then, confirms the necessity of first having had to establish the purpose of Paul's address to his implied audience as a base from which to work for an understanding of Romans 7 in particular. Having concluded thus, let us now turn to Romans 7 *per se*.

Endnotes

1. See Campbell W S (1981a:22): 'Numerous and varied suggestions have been proposed by scholars in recent years concerning the occasion and purpose of Romans. Though not all are sceptical about the outcome, some scholars feel that the varying conclusions witness to an increasing confusion rather than clarity in the interpretation of the letter.'
2. Campbell (1973:268) proposes that a division had apparently arisen because the liberal-minded Gentile Christian majority (the strong in faith) were unwilling to have fellowship with the conservative Jewish Christian minority (the weak in faith).
3. See also Sanders (1977:488): 'The letter to Rome, while recapitulating many themes from other correspondence, is really concerned with the Jewish-Gentile problem and is not a summary of Paul's theology in the sense of a tract....With regard to Donfried's argument...his first assumption is not convincing....Romans is unique in being addressed to a church not founded by Paul, and I see no force to an argument based on the occasion of the other letters.'
4. Kaye (1975:37), contra Manson who based his view on the internal arguments that Paul had sent from Corinth to Rome a letter comprising Romans 1 to 15, and a copy of this, together with Romans 16, to Ephesus, says that 'Rom I-XVI was the letter sent to Rome' and again (1976:40) 'the internal arguments for regarding Romans XVI as not part of an original letter to Rome are quite unsatisfactory.' Bruce (1982:334), in turn, sees Romans 1:1 to at least 16:23 to have been a letter addressed to the Christians of Rome. Dunn (1988:Ix), for his part, that 'most recent commentators accept that Rom 16 was part of the letter to Rome.'
5. While I do not agree with Karris (1974), who contends with Donfried (1974:333) concerning the situation in Rome, that Romans 14:1-15:13 is but part of a letter which serves to set up Paul's missionary theology and parenthesis I do believe Karris (1974:356) is entitled to question Donfried about the specific nature of the conflict between the Jewish and Gentile Christians that Paul was supposed to have heard about and was trying to settle by writing to the Romans. Confer also Bruce (1982:341): 'Caution must be exercised when evidence is sought in this letter for the state of the Roman church at the time of writing, lest we find ourselves arguing in a circle.' And Tolbert (1972:391): 'This is a position taken by many interpreters of the letter in spite of clear evidence that this could not have been the case.'
6. Sanders (1977:488), reflecting on the Donfried-Karris debate, ventures that the letter to the Romans did have a specific occasion, but that occasion was not a debate within Rome. It was the impending trip to Jerusalem, and then to the West and Paul's worry about the Jewish-Gentile problem informed by his recent difficulties. See here also Pelser (1989:45). So Beker (1988:371-372), who says that 'it is curious, if not unintelligible, that Paul refers to concrete problems (chs 14 and 15) only after the very lengthy theological reflections of chs. 1-11 and after the quite general parenthesis of chs. 12 and 13.'
7. Vorster (1991b:2) observes that with this article, Muellner has offered possibilities of reading the letter to the Romans in a new light.

8. The genres that Jewett (1982:6) refers to are the 'deliberative' genre of 1 Thessalonians and 1 Corinthians, and the 'apologetic' or 'forensic' genre of Galatians and 2 Corinthians 10-13.
9. Stowers (1986) recognises elements of all the following in the letter to the Romans: epideictic (pp 77-81), exhortation (pp 91-94), advice (p 107), protreptic (pp 112-113), admonition (p 128), and mediation (pp 153-156).
10. See in this respect, for example, 'beloved of God, called to be saints' (1:7); 'your faith is spoken of throughout the world' (1:8); 'we that...are strong' (15:1); 'I...am persuaded of you...that ye also are full of goodness' (15:14) etcetera.
11. See 'as we are slanderously reported, and as some affirm that we say' (Rm 3:8).
12. Confer also Kaye (1976:41), who calls it 'a manifesto of faith.' And Bruce (1982:345) who, in turn, observes that 'it was in any case expedient that Paul should communicate to the Roman Christians an outline of the message he proclaimed' (cf also Pelser 1989:46).
13. Elliot's thesis which reads: ""Evangelizing" the Romans is absent from Paul's future plans, not because that was never really his intention, but because that intention has been achieved between chs. 1 and 15, that is, by the letter itself" (1990:87), is far-fetched.
14. See here also Muellner's (1974:348) observation, namely: "we see Paul emphasising Christian solidarity in its fulness and its limits (14:1-12) an...appeal to mutual acceptance in the spirit of Christ" (15:7-13; cf also Jewett 1982:13; Dunn 1988:Iviii). Confer also Vorster (1992:114): "Min twyfel bestaan dat die "sterk" geimpliseerde lezers met die nie-Jode en die "swakkes" met die Jode geïdentifiseer kan word."
15. In that the purpose of the letter is missionary (Dunn 1988:Iv), and to elicit prayer support for the offering for the poor in Jerusalem (Dunn 1988:Ivi) this has already also been said by Dahl (1977:78) and Bruce (1982:349-350). In that it is apologetic, that Paul wished to gain acceptance of his gospel by the Roman Christians (Dunn 1988:Ivi), that it is pastoral (Dunn 1988:Ivi-Ivii), and that Paul wished to promote acceptance by 'the strong' of 'the weak' in Rome (Dunn 1988:Ivi-Ivii) see also Klijn (1967:77), Kümmell (1975:312), Dahl (1977:77), Boers (1982:194-195) and Bruce (1982:349-350).
16. In respect of the composition of Judaism during this time see again Kraemer (1989:36-37).
17. See 'the real Jew' (Rm 2:25-29); 'the elect of God' (Rm 1:7; 8:33; 9:6-13; 11:5-7, 28-32).
18. Kraabel, A T 1987 "Unity and diversity among diaspora Synagogues." See also Gl 2:11-19; 4:8-11.
19. See here Vorster (1991:184-189) concerning 'Paul's non-interference policy.'
20. Cf εἰς τὸ ὅρπιζθιναι ὥπας. The word ὅρπιζθιναι means to set fast, to set in a certain position or direction (Bagster (1975:204); to make fast, prop, fix, set (Liddell & Scott [1889] 1978:746).

21. See 'when I come unto you, I shall come in the fulness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ' (Rm 15:29).
22. Fraikin (1986:104) sees it thus: 'The Gentile Christians who constitute the majority of the new movement are rejected by Israel but are asked not to reject Israel in return.'
23. See, for example, 'brethren,' 'I speak to those who know (the) law' (v 1); 'that "we" should bring forth fruit' (v 4); 'when "we" were' (v 5); 'But now "we" are delivered...wherein "we" were held; that "we" should' (v 6); 'What shall "we" say' (v 7); '"we" know' (v 14); "our" Lord' (v 25a).

CHAPTER 4

THE RHETORICAL FUNCTION OF ROMANS 7 WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF ROMANS 5-8

1 INTRODUCTION

At the outset I stated my thesis that Paul is writing to a Gentile Christian audience with whom he wants to identify by a redefinition of the Gentile Christian's position to the law. In doing so he directs them away from the law. The question though is why Paul found it necessary to do this. What connection did his implied audience have with the law when they were not under (the) law (Rm 6:14)? In respect of the aforementioned I have on a number of occasions hinted that there was a tendency among Gentile Christians to want to return to Judaism and thus to the law. As the rhetoric of Romans 7, to my mind, is precisely to counter this tendency amongst Gentile Christians, I briefly present what, I believe, the reasons were for the tendency among Gentile Christians.

In this respect Brown's (1988:59) observation that in the ancient world ceremonious persons had always regarded intercourse, childbirth and death as proper subjects for taboo is helpful. Far from being repugnant for pagans, much of Jewish observance of such religious matters (except circumcision) earned their respect due to the upholders of a solemn and long-established religion. Judaism in the cities of the Diaspora therefore continued to appeal to pagans precisely because it was an ancient religion as punctilious as their own.

The Jews observed the solemn rhythms of high festivals and upheld codes of purity and this afforded men and women the opportunity to approach in a disciplined and thoughtful manner, the things that lie between nature and culture, half-wild, half-civilised. According to Brown (1988:59), it was, then,

also pagan converts and not the local Jews who forced Paul to adopt Jewish customs. They preferred to become like Jews rather than creatures condemned to ritual invisibility and for security reasons, then, strove to range themselves with the Jews.

Paul's answer to this question was No! Any overture to the law in the face of humanity's dilemma (cf 3:20) was senseless and therefore of no value to anyone (cf 4:2; 7:5).¹ Paul certainly wanted to bring the Gentiles within the scope of Judaism, but in the context of a 'new creation' and not of the old (cf 5:1, 2-21; 6:4-8, 11-23; 7:4, 6a-c, 24-25a; 8:1-6, 9-11, 13-18; cf also 2 Cor 5:17). For this the new life of the risen Jesus stood for a challenging discontinuity between the old and the new (Brown 1988:50). It should come as no surprise therefore, then, also that the body, the cause of so much anxiety for Gentile Christians, would feature prominently in Romans 6-8. In respect of the argument of Romans 6 it can be said that it leads up to that of Romans 7, whilst that of Romans 8, in turn, looks back on the argument of Romans 7.

In Romans 6, 7 and 8 Paul also, then, expresses a great measure of negativity in respect of the body (cf 6:6, 12-23; 7:5, 8, 18, 24, 25b; 8:3-13, 19-23). Understandably so, because for Paul the body was as it were the field where all manner of sin was generated (cf 7:5, 8) and for which, in turn, there was only one reward, namely, death (see 6:23; 7:9-11; 8:4, 6-8, 12-13). For that reason too, then, he holds up the body as the one great stumbling block to a right relationship with God (see 6:6, 12-22).

According to Brown (1988:26), the pagan world courted a dualistic image of the person which purported that the soul would eventually escape the body. In its view the body was only a clay that had been 'cunningly compounded' and on which age, disease and death fastened themselves relentlessly (Brown 1988:26). At the end of so much long pain it was best for the soul, then, to go away,

perhaps to the stars, ‘clean of a body’ with the diseased flesh at last melted away from the mind (Brown 1988:26). Not so in Judaism though and not so with Paul. In Judaism and with Paul it was different: the daily conflict of body and mind (7:23-24) was overshadowed by a mightier and more significant dualism.

In this dualism all mankind stood before God as other and inferior to him; body and soul faced him together; he created both and would therefore judge both. Every believer confronted God thus not as a soul committed for a time to the necessary, if thankless, task of bringing order to an alien body, but rather as the possessor of a heart, that is, a hidden core of the self (cf 5:5) that could respond to or reject the will of its Creator (Brown 1988:35; see 6:6, 12-13; 7:22-23; 8:12-13). The pain of the pious, then, was precisely that whilst good inclinations urged them to obey God, an evil inclination, namely, a deep-seated tendency to hold back from obeying God at the same time lay close to their hearts (see 7:21-23).² This evil inclination, then, also appears to suffuse the human person as a whole like an ‘evil yeast’ working deep within the dough of human nature (Brown 1988:35).

Whilst Lindijer ([s a]:92, 164-172) holds that Paul did not court the pagan world dualistic image of the person (cf also Ridderbos 1959:159) - whether this was so in fact, is not certain - he does observe that Paul appears to show some division between the body and the soul. In Romans 6, 7 and 8 Paul does look on the body with a measure of disdain as something that causes aversion (cf 6:6; 7:18; 8:8) and a strong draw card for sin (cf 6:6-7, 12-13, 19-21; 7:5, 8, 14; 8:3-8; 10, 12-13). Paul then also presents the body, a weak thing in itself, as lying in the shadow of a mighty force, namely, the power of the flesh - the body’s physical frailty. Its liability to death and the undeniable bent of its instincts towards sin, in turn, served Paul as a synecdoche for the state of human kind pitted against God (Brown 1988:48).

Whatever the cause of the conflict of body and soul, it was a fact of life and many of the sins most distasteful to Paul, notably lust and drunkenness, evidently arose from a surrender to the promptings of the body (Brown 1988:48; see 6:6, 12-13, 17, 19; 7:5, 8; 8:12-13). It is a nonentity therefore that the body could be corrected by legislation (cf 5:6; 6:11-14; 7:5-6, 14, 15, 18, 21-23) and any attempt to do so was doomed to failure (cf 8:3, 8). The solution lay neither in an escape from the body nor in the observance of a set of rules, but in a redemptive act (cf 5:6, 8; 6:6-7; 7:4, 24-25a; 8:2-11) under the rule of the Spirit (7:4, 6a; 8:4-5).

There is no tension of an inner-congregational conflict between Jewish and Gentile Christians in Rome to be detected in Romans 7 (cf Vorster 1991a:160). It is a conflict between law and grace, initiated on the one hand by a tendency among Gentile Christians to want to turn to Judaism in order to identify with the value systems prevalent in Rome and by Paul's response to it, on the other. The rhetoric of Romans 7 is set, then, to show his implied audience that what they sought through the law they already have through Christ (cf 7:4, 6a, 25a). Underlying the necessity to counter this tendency among the Gentile Christians lay Paul's desire to (1) effect a cooperation between the non-Jewish believers in Rome and consolidate them with the non-Jewish believers of his past under his authority, (2) use Rome as an operational base for his future expansion and (3) enlist the material support of his audience for his mission to the West (cf 15:24; Vorster 1992:99).

2 METHODOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

This study approaches the rhetoric of Romans 7 from the traditional perspective (cf Brock & Scott 1990) and takes Kennedy (1984) as starting point. In respect of the premise of this perspective Wichelns's observation (Brock & Scott 1990:27) that one 'must conceive of the public man as influencing the men

of his time by the power of discourse' applies. With this perspective we shall consider:

- 1 the rhetorical units of Romans 7
- 2 the role players in the units
- 3 the exigence of the rhetorical situation
- 4 the persuasive strategies Paul uses in his argument

In respect of the delineation of rhetorical units, it is important to note that the delineation of a unit as such is determined by a given argument or phase of an argument. In isolating the rhetorical units of Romans 7 the method outlined by Kennedy (1984:33-34) is helpful. This permits the isolation of three rhetorical units in respect of Romans 7, namely, 7:1-6, 7:7-12 and 7:13-25. These units though link up with one another to make the whole. Justification for the isolation of these sections as rhetorical units is based on that each has a beginning, a middle and an end. Not only that but each of these units, in turn, begins with a question and ends in a statement. In terms of the argument of each unit I shall, then, also show where each unit begins and where it ends. The syntactical elements that help to define these units are also some of the items to which I shall give attention. I shall, then, further also at the commencement of each unit give a brief explanation thereof.

In respect of the role players, various persons can participate in the rhetorical situation. A basic distinction can be made between those who have an interest in the situation and those who not only have an interest in the situation but who control it. The latter are responsible for the rhetorical process (see Vorster 1984:48; 1990:120). It is important that we follow this criterion in determining the role players in a rhetorical unit otherwise it is possible that nearly everyone/everything in a rhetorical situation could be seen as a role player.

Accordingly, then, ‘audience’ rather than ‘readers’ is the preferred term for Paul’s addressees because New Testament texts were intended to be read aloud to audiences of hearers rather than silently by individual readers as we now read them (see Keck 1979:20; Kennedy 1984:5; Dunn 1988:407; Vorster 1989:28). As interaction between the role players takes place in the dimensions of time and space, this is also presented. This is important in terms of constructing the context from which to work.

In respect of the interaction of the role players with one another in the dimensions of time and space, attention will be given to the temporal and spatial deictics in the respective sections. Whilst there is no reference to any geographical dimension of space in the text, there are references to spatial dimensions of a non-geographical nature. In respect of the latter the prepositions function as deictics. For this reason, then, attention will be given to the prepositions in the units.

It is also important to differentiate between the Paul ‘encoded’ (implied) in the text and the ‘real’ Paul as well as between the audience ‘encoded’ (implied) in the text and the ‘real’ audience. In this respect Vorster’s (1989:22-36) observation on ‘implied author’ and ‘real author’ and ‘implied audience’ and ‘real audience’ is helpful. The Paul encoded (implied) in the text (see 1:1-5) is not to be equated with the real Paul even if the two do occasionally overlap. The Paul encoded in the text is one created by the real Paul and implied in the text for as he writes he creates an implied version of himself. The implied version of himself is found in the text inscribed in linguistic, literary, rhetorical and other signs and traces. And from this the real readers (hearers) have to infer his profile (Vorster 1989:22-23).

The Paul encoded in the text is the governing and organising principle implied by the text and the source of judgments and values embodied therein. He

chooses what we read and how we read, and exerts power over the reading process. He chooses the details and quality that are found or implied in the work. He instructs the implied reader how to read by the signs of his presence in the text. He knows what is invented and that all the work's norms may not hold in 'real life' (Vorster 1989:22-23). It is the encoded (implied) Paul and not the 'real' Paul, then, whom we meet in Romans 7 and who, in turn, carries the argument in Romans 7.

In respect of Paul's audience I said earlier that I believed that his audience in Rome was a visualised Gentile Christian audience (see again 1:5-7; 13 etc) and that in a rhetorical situation the audience is a construct of the speaker. The term 'implied audience' had also been used from time to time. What now remains is that the concept 'visualised' or 'implied' audience and its purpose be qualified. In respect of Paul's audience in Rome, it should be noted that from a rhetorical point of view, whatever their make-up, the Roman community was not the actual congregation of people who received the address.

For in a rhetorical situation the audience is not the 'real' audience, but a literary construct, an image of an audience which is selected by the text (see Fraikin 1986:95; Vorster 1989:27; Vorster 1990:122; cf also Perelman 1982:14). It is implied in the text and in this sense it is encoded in the text by way of linguistic, literary, cultural and other codes. It is not identical to any outside flesh-and-blood audience therefore, but an image created by the author which has to be constructed through the reading (hearing) process in order to attribute meaning, that is, to actualise the text (see Vorster 1989:27). It is the implied audience, like the implied Paul, and not the real audience whom we, then, also meet in Romans 7. When I look at the relation 'encoded author' (speaker) and 'implied audience' in respect of Romans 7, I do so also in their interaction in terms of time and space.

With regard to the exigence of the rhetorical situation (cf Kennedy 1984:33), it is not my intention to ultimately present the exigence of the Letter to the Romans. Therefore I will also not elaborate on it when analysing each unit. The presupposition is that the exigence most certainly functions in the reason why Paul writes the letter. In the treatment of each separate section, however, I will make no explicit mention thereof. It will be evident though throughout the analysis. In respect of the nature of the exigence of the rhetorical situation, however, Kennedy and I part company.

I do admit that I used Kennedy's observations earlier in respect of rhetorical units in order to determine the rhetorical units of Romans 7. I did so for pragmatic reasons. For Kennedy says what a rhetorical unit is and mentions both the thought of a person and of a rhetorical unit. He also says that in a rhetorical situation a person looks for a given argument or phase of an argument and how it is embedded in a larger unit, and furthermore that a rhetorical unit has a beginning, a middle and an end (1984:33-34). Kennedy thus provides a delimitation unit with which one can work.

Although I follow Kennedy's methodology, I do not follow his philosophy as I do not agree with his view of history. In respect of the exigence of the rhetorical situation Kennedy (1984:34) following Bitzer (1968), proceeds from a realistic philosophy of meaning, that is, he believes that the *causa* of a rhetorical situation resides in an actual objective problem. The rhetorical situation thus roughly corresponds to the *Sitz im Leben* of form criticism (Kennedy 1984:34).

A departure from such a philosophy, however, is problematic. On the basis of such a premise one inevitably assumes that the rhetorical situation of a letter provides one with objective historical facts and that even opposing parties must see the problem in the same way. The mistake that Kennedy (1984:34-35) and

Bitzer (1968:4-8) make, however, is that a rhetorical situation as an objectively given does not exist (see Vorster 1994:141). Consequently I will make modified use of Kennedy.

The exigencies of rhetorical situations, it should be observed, are not things that rush upon people from reality itself but the result of people's creative activities. Social realities are thus not 'found' or 'discovered' but created (Vorster 1994:139-141). In the light of this, what rhetoric wants to tell us is that we have to do with a multiplicity of perspectives. The exigence which we are now going to seek with Paul, therefore, is one which he constructed and this is the exigence that we encounter throughout the analysis.

In respect of the persuasive strategies, it is not possible to examine or present all of them. But as the situation of Romans 7 centres on argumentation and persuasion I will use Perelman (1982) as a point of departure without restricting myself to Perelman. In a rhetorical situation identification by the speaker with his audience is an important element in persuasion (Vorster 1991b:64). In a text of argumentation the implied audience in return functions both as a means by which the close relationship between the speaker and the audience can be expressed and with which the real audience can identify, interact, and be open to persuasion (Vorster 1991b:64). We have seen that identification in terms of the purpose of the letter is a probability as a persuasive strategy and therefore attention will be given to this aspect. And as Paul is concerned with a redefinition of the Gospel for the Gentiles, it can be expected that dissociation will also be present. From these observations we now turn our attention to the rhetorical units of Romans 7.

3 RHETORICAL UNITS

3.1 Rhetorical unit 1 (7:1-6)

3.1.1 Delineation of rhetorical unit 1

This unit engages itself with the question of the believer's freedom from the law. It begins with the question: 'do you not know brethren...that the law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth?' (v 1) and ends with the statement: 'but now we have been delivered from the law...that we should serve in newness of spirit and not in oldness of letter' (v 6). The essence of the argument is that a believer cannot return to that in respect of which he/she has died (the old; 7:1c-4a), but has to occupy the context of the new (7:4b, 6; cf also 3:20-21; 6:3-7). A further reason why I have demarcated this section as a rhetorical unit is that it is dominated by the analogy of the marriage bond (7:2-4). In the previous section (Rm 6) a different type of metaphor worked, namely, that of the slave or servant (cf 6:6-23). It is thus quite clear that the foregoing section ends at 6:23 and what we have from 7:1 therefore is a new section. We turn now to the role players in this unit.

3.1.2 The role players

The role players in this unit are (1) Paul, stated (encoded) in Romans 1:1 as the speaker, who opens the discussion with: 'Or know ye not, brethren...I speak' (cf 7:1; cf also 'my'; v 4) and (2) the audience in Rome, encoded in the letter as Gentile Christians (see Rm 1:5-7, 13 etc) whom Paul, in turn, addresses as 'brethren' and 'you' (see 7:1, 4; Fraikin 1986:95; Vorster 1990:101, 1991a:167, 1991b:64). Justification for identifying Paul's audience as a role player is that he both calls them brethren and refers to their knowledge of the law (7:1). Paul and his implied audience are, then, also the controllers of the situation. Paul

acts in terms of his cause (1:1, 5-6, 11-15; 15:24). The audience has to make a decision about Paul and the proposition he puts to them. Both Paul and the audience have an interest in the matter. The audience will be affected by its own decision and the cause propagated by Paul is his cause (1:11-13; 15:24; cf Vorster 1984:48). From these observations we now turn our attention to the interaction of the role players with one another in the dimensions of time and space.

3.1.2.1 Interaction between the role players in the dimension of time

As Paul has made a case in Romans 6 regarding the believer's death to sin, he now turns to discuss the believer's death to the law. For this he returns to the theme of 6:14b (Little 1984:82). Previously he brought to the attention of his Roman audience that they are no longer under the law but under grace (6:14; cf Cranfield 1975:331; Dunn 1988:357). This he elucidates in 7:1-6 by showing not only how this is true, but also how this freedom had come about, that is, that they have been freed from the law by a death which in God's sight and by His gracious decision they themselves have died³ (Cranfield 1975:331) in Christ's death on their behalf (Ridderbos 1959:142-147; Little 1984:82; Dunn 1988:357; Elliott 1990:241-242). Paul begins his discussion with the logical principle that the law's authority over man lasts as long but only as long as he lives (7:1; cf Cranfield 1975:331).

The interaction between Paul as speaker and the envisaged audience in 7:1 is set in the present as shown by *ἀγνοεῖν*, *γινώσκειν* and *λαλεῖν*. With the statement that the law rules over man as long as he lives (v 1) Paul focuses the attention of his audience on the duration of that rule, that is, *Ἐφ' ὅσον χρόνον*. The *Ἐφ' ὅσον χρόνον ζῆ* extends the *κυριεύειν*. The extent to which the *κυριεύειν* may progress is set by *ζῆν*. This has far-reaching consequences for

Paul's implied audience in respect of their own position to the law as Paul will, then, also show shortly thereafter in 7:4 (cf ἐθανάτῳ θητε τῷ νόμῳ).

With the analogy (vv 2-3; cf Brandt 1970:15; Corbett 1971:34; Kennedy 1984:14), by the use two perfect passives, the one of δεῖν and the other of καταργεῖν, Paul fixes the attention of his implied audience on two facts: (1) the wife bound by the law to her husband (v 2a) and (2) her release from the law as a result of her husband's death (v 2c). The first of these passives locates the woman within the time parameters of ζῆν (v 2a), on the one hand and ἀποθανεῖν (v 2b), on the other, the law having been the governant for the duration of the ζῆν (v 3).

The implications of this for Paul's audience are without question. It presents them with a 'before' and 'after' in respect of their own position (cf also Little 1984:84). That this is so becomes clear by what follows. In line with the analogy, with the aorist passive of θανατοῦν (v 4), the imperfect active of εἰναι (v 5) and the aorist active of ἀπονήσκειν (v 6), Paul takes his audience back to three events in their past. The first relates to their having been put to death to the law, the second their condition prior thereto (under the law), namely, 'in the flesh' with the passions of sin working in their members to bear fruit for 'death,' and the third their release therefrom (cf MacGorman 1976:40).

The first of these, namely, 'you also have been put to death to the law,' undoubtedly holds a serious implication for them. The thought is the same as that in 6:2-11. However, as Ridderbos (1959:144) correctly observes, what is spoken of here is not of death to sin but to the law. In practice, being under the law means the same as being under sin (Alford 1968:375; Denney 1974:637; Cranfield 1975:337; Dunn 1988:363) and freedom in Christ is thus not only a freedom from the dominion of sin but also from the law (6:14; 7:4a).

In respect of the second, ‘for when we were in the flesh’ (v 5) paints the situation under the old rule (Alford 1968:375), not yet under the rule of Christ and the Spirit (cf 8:8-9). To quote Ridderbos (1959:145): ‘Het “zijn in de vlees” duidt deze menselijke existensie aan als een boven-individuele werkelijkheid, waaraan de individuele mens-buiten-Christus vervallen is.’ In this period, then, the passions of sins, prodded by the law, had worked in their members (cf 6:13) ‘to bear fruit for death’ (see Ridderbos 1959:144; Lindijer [s a]:152-154]).

In respect of the third, namely, ‘having died to that in which we were held fast,’ holds up to Paul’s audience (1) their previous condition of captivity, both to sin and the law and (2) their release therefrom. The presentation, we credit Ridderbos (1959:146), is the same as that of Galatians 3:23. About the law, he observes: ‘is voor de zondaar als een gevangenis, waaraan hy machteloos neerlight met geen ander uitzicht dan de dood. Zij houdt enerzyds de mens by haar eis en laat hem niet los: andersyds kan zij door haar voorschriften en verboden de zonde slechts steeds vermeerderen.’

With the deictic *vūti*,⁴ Paul brings his audience back with him to the present. Whereas they in the past, with the passions of sins working in their members, were bearing fruit for death, they are now in a position to bear fruit for God. The utterance ‘you were put to death to the law’ (v 4) is taken up here (v 6) again by ‘but now we were discharged from the law, having died to that in which we were held fast.’ And ‘that you may belong to another...that you may bear fruit for God’ (v 4) is taken up here, in turn, by ‘that we may serve in newness of Spirit.’

Of great importance here is the time factor with which we have to do. Given the situation that Paul’s hearers are already partakers of the divine nature (cf 1:7), already serving ‘in newness of Spirit’ bearing fruit for God, I believe we need to stop and ask: What is it that underlies this utterance? What is its

communicative objective? (Vorster 1990:111-118). Evidently it is the implied audience's credibility, the confirmation of a mutual value system they obtained not by law, but by grace (cf 6:14; see also 8:33-34), that is, by Christ (v 4), 'the *τέλος* of the law for righteousness for everyone that believes' (cf 10:4, 13-14). It follows that Paul wishes to lodge firmly in the minds of the members of his implied audience their status as at present.

Whilst the pace of the progress may not be strong, sometimes only latent (Van Rooy [1983] 1986:7), it is nevertheless a 'henceforth.' With the role players 'we' (*ἡμεῖς*) in the dimension of 'newness of Spirit' (v 6c; cf 2 Cor 3:6; Dunn 1988:366), the approach from the 'law rules' is complete (Steyn 1976:14), the rule of the law is relativised and at an end (Du Plessis 1961:93). With rule of the law at an end, the question of whether it is 'faith with or without law' (cf 5:1-2) is answered.³ It is clearly 'faith *without* law.' Paul thus confirms for his implied audience that the value they share is the only value that now exists; their credibility therefore cannot in any way be impeded (cf 8:1f, 33-34). And from these observations we now turn to the interaction between the role players in the dimension of space.

3.1.2.2 Interaction between the role players in the dimension of space

Interaction between the role players within the dimension of space in Romans 7:1-6 is limited. In respect of the geographical dimensions of space we said earlier that we have no reference to it in the text. In respect of the non-geographical dimension of space, in turn, we said that the prepositions function here as deictics, the meanings of which primarily express notions of space, then of time and finally are used in a figurative relation to denote cause, agency, means, manner and so forth (Smyth 1963:365). The prepositions that lend themselves to identification of locality in this unit are *ἀπό* (v 2), *ἀπό* (v 3), *εἰς*, *διά*, *ἐκ* (v 4), *ἐν* (2x), *εἰς* (v 5), and *ἀπό*, *ἐν* (3x; one implicit v 6). The

preposition ἐν in verses 5 and 6 are all locatives (see Smyth 1963:377; Liddell & Scott 1978:257; Moulton [1963] 1980:260).

Interaction between the role players in the dimension of space is limited to verses 5 and 6. Paul leads the argument by the expression ‘for when we were in the flesh’ (v 5a) then continues ‘the passions of sins, those through the law, operated in our members to bear fruit for death’ (v 5b). The implication in these verses is clear, namely, that the body had become the seat where the law exercises its rule and where the passions of sin abate themselves (cf Cranfield 1975:338; Lindijer [s a]:152-154). But while this is so, the person is nevertheless held responsible for the result (v 5b; cf 6:12-13, 20; 7:24). For the believer though this space is now the seat of the Spirit (v 6c) so that we now ‘bear fruit for God’ (v 4c; cf 6:13; 7:25a; 8:2, 4).

Obviously, as far as the status of Paul’s implied audience is concerned, this observation is of great significance for them. For whereas they previously had a cause for shame (6:21), the matter is now reversed, leaving them with cause for joy (5:1-2). And from this we now turn to the persuasive strategies employed by Paul.

3.2 Persuasive strategies in 7:1-6

3.2.1 Identification with the implied audience

In accordance with the contention that Romans is an argumentative text with the intent to persuade, we turn now not only to establish the junctures at which Paul identifies himself with his implied audience, but also to attempt to establish the communicative goal or objective of the utterance at the points at which such identification takes place.

3.2.1.1 Junctures at which identification with the implied audience take place

A mutual frame of reference in 7:1-6 appears at the following junctures: ἀδελφοί, γινώσκουσιν...νδμον (v 1a-b); in the analogy (vv 2-3); ἀδελφοί μον, θμεῖς ἐθανατώθητε, θμᾶς, καρποφορήσωμεν (v 4); ήμεν, ήμῶν (v 5) and κατηρήγθημεν, κατειχόμεθα, and ήμᾶς (v 6).⁶

3.2.1.2 The implications of identification with the implied audience

The address ἀδελφοί (vv 1, 4), an ‘in-group’ term (Vorster 1991b:115), locates the implied audience within the household and shows the identification to be as close-knit as that of a family. Already in the *exordium* of the letter Paul had located his audience in Rome in the household with him (1:13). The possessive pronoun μοῦ (v 4), in turn, serves, then, to draw this bond even tighter.

Dunn (1988:361) ascribes Paul’s use of μοῦ here to what he believes to be the sensitivity of the issue with which Paul has to deal, namely, that of the law. This might very well be conceded not only because we do not know exactly how Paul’s implied audience was made up, but also because some of his audience had wished to return to the law. Identification with the implied audience takes place in an interpersonal relationship (Vorster 1991b:128). The use of the possessive pronoun here confirms that relationship, except that now this relationship is confirmed with a people, most of whom he has never met, and that with a special warmth (cf Dunn 1988:857, 866).

The expressions ‘that we may bear fruit’ (v 4), ‘when we were in the flesh,’ ‘in our members’ (v 5b), ‘we are delivered,’ ‘we were held fast’ and ‘that we may serve’ (v 6), all serve to confirm this common bond. Identification with the implied audience by way of the personal deictics we/us/our is also prominent

in Romans 5, 6, and 8. Paul identifies himself with his implied audience by this avenue seventeen times in Romans 5, seventeen times in Romans 6, and twenty-eight times in Romans 8, on each occasion confirming the relationship between them.

An identification with the implied audience next takes place with the utterance: 'I speak to those who know (the) law.' Whilst it does suggest a shared world of knowledge (Vorster 1991b:254), it is highly likely that here too the fulsome language is probably exaggerated, as Vorster (1990:115-117) finds at 1:8 and Dunn (1988:866) at 1:8 and 15:14.⁷ The reason for this is that courteous compliments in the East tend to be in this way (Dunn 1988:866). And while on the one hand Paul would hardly expect them to take it literally, on the other it does express his confidence in their maturity that they are able to enter into a sensible discussion with him in what will shortly follow (Dunn 1988:866; Vorster 1990:116). The utterance, then, serves rather as a politeness strategy (Vorster 1990:123-125) for the discussion to be entered into and not so much as a standard by which to judge the extent to which Paul knew his implied audience in Rome.

In respect of the identification of Paul with his implied audience, we have on a number of occasions already shown that Paul repeatedly takes his departure from Judaism. Fraikin's (1986:94) observation brings the matter closer to home:

In the very first verses Paul locates the gospel, and therefore himself as servant of the gospel, in the Jewish tradition by mentioning the prophets and the holy scriptures and the Davidic lineage of Jesus...Paul the Christian does not look at the story of God's dealings with his people from a distance. The gospel is inside that space which Paul considers his home.

Dunn (1988:xii) also supports this thesis:

The basic point for our understanding of the letter...is that his Jewish and Pharisaic background became and remained an integral part of Paul. His self-identity and his concern with the heritage of his people provide one side of the dialogue which continues throughout the whole letter, the warp which runs back and forward throughout the whole pattern.⁸

It is important for our understanding of Romans 7 to note that whilst Paul was spatially removed from his audience at the time of his conversation with them, he overcomes this by the use of household terminology. This is borne out by the appellations ἀδελφοί...ἀδελφοί μου (vv 1a, 4a). The appellations in question locate Paul's audience in the household. This being so, the tension between distance and presence in the letter is reduced (Vorster 1990:111). If the brethren are in the same home, it means that their status is equal and that Paul's argument here serves only to confirm their mutual value system from which this status derives. To this we now turn our attention.

The character of Paul's home (Judaism) was previously that of (ἡ) σάρξ.⁹ This condition held not only inside but also outside of Paul's home. On the outside were the Gentiles (cf v 5). In Paul's home the law once ruled (v 1). It is not clear to what extent it ruled also on the outside of his home (cf Rm 2:15). What is certain, however, is that its judgment was equal for both Jew and Gentile.¹⁰

But since Christ had come (v 4), the character of Paul's home was no longer that of 'flesh' (oldness of letter/law), but on the contrary that of 'newness of Spirit' (v 6c).¹¹ And whereas formerly the members of Paul's implied audience were located outside of his home, they have since been brought inside (see 15:6, 9-12; cf Vorster 1991a:170-171, 1992:100). This is abundantly clear in the change of the personal deictics 'you' to 'we' in καὶ ὑμεῖς ἐθανατώθητε τοι ἵνα καρποφορήσωμεν (v 4).¹² The fact that some of the Jews in the house still wished to cling to the old condition (cf 11:23) does not abrogate that which now exists.

The nature of the space in the house as we have said is now a changed one. And herein both Paul and his implied audience reside. There is no pleading by Paul for anyone to be reconciled to God (cf 2 Cor 5:20) for this they already are (7:4). What transpires here is thus merely a confirmation of their mutual value system and an argument for strong adherence thereto. The era of the law has passed (v 4) and there can be no returning to it (cf 6:14; Gl 3:11; 5:2-4). What remains now is to persevere in the life that comes not by law but by grace (7:4; cf 6:23; Gl 5:1), namely, ‘in newness of Spirit’ and not ‘in oldness of letter’ (v 6c-d).

The other junctures at which identification between Paul and his implied audience takes place in this unit have already been shown. It is therefore not necessary to do so again. What remains now is a final remark, namely, that we said earlier that a requirement for a communicative setting, with persuasion as the objective, was that a speaker identify with his audience. For that becomes the means by which the real audience can identify, interact and be open to persuasion (Vorster 1991b:64).

In this respect we have shown both that Paul meets this requirement, namely, at the junctures: ‘brethren’ (vv 1a, 4a), ‘those who know (the) law’ (v 1b) and by the use of the deictics we/us/our (vv 4c, 5a-b, 6), and how this identification takes place: (1) both speaker and implied audience were under the rule of the law (v 1), (2) both have been put to death through the body of Christ, and therefore free from said rule (vv 4a, 6a-b), (3) both may belong to another (v 4b) and (4) both are to serve in newness of Spirit and thus ‘bear fruit for God’ (vv 4c, 6c). From this, then, follows that a mutual frame of reference has been established between Paul as encoded speaker and his implied audience. The real audience can therefore identify, interact with the implied audience, and be open to persuasion to Paul’s thesis of ‘faith’ without ‘law.’ From this we now turn our attention to Paul’s use of the strategy dissociation by the argument of

incompatibility. Paul's purpose is to show the Gentile Christians who want to return Judaism and thus to the law that this is incompatible with their own situation.

3.2.2 Dissociation

Perelman (1982:54) argues that 'we find ourselves faced not with contradictions but with incompatibilities in those instances in which the affirmation of a rule, assertion of a thesis, or adoption of an attitude involves us (even against our will) in a conflict with either a previously affirmed thesis or rule or with a generally accepted thesis to which we as members of a group are expected to adhere.'

Perelman (1982:55) also maintains that an incompatibility forces a person to choose, to indicate in a conflict, which rule will be followed and which will be relinquished or at least restricted in its scope. And later again (1982:66) that 'if we want to resolve an incompatibility and not just push it off, we must sacrifice one of the two conflicting rules, or at least "recast" the incompatibility by a dissociation of ideas.'

To identify with his implied Gentile Christian audience and to enhance their position of status, Paul finds it necessary to redefine for them their position in respect of the law. This he does by a dissociation of ideas, by pointing out to them the incompatibility of their yearning to be under the law with that of the position they currently occupy, namely, their position under grace. The whole of Romans 7 is bent on recasting this incompatibility for Paul's Gentile Christian audience by a dissociation of the idea that the body could be controlled by Jewish rhythms of high festivals and codes of purity (see again Brown 1989:59) and that the law is a means to status.

The dissociation of this idea by the argument of incompatibility (picking up the theme of Romans 6:14b, namely, ‘ye are not under (the) law but under grace’ once again) is triggered off by the utterance: ‘Or do you not know, brethren, for I speak to them that know (the) law, that the law rules over the person as long as he/she lives’ (7:1 [transl mine]). Strictly speaking, Paul’s implied Gentile Christian audience should already be aware of the implications of their own position to the law.

The analogy that follows (7:2-3) intensifies the argument for dissociation. The fact that the analogy at the point of its application seems to run wild (cf Du Plessis 1961:91; Steyn 1976:12; Polhil 1976:429; Trochme 1987:74) is not important. Dodd’s bewilderment as recorded by Cranfield (1975:334) and others (Little 1984:85; Dunn 1988:361)¹³ is also not necessary. It is further also not essential to engage in lengthy discussions on Paul’s use of analogy (see Little 1984:87-90). For the analogy merely seeks to support its proposition by finding some parallel, some likeness to the proposition under discussion (Du Plessis 1961:91; Alford 1968:375; Brandt 1970:128; Cranfield 1975:334). And unlike the pure mathematical proposition, ‘it does not posit the equality of two relationships but affirms rather a similitude between them’ (Perelman 1982:114).¹⁴

But what now is the similitude between the wife in the analogy and Paul’s implied Gentile Christian audience? The similitude is clear, namely, that inasmuch as a woman whose husband has died cannot still be bowed down by the conditions of the marriage situation but, on the contrary, her position must be redefined (see 7:3), so too must that of the Gentile Christian believer. This is spelt out, then, in no uncertain terms in the application of the analogy (7:4). Just as ironical as any suggestion in respect of the woman whose husband has died that the marriage law could still rule over her would be, so too is any suggestion that the law can still rule over the believer (cf Vorster 1991a:174).

The implications of Paul's words to his implied audience therefore are clear, namely, that they ought actually to know that the law cannot any longer rule over them. It is manifestly a gross error, then, on the part of anyone who would dare to think otherwise (7:1, 4; cf also 2 Cor 5:17). Paul's use of the analogy functions, then, within the larger frame of dissociation to bring home a specific point to his implied audience, namely, 'the law can and does rule where there is life (7:1), but you though have been put to death (7:4), and for this reason the law cannot rule over you' (7:1). A return to the law is thus taboo.

This point is further illuminated in Romans 7:6 by the contrast between 'Spirit' and 'letter' (Perelman 1982:130; Perelman & Olbrechts-Tyteca [1969] 1971:420ff). The state of Paul's audience prior to the liberating death of Christ on their behalf is clearly one in which they had been under the constraint of the law, confined by it within the realms of sin and death. But now that Christ has died the nexus of sin and death is broken. Consequently those who have identified with Christ in his death have begun to share in the eschatological life, a life that surpasses the boundaries of the old and frees from that which condemns to death (cf Dunn 1988:372).

To want to order one's life by the law in a typically Pharisaic style is thus a stifling and destructive undertaking (7:5; cf also 2 Cor 3:6). While the Jews believed that the letter spelt life (cf Dunn 1988:402), it was not so. On the contrary, it rather brought death (7:5-6a-b). Such was the precarious position of the person under (the) law. And such would again be the position of the one who had been set free and thereafter turned to Judaism and thus to the law. And this Paul brings home emphatically to his implied audience (7:5, 6d).

To summarise, then, my thesis is that Paul is writing to a Gentile Christian audience with whom he wants to identify by a redefinition of the Gentile Christian's position to the law. I stated at the beginning of this unit that the

essence of the argument is that a believer cannot return to that in respect of which he/she has died but must occupy the context of what is new. In the interaction of the role players in the dimension of time I showed that Paul holds before his audience a ‘before’ and an ‘after’ both in so far as it touches his audience and himself. Their former position was that of ‘in the flesh’ under (the) law with the passions of sin working ‘death’ in their members (7:1, 5, 6d), and their latter position is their release from the law (7:4, 6).

In the interaction of the role players in the dimension of space I showed that Paul argues that whereas the body had once been the seat where the law had exercised its rule and where the passions of sin had dominion (7:5), for the believer this space is now the seat of the Spirit which enables the believer to now bear fruit for God (7:4, 6). In respect of the persuasive strategies used by Paul I showed (1) the junctures at which he identifies with his implied audience and the implications thereof and (2) that by dissociation of ideas, by the argument of incompatibility, in the conflict between law and grace, Paul shows which rule is to be followed and which is to be relinquished (Perelman 1982:55). For Paul the issue is clear, namely: ‘It is the rule that the law could meet the demand for control over the body and status that has to be relinquished and not the life under grace’ (7:4, 6; see again 6:14) and for that reason a return to the law by a Gentile Christian is not to be undertaken. Now let us consider the second rhetorical unit (7:7-12).

3.3 Rhetorical unit 2 (7:7-12)

3.3.1 Delineation of rhetorical unit 2

This unit engages itself with the problem of ‘the role of the law in relation to sin.’ It begins with the question: ‘What shall we say then? Is the law sin?’ (v 7) and ends with the statement ‘wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment

holy, just and good' (v 12). The argument in essence is that (1) the law is not sin (7:7c, 12), (2) the knowledge of sin comes through the law (7:7d-e), (3) sin misuses the law to work iniquity in a person (7:8, 9, 11) and 4) whoever relies upon the law for 'life' to the contrary receives not 'life' but 'death' (7:10).

In respect of verse 13 it should be pointed out that some scholars see this verse as forming part with verses 7-12 because it appears to conclude the section and the tenses in the verse correspond with the tenses of the other verses in the section (e.g. Ridderbos 1959; Watson 1973; Fung 1978; Nickle 1979; Dockery 1981; Newman 1983; Milne 1984). Other scholars, in turn, locate the verse with verses 14-25 (e.g. Polhil 1976; Ziesler 1988; Garlington 1990). Dunn (1988:376-377), for his part, sides with the former, believing that not only does verse 13 conclude the section, but serves at once as a transition and as an introduction to the next. According to Dunn (1988:377), the appearance of γάρ in verses 14 and 15 is intended to bring out this connection and verse 13b, then, provides a heading for the next section.

Whilst such a close connection cannot be denied, verse 13 might very well be a *praesumptio*¹⁵ as the discussion which follows shows. While Dunn (1988:376-377) sees 13b providing a heading to 14-25, I see the possibility of dispensing with 13b and thereby linking 13a directly to 14-25. For this reason, then, I cast the lot of verse 13 with verses 14-25 and the appearance of γάρ in verses 14 and 15, like in Dunn's argument, to bring out the connection. Cranfield (1975:354), too, observes that the new paragraph begins with a question parallel to that raised in Romans 7:7. Now let us turn to Paul's argument in this unit (7:7-12).

According to Cranfield (1975:340-341), several things that Paul has said in the course of his argument (5:20; 6:14; 7:1-6) could give the impression that the law is actually an evil, in some way to be identified with sin (cf. also Dunn

1988:376). The law was held in high esteem by the Jews (cf Lv 18:5; Dt 6:24) and we have shown that it was also held thus by Gentiles (Brown 1988:59). On this basis, in the light of what Paul had said about the law, a question enquiring whether the law was ‘sin’ (7:7) could be expected. That Paul, in turn, would take up such a question comes as no surprise. That Dunn (1988:376) would see what follows in 7:8-13 as a ‘defence of the law’ (see also Newman 1983:131; Milne 1984:9) and Cranfield (1975:341), in turn, that with 7:7-12 Paul is seeking to deal with this ‘misunderstanding’ (see also Ridderbos 1959:149) could almost be taken as such.

This study contends, however, that Paul’s argument in this section entails far more than a defence of the law or the clearing of a misunderstanding (cf Lindijer [s a]:159). Paul’s rhetoric in this section is therefore also, then, specifically instituted to (1) curb any would-be confidence in the law as a means to status amongst his implied audience, for from its inception already the law had not been able to stay the onslaught of sin, (2) show them that it is a disadvantage to be under (the) law, (3) confirm for his implied audience their status and credibility (Moxnes 1988:63; Vorster 1991a:323) which they do have by virtue of their being in Christ (see 7:4, 6; cf also 6:14, 20-22) and (4) persuade them to adhere strongly to this.

If this were not so, why, then, Paul’s extensive use of the aorist tense in 7:8-11? And why, when he had just argued for his audience their freedom from the law in 7:1-6, does he now take them back to the past with him? If it is to clarify the relation between sin and the law, why, then, from the context of time gone by? What does that have to do with the present context of his audience? Does it have something to say to his implied audience in terms of the tendency amongst Gentile Christians to want to return to the law? I believe it does, and this will, then, also become evident when I deal with the role players in this unit, their

'interaction with one another in the dimensions of time and space, and the persuasive strategies that Paul uses in arguing his cause.'

3.3.2 The role players

Whereas in the previous unit Paul could explicitly be identified as the encoded speaker, here the situation has changed. This does not mean that the 'encoded' Paul has disappeared from the scene but he is taken up with his implied audience (see *ἔροῦμεν*; v 7) to the extent that the situation that we now have before us is not that of an ordinary speech situation. Identification with the implied audience is thus a factor here once again. As the identification, for its part, is set upon a redefinition of the Gentile Christian's position to the law, Paul once more stages a scene in which his implied audience and himself are the two characters, and with whom his implied audience can identify (cf Vorster 1991b:64). The use of the *Ἔγώ* (vv 8-10), *Ἐγνων* and *ἡδειν* (v 7), *ἴμοι* (v 8), *ἀπέθανον* and *μοί* (v 10), *με* (v 11), assisted by *ποτε* (v 9), in turn, then also presents a certain vagueness by which to elicit the participation of the implied audience.

3.3.2.1 Interaction between the role players in the dimension of time

The interaction between Paul and his implied audience in the dimension of time takes its departure with the question: 'What shall we say therefore? Is the law sin?' (7:7). Whilst the future tense, (*ἔροῦμεν*), is used here, it does not relate to an event which has to be played off in the future, but raises a matter which must be decided on directly. The question, whether on a suspicion of things that Paul had previously said about the law, namely, that the law could be identified with sin (Cranfield 1975:340-341; Dunn 1988:376), or taken up by Paul without such a suspicion, is inevitable for what he wanted to bring home to his implied audience.

The point that he wished to make to his implied audience is decided, namely, the law is not sin, but on the contrary is holy, and the commandment is holy, and just and good (7:12), but it is weak. It was proved as such already with Adam (Gn 2:16-17; 3:6, 11-13) and is still so now (7:8-11) and thus cannot help them (cf again Brown 1988:59). That the law is not sin is spelt out promptly, then, also by the μὴ γένοιτο that follows (7:7c).¹⁶ But while this is true, there is a connection, and that connection is that one can only experience ‘sin’ (come to know what sin is) through the law (v 7d-e; cf 3:20). With the aorist of γινώσκειν and the pluperfect of εἰδέναι (v 7b-d) Paul shows, then, how a person arrives at the ‘knowledge’ (experience) of sin, that is, by the law naming it (7:7d-e). Whilst γινώσκειν means ‘to experience’ (cf Ridderbos 1959:149), εἰδέναι, in turn, means the beginning of ‘a continuing experience.’

But why εἰδέναι? The use of εἰδέναι is evident. And whether we accord it its normal pluperfect meaning or an imperfect meaning (Smyth 1963:35; Moulton [1963] 1980:86; Goodwin 1981:268; Van Rooy [1983] 1986:15), the implication is the same, namely, that it relates to an experience that had continued in the past, but had since come to an end to the extent that they are now safeguarded by Christ. But why does Paul hold this up to his implied audience? Is it perhaps for them to identify with the situation as being theirs also? Undoubtedly, for what Paul says here applies to them inasmuch as it applies to the ἐγώ (see 7:5-6; cf also 5:1-2, 8-11; 6:1-2, 6-7, 11-13).

Returning to the ‘experience,’ how did this come about? Through the law? No, not through the law, but through sin.¹⁷ Nevertheless had it not been for the law, the situation as such would not have pertained, for, as Paul makes explicit in verse 8b, ‘without (the) law sin was dead (inactive/dormant’; v 8b). The clause χωρὶς γαρ νόμου ἀμαρτία νεκρά, then, sharpens the contrast between sin and the ἐγώ (see Dunn (1988:381).¹⁸ Cranfield (1975:350) contends that with the phrase διὰ τῆς ἐντολῆς, Paul does not intend to suggest that the

commandment is the means by which sin obtained an ἀφορμή, (starting point) but that the commandment is actually that ἀφορμή (cf Dunn 1988:380). Cranfield's observation is pertinent in so far as it touches the interaction of the role players in the dimension of time. For it highlights two aspects, namely, (1) sin's first opportunity of its misuse of the law and (2) the law's opportunity at the same time to expose sin (v 7d-e).

What has been said thus far about the law already does not augur well for it. For clearly, of what use would a return to the law be if the law is not able to check sin? It does not stop there, however, but goes on to show the implied audience what effect the presence of the law has on a person, saying, "for I was "alive" without the law once, but when the commandment came sin "revived" and I "died" (v 9). The identity of the έγώ now needs to be qualified. Who is this έγώ? Is it Paul himself? If so, where and when and how, then, did his encounter with sin, the law and the commandment take place? When and where and how, then, also did he live without the law? Furthermore, if it was Paul's experience, what did it have to do with his implied audience? But presuming, on the other hand, that it was not his experience and the έγώ here is a rhetorical device (cf Moo 1986:129), who, then, is the έγώ and what is its function?

Many scholars flutter (cf Cranfield 1975:342) at the question of the identity of the έγώ in these verses and the time of the experience. Ridderbos (1959:150-151) suggests that Paul is referring to his infancy (see also Alford 1968:379-380).¹⁹ This is a good attempt except that we are told of statements from the time of Paul which emphasise the effort made by Jewish parents to provide their children with a thorough grounding in the law from these years (cf Denney 1974:468; Dunn 1988:382). Ridderbos's (1959:151) argument concerning έλθούσης and the verbs that follow²⁰ is also to be rejected as, I believe, it places an interpretive load on these aorists that they are unable to bear.

Two other suggestions offered in this respect are: (1) that it refers to the total period of Paul's childhood up to the time of his becoming *bar mitzvah* and (2) that it refers to the period of Paul's life as a Pharisee prior to his conversion (see Ridderbos 1959:151; Alford 1968:379; Dunn 1988:382). Both these suggestions should be set aside: the first, on the ground that it would necessitate our understanding the legal death which follows (v 9d; Greek text 10a) as that of Paul's conversion, and this cannot be (Alford 1968:379) for, as Dunn (1988:382) also observes, it is hardly possible that Paul would see his encounter with the risen Christ as a dying occasioned by the quickening of sin (vv 9-10) and the second, on the ground that prior to becoming a *bar mitzvah* a Jewish boy was probably not required to keep the law (partake in the rituals?).

It is unlikely, then, that a Jewish male of Paul's day could ever think of a period in his life when he was *χωρίς νόμον* (cf Ridderbos 1959:151; Alford 1968:379; Cranfield 1975:342-343; Newman 1983:132; Dunn 1988:382). According to Dunn (1988:382), most interpreters also agree that it is a mistake to treat this passage as autobiographical and to look for matching stages in Paul's own experience (see also Elliott 1990:246). But who is the *έγώ* then, if it is not Paul?

I said earlier that (1) the *έγώ* is a rhetorical device and (2) that whilst Paul could be identified explicitly as the 'encoded speaker' in the previous unit, he cannot to that extent be identified here. The reason is that he is here so taken up with his implied audience that the situation we now have is not an ordinary speech situation. In the light of what we have said so far we conclude that with this *έγώ* Paul is presenting himself as the representative of humanity, but with the focus on Gentile Christians. What it amounts to then is that Paul wants to work universally, but with particular accent on Gentile Christians. In terms of this, then, the *έγώ* can be said to equal Gentile Christians, but with the proviso that it does not exclude Paul (and anyone else for that matter).

But as the emphasis here is on the Gentile Christians, how do we relate this to Paul's implied audience, that is, what does it want to tell them? And also, what do we do with the statement, 'I was alive without the law once, but when the commandment came sin revived and I died' (v 9) when we have disqualified that Paul could at any time have lived without the law, and cannot therefore be the *έγώ* as such? Who is the *έγώ* here then? Into whose shoes is Paul stepping? I have already put forward that Paul is presenting himself as the representative of humanity. The only possibility that lends itself in respect of the identity of the *έγώ* here, notwithstanding the objection of some scholars (e.g. Moo 1986; Karlberg 1986), is that Paul is taking up the Adamic narrative and speaking as Adam (so Rabe 1986:61; Dunn 1988:381).²¹

Initially the reference to Adam is not so clear (Dunn 1988:399). But contra Cranfield (1975:343), to whom the idea that Paul is specifically speaking in the name of Adam is forced, the use of language in verses 7-11 corresponds all too well to the sequence of Genesis 2-3²² for us to credit Cranfield. The view that Paul speaks here as Adam is supported by Watson (1973) and other scholars. Watson observes that this view is strengthened by some unmistakable references to the story of the Fall. The use of the word *έντολή*; the progression from desire to sin; the concept of sin as a personal power (cf. the serpent; Gn 3:1-4); the deception effected by sin and the connection between sinful act and death all recall the story of Genesis 3²³ and in doing so pick up the reference to Adam in Romans 5. In the words of Bornkamm, says Watson (1973:28): 'The Adam of Rom. v:12ff speaks in the "I" of Rom. vii:7ff.'

But why all this? Why speak in the name of Adam? Paul does not do this without reason. Bearing in mind that Paul wants to bring home to his implied audience that the law (commandment) was already found weak at its inception and therefore could not help them, with whom else could he provide the proof than with Adam (Gn 2:16-17)? And what does it tell Paul's implied Gentile

Christian audience? It tells them that where the law is absent, sin is dead and for the person to whom sin is languid there is no death (7:4-6; 4:15; 5:12-13; 6:8, 14). This was their position in Christ (7:4a, 6a-c). Should there now, then, be a return to the law, the matter would only repeat itself once again. According to Ridderbos (1959:150), the Rabbis taught that in the battle between the good and evil inclinations the law was the best of the God-given means whereby to control the evil fervid. If Ridderbos is correct, this teaching was most likely to have been well known to Gentiles and it is for that reason, then, also that they wished to turn to the law (cf Brown 1988:59).

It was important for Paul's cause though (cf 1:11, 13; 15:24) to show his implied Gentile Christian audience that at its outset, that is, already with Adam, the law had not been able to hold in check the passions of sin. As much as it was so then, it is also so now. If it is still so now, what possible benefit could a return to the law hold? The answer is singular, namely, 'No benefit' For clearly to 'court' the law is to 'court' death! There is only one option therefore, namely, freedom from the law (7:4) for as the law gives sin its opportunity to enslave the person to itself and to death (Ridderbos 1959:152; Alford 1968:380-381; Denney 1974:640; Dunn 1988:384), so a release from the law ends that enslavement and death (7:4-5; 6:6-7; 8:1-4), for 'without (the) law sin is dead' (7:8b). And Paul needed his implied Gentile Christian audience to identify clearly with this (cf Vorster 1991a:118-120).

The irony of the situation is that whilst a person would expect the law to serve to ground one in 'life' because of sin, precisely the opposite transpires (7:10). Thus whatever the real intention for the law, the reality (cf Perelman 1982:55) is that it brings death (Cranfield 1975:352; Dunn 1988:384). And this no one under the law can escape (7:10; cf again 3:20; 4:15; 5:13). This was Adam's experience, this is the experience of the one under the law (5:12-13; 7:5, 8-11), and this will be the experience of the one not under the law but who turns to

it (7:9-10). It is clear that God's instruction, that is, the law, will work in the absence of sin, but not where it is present (7:8a; cf also Dunn 1988:384). Any attempt therefore to try and live by the law is a pointless exercise for the commandment more readily spells death than life. In Romans 7:11, with basically the same words as those used in Romans 7:8, Paul emphasises once again for his implied Gentile Christian audience the consequences that a life under the law has in store. It is not that the law, or the commandment, is sin (7:12), but it has no power to realise their expectations (see again Brown 1988:59). This Paul needs his implied audience to realise without fuss.

3.3.2.2 Interaction between the role players in the dimension of space

Once again there is no reference to interaction between the role players with respect to a geographical dimension of space in this unit. Reference to interaction between the role players in a non-geographical dimension of space is limited, for there is only one preposition in this section that indicates space, that is, the preposition *ἐν* (v 8; cf Smyth 1963:356).

Taking up the statement: ή ἀμαρτία διὰ τῆς ἐντολῆς κατειργάσατο ἐν ἡμοὶ πᾶσαν ἐπιθυμίαν, Paul shows his visualised Gentile Christian audience that it is in the very body which they sought to control by legislation that sin works its evil and that in the face of the commandment which says 'thou shalt not' (cf 7:7; cf Dunn 1988:380). All things being equal, under the law, the body (6:6, 12; 7:24; 8:10-13), the flesh (6:19; 7:5, 14, 18; 8:4-9, 12) and the members (6:13; 7:23) are but the playing field of sin where sin's passions work out fruit for death (cf 7:5, 6d).

This field in respect of the believer has now been redeemed (7:4, 6a). Consequently the Spirit, in turn, now operates in it (cf 7:6c). For this reason, then, Paul in Romans 6:12-13 and 6:19-22 exhorts his implied audience to yield

their members' servants to righteousness and not to sin. For the person under the law this space is the domain of sin (6:14; 7:5, 8, 11) and for that reason a reversion to the law by a Christian is fatal (7:9-10). This will once again give sin the opportunity to fully set in motion its work of destruction in the life of the person who returns to the law (7:8, 11; Gn 3:1, 4-5). For it is precisely through the commandment that sin was able to tempt Adam and generate in him the sin of lust (cf Dunn 1988:400). Inasmuch as sin gained control through the law then, it will gain control once again now (7:8a, 9, 11).

In the similitude of Adam who found the commandment that was given as a hedge against sin 'unto death' (7:10; cf Cranfield 1975:352), those among Paul's audience who return to the law will also do so. About this Paul wanted no misgiving (7:8, 11). The point to be taken by Paul's audience, then, in terms of the picture held before them is the reality of their situation under grace (6:14; 7:4, 6) as opposed the futility of that under (the) law. With this in mind let us turn our attention to the persuasive strategies used by Paul in this unit in arguing his cause.

3.3.3 Persuasive strategies in 7:7-12

3.3.3.1 Identification with the implied audience

In the foregoing unit (7:1-6) we showed that, as a means to making his argument most effective, Paul identifies himself with his implied Gentile Christian audience. A mutual frame of reference between Paul and his implied audience is shown in this unit by the deictics 'we' and 'I' (see *εροῦμεν*, *ἔγγων*, *ἡδειν*, *ἐμοί*, *ἔγώ*, *ἀπέθανον*, *μοί*, *μή*; v 7-11). In respect of the 'I' we have designated this a rhetorical device and have also shown that Paul specifically stages a scene here in which his implied audience and himself are the two characters, and with whom his implied audience can identify.

Whilst Paul identifies himself with his implied Gentile Christian audience and with the plural 'we' invites the participation of his audience he also does so with the 'I.' It would strictly have been in order had he used the deictic 'you' or 'we' saying thus that 'you' or 'we' would not have known sin, except through the law. The use of the 'I' is strictly but once again a politeness strategy (cf 7:1 'those who know the law'), Paul leaving it open to his implied audience to identify with the situation for themselves.

In respect of the question, 'Is the law sin?', the Gentiles undoubtedly had a high respect for the law. For were it not so there would not have been a tendency amongst them to want to live by its prescripts (see again Brown 1988:59). In respect of the Gentiles' admiration of the law, Dunn (1988:Ixx) places Josephus on record as saying:

The masses have long since shown a keen desire to adopt our religious observances....Were we not ourselves aware of the excellence of our laws, assuredly we should have been impelled to pride ($\mu\epsilon\gamma\alpha\varphi\rho\omega\nu\epsilon\tau\eta$) ourselves upon them by the multitude of their admirers.

Paul undoubtedly held a knowledge of this sentiment and for that reason it was important that he clarify the relation between sin and the law. It is not that the law is sin (7:7c, 12), Paul shows, but its inability to curb sin's onslaught on humankind (7:8a). And this is his concern, then, also for Gentile Christians who want to return to the law (7:9-11). And for this reason, then, he also stages the scene in 7:7-11 and through the $\xi\gamma\omega$ puts Adam (Gn 3; Rm 5:12) on stage to relate his experience with sin and the law (Watson 1973:28). Paul does this, then, also in the hope that his implied Gentile Christian audience would identify with it and thus realise the futility of a return to the law. What is needed now is that they remain under grace (6:14; 7:4, 6a).

3.3.3.2 Dissociation

In identifying with his implied audience Paul does not want to move away from Judaism. It still forms part of the background, but it is only that the ‘power’ of the law had become a problem for him, which he, then, also clearly shows (7:8, 11). As it cannot control the passions of sin (7:5), being restricted in its power (7:9-11), it is essential that their position, that is, the Gentiles’ position, to that of the law be redefined. The dilemma of the law being what it is, of what benefit, then, could the law be? Can it provide ‘status,’ make them ‘real’ Jews (Rm 2:28)? No, for this they already are through Christ (5:1; 7:4, 6a-c).

So to identify with his implied audience thus and to enhance their status (Vorster 1991a:174), the Jews are continually, sometimes subtly and sometimes more blatantly, held as a people who misunderstand their own position in respect of God and the Gentiles. These misunderstandings Paul frequently brings to light by the argument of incompatibility accompanied by irony (Vorster 1991a:74). In order to do this he makes use of dissociation by the argument of incompatibility (Perelman 1982:55; Vorster 1990:250).

In respect of the Jewish pride in their customs and laws, Dunn (1988:Ixx) also has Philo on record as saying ‘they attract and win the attention of all...the sanctity of our legislation has been a source of wonder not only to Jews and to all others also.’ Then, further also a statement from Exodus Rabbah 5 (17a), namely: ‘the Torah spells life to the Israelites but death to the Gentiles because they did not accept it’ (Dunn 1988:384).²⁴ This confidence which the Jews had in the law was undoubtedly carried over to the Gentiles, to which the tendency amongst Gentile Christians to return to it, then, also testifies (Brown 1988:59).

But what Paul does here now is to show his implied Gentile Christian audience that the law is not all that the Jews advertise it to be (cf again Dunn 1988:Ixx)

and had in fact, rather become a catalyst both for sin (7:8a, 11a) and death (7:9d, 10b, 11b). This he effects by pointing out that the very commandment the Jews rate so highly, and which they as Gentiles have so much respect for, is that which sin had used to bring death on to the human stage of life (7:8a; see also 11a; Dunn 1988:385). The particle δὲ in Romans 7:8a, then, also carries a strong adversative force (cf Moulton [1963] 1980:329; Louw & Nida 1988:794).

The phrase διὰ τῆς ἐντολῆς (cf also vv 11 and 13) is here, then, also placed first relative to κατειργάσατο for emphasis. This Paul does to mark out the commandment for his audience not merely as the occasion for sin, but as its actual instrument (cf Cranfield 1975:341, 350; Dunn 1988:380). This is evidently a blow to the Jewish ‘high prizing’ of the law, and clearly does not leave the law in an enviable position. Paul, however, does not leave it at that as immediately becomes evident also from what follows.

With χωρὶς...νόμου ἀμαρτία νεκρά (v 8b), Paul shows that the giving of the law did not provide a realm (Israel with its cult) where the power of sin was broken, but on the contrary rather, as Genesis 3 shows, the giving of the commandment simply afforded sin a more effective leverage on humanity (Dunn 1988:381). This situation remains current under the law (7:8, 11). And this dilemma (cf 7:5), notwithstanding what accolade one accords the law, Paul shows his implied audience is nothing but a helpless situation (v 9a-11). Under these circumstances a return to the law, notwithstanding the law’s original intent (cf (ἢ εἰς ζῶντα), thus spells only calamity (7:10; cf 5:12-14; 7:5). This is made transparent further also by ἐγώ δὲ έξων χωρὶς νόμου ποτέ (v 9). The ἐγώ with ζῶντα here, then, is also emphatic.²⁸

Paul’s use of sin and the law in terms of death and life is pointed in respect of a return to the law. The stages marked by έξων ποτέ and ἀπεθανον reflect the stages of Adam’s fall (Dunn 1988:381). Should χωρὶς νόμου apply not only to

the primeval time of Adam's innocence but also now in the eschatological time, the new epoch introduced by Christ (3:21) as hinted by Dunn (1988:400) and which appears to be so without question, what, then, would a return by Paul's audience to the law entail?

The answer is obvious, that is, they now have 'life' (7:4, 9a) and sin has no dominion over them (6:7, 11, 14). Should the law, however, come on to the scene once again, the Adamic sequence is bound to be repeated, that is, from 'life' without the law (v 9a; cf vv 4, 6) to 'sin and death' under the law (vv 9b-11) for sin which has no dominion over them now (6:14) will gain that dominion once again (v 9b-11). This will entail a reversal of the freedom which they now have to bondage again (7:1, 5-6a-b)²⁶ and they will be faced, then, with the same ironical situation as that which had faced Adam, namely: the commandment which was given with a view to 'life' (v 9a) he found to be unto 'death' (v 10).

A return to the law under such circumstances is surely, then, a voyage to 'death' (7:5; cf also 3:20; 4:4; 5:10; 6:23; 8:13). The phrase 'the commandment which was for life' could very well deliberately characterise and echo the typical Jewish attitude to the law (Lv 18:5; cf Dunn 1988:402). The point that the Paul of the text is making to his encoded audience though is that this is a mistaken understanding of the law, a function that was outmoded as early as the Fall (see Gn 3:13).

Not to be ignored, as Dunn (1988:402) brings to our attention, is the implied sharp reverse and rebuttal of the Jewish assumption that the commandment promoted life (Lv 18:5; Dt 6:24; Prov 6:23). To think of the law as actually bringing life, the 'encoded' Paul shows, is to ignore the existential presence and power of sin. His kinsmen still loyal to the law may think that the law acts as a hedge to sin, but what they have failed to realise, and this Paul holds up to

his implied audience (cf Dunn 1988:402), is that the law simply binds the individual more tightly to the sin-death nexus characteristic of the old epoch (cf v 24; cf also Ridderbos 1959:152).

The irony of the law's position is exactly this, then, that whilst as a hedge against sin it ought to have guaranteed 'life,' it had become the avenue by which sin had introduced death (v 10). This, then, likewise lends irony to Israel's position under the law. For whilst they pride themselves on having 'life' by it, their pride is misplaced as the law cannot support their claim (see also Rm 2; Cranfield 1975:352; Dunn 1988:402; Vorster 1991a:174). A return to the law by Gentile Christians is for that reason, then, clearly incompatible with their position under grace (cf 7:4a, 6a; Perelman 1982:55). Paul has no qualms about this (cf again 7:1-6). The dissociative element is embedded therein that while Paul's audience expect to have 'life' through the law what they in 'reality' will have is 'death' (cf Perelman 1982:126-137).

Not only have the Jews missed the point in so far as their perspective that the law spells 'life' for them, there is yet another aspect of the function of the law that they have missed, and which Paul, against the background of the Genesis account, in turn, strongly emphasises for his implied Gentile Christian audience, namely, the function of the law in bringing one to the knowledge of sin (7:7d-e). It is clear that the law makes some actions sin, which without it would not have been sin, or alternatively which without the law would not have been known to mankind (7:7d-e; 5:13). For that matter the law seems to bring into being actions with which mankind would otherwise not have been acquainted.

For through the law one becomes aware of what is good and what is right, of what is wrong and what is bad (cf 'I would not have known...except the law said'; 7:7).²⁷ Notwithstanding its misuse by sin, the law is therefore not entirely

impotent, it still functions. It functions as the medium through which an alluring world is revealed to mankind - it functions as the revealer of sin. Its function therefore appears to be one of manifestation, of distinguishing, of crystallizing sin in the life of a person (7:7d). It is clear therefore, then, that whilst the law 'is holy and just and good' (7:12), its use must be correctly understood.

The dissociative element is embedded therein, namely, 'the law cannot provide one with status, but on the contrary divulges rather an inferior one' (see again Perelman 1982:126-128). The only antidote to this, it is clear, is a 'life' in Christ (6:4, 6, 7, 11, 14, 22; 7:4, 6). Why, then, if this is true, return to the law? What advantage does it hold for Paul's implied Gentile Christian audience? The answer is straightforward: No advantage! Paul does not place himself in opposition to the law for the law surely had a function (v 7), but that function was limited (v 8; cf 3:21-22; 4:4-6; 5:6, 8; 6:6; 8:3-4, 13). It cannot therefore support the claims of the Jews (cf 4:2; see again Ridderbos 1959:150; Dunn 1988:lx, 402).

If it cannot support the claim of the Jews, it also cannot, then, meet the expectations of the Gentiles. This Paul makes clear (cf Fraikin 1986:104; Moxnes 1986:63; Vorster 1991a:159, 1992:100). As an alternative, the only option is what they already possessed, namely, their life under grace (6:14, 7:4, 6), and to which Paul wanted them to adhere (7:1, 4-6). This, of course, also does not stand without reason, namely, among other things (cf 1:11-13), to enlist their aid to carry the Gospel to the West (15:24).

In line with my thesis that Paul is writing to a Gentile Christian audience with whom he wants to identify by a redefinition of the Gentile Christian's position to the law, I said at the beginning of this unit that the argument in this section essentially is that (1) the law is not sin (7:7c, 12), (2) knowledge of sin comes

by the law (7:7d-e), (3) sin misuses the law to work iniquity in a person and (4) whoever relies on the law for 'life' on the contrary encounters 'death' (7:10). In the interaction of the role players in the dimension of time, I showed that Paul takes his audience back to the past by the extensive use of the aorist tense in order to show that, despite the fact that the law is holy and just and good (7:12), it was proved weak at its inception already, as testified to by Adam (7:8a, 11a; Gn 2-3).

In the interaction of the role players in the dimension of space, I showed that Paul argues that it is the precise law to which they were looking for control over the body and as a means to status that sin misuses to work its evil in the person, the body, in turn, being the field where the passions of sin operate (7:8a, 11; cf 7:5). Also, in respect of the believer, the said field had become the sphere of the operation of the Spirit (cf 6: 4; 7:6c). For this reason, then, Paul exhorts his audience to remain in their present status, namely, under grace (cf 6:14; 7:1, 4, 6c).

In respect of the persuasive strategies used by Paul, I showed (1) the junctures at which Paul identifies with his implied audience and how this identification takes place and (2) that Paul, in the conflict between law and grace, by dissociation of ideas and the argument of incompatibility, shows which rule is to be relinquished by his implied Gentile Christian audience and which is to be followed. Once again, Paul has no reservations in this regard: 'It is the rule that the law could provide control over the passions of sin at work in the body, and status, that has to be relinquished, and the rule of the new life in Christ, in which one is to be "dead" to the law (6:14; 7:1, 4, 6) that has to be adhered to' (cf Perelman 1982:126-128). Only one question remains now, that is, for what reason is the law weak, that is, what keeps it from fulfilling its spiritual function and aim? For the answer we turn to the third rhetorical unit (Rm 7:13-25).

3.4 Rhetorical unit 3 (7:13-25)

3.4.1 Delineation of rhetorical unit 3

In unit 1 (7:1-6) Paul showed his implied Gentile Christian audience why they could no longer live under the law (cf 7:4); in unit 2 (7:7-12) that the law not only could not help them (cf again Brown 1988:59) but also that sin, in fact, uses the law to achieve its evil ends (7:8a, 9, 11). In this unit Paul shows his implied Gentile Christian audience why the law cannot help them (7:14b, 18, 23-24). It begins with the question: ‘Was then that which is good made death unto me?’ (v 13) and ends with the statement: ‘So then with the mind I serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin’ (v 25b). The argument essentially is that (1) the law has not brought death to humanity (v 13), but that the self has been taken over by sin (v 14b) and its members suffused to such an extent (v 18-24; cf Brown 1988:48) that it cannot mount to God’s standard in spite of the law (cf especially vv 22-23) and (2) deliverance from this situation comes only by Jesus Christ (v 25a; cf also 7:4, 6).

The unity of verses 13-25 might be questioned. But such a thesis, however, has been tested and found to be negative. Evidence for the unity of verses 13-25, to my mind, is underwritten by (1) the connection between (a) σάρξ in verses 14, 18, and 25; (b) δὸνομδες in verses 13 (ἢ ἐντολὴ in v 13), 14, 16, 22, and 25; (c) ἡ ἀμαρτία in verses 13, 14, 17, 20, 21, 23 and 25; (d) the argumentative γάρ in verses 14, 15 (2x), 18 (2x), 19, 25 and the contrastive δέ in verses 16, 17, 18, 20, 23 and 25 holding these verses together; (e) the expressions ἐν ἔμοι ἀμαρτία (v 17), οἰκεῖ ἐν ἔμοι (v 18), ἐν ἔμοι ἀμαρτία (v 20), ἔμοι...ἔμοι in verse 21 which, to my mind, could without fear of contradiction also be read as ἐν ἔμοι, ἐν τοῖς μέλεσιν μου (v 23) and (2) the flow of the argument from verses 13 to 23, which shows a continuity of thought culminating and finding its conclusion in 25b.

Let us now follow up Paul's further argument against a return to the law by his implied Gentile Christian audience. Once more in terms of the role players in the unit, the interaction between the role players in the dimensions of time and space, and the persuasive strategies that Paul employs to confirm for his implied audience their credibility and status in order to curb a return by his implied audience to the law.

3.4.2 The role players

In the previous unit I showed the role players to be the 'encoded' Paul and his 'implied' audience. I also argued that the 'encoded' Paul is so taken up with his implied audience that the situation that faced us was not that of an ordinary speech situation. Such, then, is the situation in the previous unit (7:7-12). But who are the role players in this unit? Clearly still the 'encoded' Paul and his 'encoded (implied) Gentile Christian audience. The 'encoded' Paul here is still so taken up with his implied audience (see *ἔμοι* in v 13; *Ἐγώ* in vv 13-25; *κατεργάζομαι*, *γινώσκω*, *Θέλω*, *μισέω*, *πράσσω*, *ποιέω* in v 15; *Θέλω*, *ποιέω*, *σύμφημι* in v 16; *οἴδαμεν* in v 14) that what we have here is still not a familiar speech situation. The *Ἐγώ* of the previous unit (7:7-12) is still the *Ἐγώ* here and its use is still a politeness strategy.

Other entities that might be recognised as role players in this unit are (1) sin and the law and (2) God and Christ. Sin and the law though can only appear as role players when personified as such (cf Perelman 1983:100). By this avenue sin appears as a role player in verses 13, 17, 20 and 23 and the law as that in verses 13, 16 and 23. The same phenomenon also appears in verses 7, 8, 9 and 11 above. In verses 8, 11 and 23, sin is personified to the extent that it appears as a military force, or slave owner, stressing man's experience of sin as an oppressive force acting upon the individual externally whilst in verses 17 and 20, in turn, it is depicted as a constraining force within (Dunn 1988:380, 390).

In respect of God and Christ, as the cause argued for by Paul is his cause, they do not, however, function prominently as role players except as the guarantors of that gospel in terms of which Paul seeks to redefine the law for his Gentile Christian audience (cf 1:16-17; 3:21; 4:4-5; 5:1; 6:4, 14; 7:1-6 etc).

3.4.2.1 Interaction between the role players in the dimension of time

In respect of the dimension of time within which the interaction between the role players takes place in this unit, we do not have here that interchange where Paul moves to the past, whether distant or not, nor at any time to the future as in the previous units. On the contrary, Paul's interaction with his implied audience takes place in the present, in the implied audience's own situation, that is, the tendency amongst them to want to turn to the law. In terms of that, the situation that faced Paul here, then, was an 'existential' problem with the flesh (body), for the control of which Gentile Christians looked to the law as the answer (Brown 1988:59).

The interaction between the 'encoded' Paul and his implied audience unit in the dimension of time takes its departure with the question: 'Was then that which is good made death unto me?' (v 13a). At this point we have to ask, why this question? Could Paul not just have continued from what he had previously said in 7:7-12 and have explained the situation to his implied Gentile Christian audience? I believe he could. But as he has not, why not? Is the question here, then, a *prae*sumptio** (Brandt 1970:50; Deist 1984:135; Harper-Collins 1992:1069) or can an awareness by Paul in respect of a favourable disposition towards the law by his implied Gentile Christian audience be detected here (cf again Brown 1988:59)?

If this is so, which clearly appears to be the case (cf vv 13b, 14a, 16b, 22, 25b), is it perhaps, then, that whilst Paul wished to sway his audience away from the

law, he at the same time also did not want to lose them? That there was a favourable disposition by Gentiles towards the law (cf Dunn 1988:Ixx; 387), I believe, can hardly be denied. And of this Paul was undoubtedly well aware (cf again Brown 1988:59). That he also did not want to lose his audience stands without question. His intention thus was not to cast off the law as something evil as shown by 7:14a, 16, 22 and 25b (cf again Ridderbos 1959:153; Cranfield 1975:340-341; Dunn 1988:376), but to show why it stood impotent (v 14b; cf also 8:3). It is significant though that while Paul did see the law as impotent, he does not regard it now as entirely without function. It still functions for pragmatic reasons: 'it makes sin stand out stronger' (v 13b).²⁸

It is not a question that the 'good,' that is, the law (cf 7:7, 12) had become 'death' to the 'I' ('you', 'us'; v 13), it is simply the body (the flesh) 'sold as a slave to sin' (v 14b; Dunn 1988:388), that is at the heart of the problem. The perfect passive participle of *πιπράσκω* (*πεπραμένος*) has its normal sense here, namely, 'I have been sold to sin and still am' (cf Robertson 1931:369; Cranfield 1975:357-358; Dunn 1988:388). As Dunn (1988:388) correctly maintains what is in view here is the consequence of the archetypal *έγώ*'s capture and subjection to death at the hands of sin, which is, then, also the condition of the *έγώ*. What Paul is presenting to his implied Gentile Christian audience here is that the body had so been taken over by sin (cf Brown 1988:35) that it cannot be controlled, not even by the law.

That Paul sees it thus is aptly captured also by Brown (1988:47) when he observes that Paul 'presented the human heart as hardened to a degree and depth unheard of in contemporary Judaism. The giving of the law had had no other effect but to make the dark forces of rebellion stir yet more vigorously at every level of the self.' It is thus evident that no help for a control of those things that 'lie between nature and culture, half wild, half civilised' (Brown 1988:59) can be had from the law. The negativity that Paul holds in respect of

that the body could be controlled by legislation finds clear expression, then, also in the contrasts that he holds up in verses 14 and 15, 17 to 20, 23 and 25, in respect of the law, the *λ*γω and sin, to wit: the law is ‘spiritual’ *but* I am ‘flesh’ sold to sin (v 14).

With this statement Paul is then, also declaring outright to his implied audience why they cannot be successful in an effort to contain the body by legislation because as slaves of sin strictly they are not the masters of the body. What follows then, namely, ‘for what I would, that I do not, *but* what I hate I do’ (v 15); ‘it is no more I that do it *but* sin that dwells in me’ (v 17); ‘in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing...to will is present with me...*but* how to perform...I find not’ (v 18); ‘For the good that I would I do not *but* the evil...that I do’ (v 19); ‘it is no more I that do it *but* sin that dwelleth in me’ (v 20); ‘I delight in the law of God...*but* I see another law in my members (body) that takes me captive to the law of sin’ (vv 22-23) and ‘with my mind I myself serve the law of God; *but* with the flesh the law of sin’ (v 25b [italics mine]) is proof of that and a confirmation once more that the flesh (body, members vv 14b, 18, 23, 24, 25b) is the property of sin (vv 17, 20, 21, 23, 25b).

The body so taken over by sin (v 14b) is then, also constantly under surveillance (v 23). In all this, Paul shows, the law is close at hand (7:7, 12, 13b, 14a, 16b) pointing out what is wrong (5:13; 7:7, 13), but does not have the power to intervene (v 23; see also 7:8, 11; Gn 3:13). As for the glad obedience to the law shown by many pious Jews, Brown (1988:47) correctly observes that the spontaneous obedience of the upright mind served only to highlight the extent to which deep-set enmity to God lay diffused throughout the human person as a whole, blocking the wishes of the pious with a weight of spiritual impotence as terrible as the heaviness with which the mortal body weighed down the soul (cf especially vv 18, 23-24).

Paul's presentation of the body and with the inability of the law to sustain the $\xi\gamma\omega$ clearly speaks negatively to a would-be return to the law by his implied audience. It is not that Paul has a problem with the law as such (cf again vv 14a, 16, 22, 25b) but that the law appears to have been accorded a magical power which does not exist (cf v 23; Ridderbos 1959:150). For surely if the law cannot suppress wrong actions, but on the contrary rather gives an occasion to sin (cf 7:8a, 11) what profit, then, is to be derived from a return to it? And this once again, I believe, Paul wishes his audience to see clearly. A return to the law is thus bound to result in a loss of status (cf Vorster 1992:113). This Paul wanted to prevent both for their sakes (7:4, 6; 1:11-12; 16-17; 8:13) and for his own (15:24; cf again Vorster 1984:48).

Dunn (1988:387) observes that with 'the law is spiritual,' (v 14a) Paul begins his argument that there is a duality both in the law, and in himself as a typical believer (cf also Griffith Thomas [1974] 1976:191). Also, that with 'but I am fleshly, sold under sin,' (v 14b) the reference of the $\xi\gamma\omega$ broadens out from that of every man expressed in terms of the 'once upon a time' Adam to that of every man in the present ($\epsilon i\mu\acute{t}$). Further also, that with the transition from the past to the present a note of personal involvement immediately becomes sharper (v 15). Dunn's observation has merit. But the use of the 'I' (v 14b) must at the same time also not be overlooked as a politeness strategy. Rather than see it as Dunn (1988:408) later allows when commenting on verses 18-20, namely, that 'Paul continues to express his analysis as a personal confession; *let all who will acknowledge its truth for themselves*' [italics mine], thus leaving it open, it should be seen, still not excluding Paul, as pointing also to his implied Gentile Christian audience (cf 'you', 'we'; 7:4-6, 7). It is also not to be taken that Paul holds a dualistic anthropology (cf Lindijer [s a]:164-172) but rather a duality in so far as it touches 'willing' and 'doing' (vv 15, 18, 22-23).

Ridderbos's (1959:153) claim that the contrast here lies between the law and the flesh in the old era is problematic. That a sharper realisation of the depravity of the body could be recognised under grace (Cranfield 1975:358; Dunn 1988:407) and that Paul cried and longed for a deliverance from it (v 24; cf 8:23; Brown 1988:46), as much as believers do, is not denied. But a distinction as sharp as Ridderbos's cannot be accommodated. The testimony drawn by Dunn (1988:389) from IQS 11:9-10 to the human condition, namely, 'As for me, I belong to wicked mankind, to the company of ungodly flesh. My iniquities, rebellions and sins, together with the perversity of my heart, belong to the company of worms and to those who walk in darkness,' still has something to say for the present (cf 7:18, 24, 25a; 8:23).

Whilst the resurrection has not yet taken place as Dunn (1988:405) correctly points out, what we have here is still, then, also the experience of the believer in the body. A control over the body as sought by the Gentile Christians (cf again Brown 1988:59) is not possible and the law cannot give that control. The law can demand 'yes' but it cannot 'fulfil' (cf v 19, 21; Griffith Thomas [1974] 1976:190). It is thus not a question of epochs as Dunn (1988:405) sees it, but of a continuing experience in the present as shown by the extensive use of the present tenses,²⁹ with a cry for deliverance from it (cf *πονθαί*; v 24).

The problem with the body as an experience in the present leading up to and following the piteous cry of verse 24, is spelt out clearly with the expressions: 'for what I would, that I do not...but what I hate, that I do' (v 15); 'nothing good dwells in my flesh...to will to do the good is present with me...how to do it I find not' (v 18); 'the evil that I do not want to do...I do' (v 19); 'I delight in the law of God in the inward man....But I see another law in my body (members) that takes me captive to the law of sin' (vv 22-23) and 'I myself serve the law of God with my mind; but with my flesh (body) the law of sin' (v 25b). Nowhere it is to be observed are any past tenses used.

Commenting on ‘for not what I wish, I do, but what I hate this I do’ (v 15), Ridderbos (1959:155) says, ‘de apostle stelt hier de tweespalt tussen willen en doen niet in het licht, om aldus het ik nog op de een of ander wijze te excuseren of “zichzelf” tegenover zijn praktische levensopenbaring te handhaven. Veeleer wil hij aldus de macht der zonde illustreren, waaronder hij verkocht is.’ Ridderbos’s observation is to the point, but his view that the experience depicted here is that of the person under the law and not an existential problem with the body (1959:154) cannot be accommodated (cf also Dunn 1988:407). It is clear from the testimony of the Έγώ that the power of sin frustrates his better intentions all the time, renders his will without effect upon the deed and makes him stand in helpless abhorrence of his own work.

That it is not an abject unquestioning servitude, but a slavery under protest is absolute (Ridderbos 1959:155; Dunn 1988:389). For an escape from this slavery, a slavery from which Paul’s implied Gentile Christian audience themselves undoubtedly sought escape (v 24), Paul shows his implied audience that the law is not the answer (vv 22-23). The only answer is Jesus Christ (v 25a). Contrary to some popular piety, Paul does not teach that conversion-initiation brings a complete ending or release from the flesh nor an immediate and lasting victory over the power of sin (Dunn (1988:411). Proof for this comes plainly from verses 18, 22 and 23, and 25b. On the contrary, as Dunn (1988:411) correctly observes, it is spiritual warfare that is the sign of life (see also Cranfield 1975:360).

Elliott’s (1990:244) observation that the Christian’s previous existence was ἐν τῇ σαρκὶ, the sphere in which sinful passions, aroused by the law’s decree, were active in their members; but now Christians have been released from that law ‘because we have died to that in which we were held in thrall,’ that is, the dominion of the flesh, is only half correct. For, properly, while Christians have been released from the law (7:4, 6) and are expected and exhorted to walk in

newness of life (6:4,12-13, 19) and to serve in newness of Spirit (7:6), they have not yet been entirely released from the dominion of the flesh (cf 6:11-13, 16, 19, 22; 8:11, 23). On the basis of the subjunctive, imperative and infinitive moods in 6:4, 6, 11-13, 19; 7:4, 6 it is clear that it is not yet a final matter. For were it so, the suggestions, exhortations and entreaties in the above verses would surely have been superfluous.³⁰

Whilst Dunn (1988:390), commenting on verse 20b, maintains that the major thrust of the argument is still to defend the law, Ridderbos (1959:165) should rather be credited: 'De bedoeling is niet zozeer opnieuw iets over de (goedheid van de) wet, als wel over het ik, te zeggen. De uitspraak vormt een schakel in de analyse van de doodssituatie van het ik.' In response to this situation, and anything of sin which assails the $\xi\omega$, the law cannot provide a counter-weight, even less break the power of sin in him (Ridderbos 1959:155).

In the whole context, strictly already in Romans 6, sin is depicted as a power, more powerful than the $\xi\omega$, and therefore cannot be overcome by the $\xi\omega$ himself. It can only be overcome by another power that can match the power of sin, which power though is not the law, but Jesus Christ (v 25a; Ridderbos 1959:156). But once again what Ridderbos observes must be seen in terms of an existential struggle with the body in the present and not restricted to the person under the law (cf again Ridderbos 1959:154).

In this passage Paul is clearly not offering his implied Gentile Christian audience an explanation for his, nor their, nor anyone else's weakness, in performing the good (cf again 5:6, 7:4, 6; cf also 2 Cor 5:17), but simply why the good cannot be brought to fulfilment. Dunn argues:

Paul's teaching here is not intended to provide an easy excuse for persistent moral defeat - only an excuse for defeat experienced as defeat, as a wretched captivity and slavery to sin. Paul can and does

readily conceive of believers being frequently defeated (v 23) and in continuous sequence of moral choices which confront them (6:12-23).³¹

(1988:412)

The person caught between 'the law in its members' and 'the law of its mind' (v 23), 'the law of God' and 'the law of sin' (25b) is exactly the person who still has to arrive at complete victory over the flesh, sold to sin (vv 14b; 25a; 8:11, 23).³² In the present though it is still the life in the flesh (v 14b) with sin continually seeking to bring about its evil ends (v 23). If this is the existential situation of the $\epsilon\gamma\omega$ as flesh, the $\epsilon\gamma\omega$ with whom Paul's implied Gentile Christian audience cannot escape identification, the $\epsilon\gamma\omega$ taken captive to sin (v 23), with the law unable to effect any change, what sense is there in a return to the law? The answer is obvious: 'It is outside the realm of logic, and is thus not to be entertained.'

Dunn (1988:388) is entirely correct when he observes that Käsemann is wrong in holding that what Paul says in respect of 7:14b is already past tense for the Christian (so Martin 1976:43; Elliott 1990:246). Together with Alford (1968:380), Cranfield (1975:365-366) and Dunn (1988:396-397), contra Ridderbos (1959:153), Denney (1974:643), MacGorman (1976:41), Martin (1981:43-47) and Elliott (1990:246), the cry in verse 24, 'O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death,' is one for deliverance from the body in the 'now' - the body in which the passions of sin still now have their play (cf 13d), whose redemption will eventually come through adoption ($\upsilon\lambda\theta\varepsilon\sigma\alpha$) and which the believer eagerly expects (cf 8:23).

The cry that goes up from the $\epsilon\gamma\omega$ undoubtedly must ring with Paul's implied audience as the cry of their own hearts also. It is the division of the $\epsilon\gamma\omega$ against

himself, his inward conflict, and miserable state of captivity to sin in the flesh, while with the mind loving and serving the law of God (Alford 1968:384) that causes the cry for deliverance (v 24). Dunn (1975:273; 1988:410) and Cranfield (1975:365-366) reduces the cry here from the general to the specific (so Robertson 1931:371; Alford 1968:385; Fung 1978:44; Wenham 1980:89-90). Dunn and Cranfield's observations, however, does not totally arrive at the real situation.

In terms of what we said earlier in respect of Paul being so taken up with his implied audience, whilst admitting his own desire to be free from the body (cf again 8:23), the cry must mirror for his implied Gentile Christian audience their own desire to be free from the plight of the flesh, a plight for which they sought the help of the law (Brown 1988:59). Before proceeding to speak about the way out of this plight for himself, his implied Gentile Christian audience and humanity at large (v 25a; Rm 8:1ff), with two presents of δούλευειν, one explicit and one implicit, Paul completes the picture of the existential struggle in the flesh. The outcome is: 'So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh (serve) the law of sin' (v 25b).

With the situation depicted by Paul touching the relation of the law and the 'I' ('you/we'), the 'law' being πνευματικός and the 'I' σάρκινος, the law rendered impotent because of the latter, two questions arise: (1) Where does it leave Paul's audience in respect of their own situation of the tendency amongst Gentile Christians to want to side with Judaism? (2) How does Paul's argument here fit in with what we have shown to be the purpose of the letter, that is, (a) to abjure a credibility crisis with reference to the status of the non-Jews in respect of the claims of the Jews (cf Moxnes 1988:68-75) and (b) to enlist the support of the Roman households to carry the Gospel to Spain and beyond?

In respect of the first of these questions the answer is clear. A return to the law is not the answer. For to be under the law is to be under the power of sin (6:14; 7:5, 8, 14b, 17, 20, 21, 23, 25b) and (2) to be under the power of sin is to be in a situation of death (cf again 7:5, 9-11, 24), the escape from which, we have shown, the answer is Jesus Christ (6:4; 7:4, 6). The situation of Paul's implied Gentile Christian audience being that they had already taken this route (6:14, 7:1-4, 6a-b) notwithstanding that a final deliverance from the flesh (body) still has to take place (7:24-25a; 8:11, 23),³³ they need only adhere strongly to it (cf again Perelman 1982:20).

The answer to our second question is inextricably linked to the first. In the context of the first-century Mediterranean culture, we have shown, a person could lay claim to honour, but honour only becomes honour when the claim is recognised by 'the significant others.' Should it be that a claim to honour is based on the works of the law, the Jews might lay a claim to honour but this not with God (cf 4:2; 7:5, 15-24, 25b). If, however, the basis on which the Jews lay their claim to honour (the law) has been relativised (cf 3:21; 6:14-15; 7:4, 6, 25a; cf also 8:1-4; 10:4), the question of honour and shame now becomes a question of a person's relationship with Christ (5:1; 7:4, 6, 25a; 8:1, 33-39). It is Christ now and not the law, who is the touchstone by which to determine what is honour and what is shame (cf Moxnes 1988:72).

In this situation the role of credibility is, then, also reversed (v 24-25a; cf Dunn 1988:116-117; Vorster 1991a:159, 1992:99-100). Should the Jews, then, now wish to lay claim to honour on the basis of the law, their claim cannot be met (7:5; cf 4:2-4). In fact, it is only those dead to the law who are able to produce results pleasing to God and worthy of honour (7:4). A return to the law can thus only result in a loss of credibility. It becomes clear, then, that Romans 7 wants to warn against a possible loss of status in the event of reverting to the law.

For this would clearly place them back in their former inferior position in the eyes of the Jews notwithstanding the fact they might take up the Jewish identity markers (circumcision, the sabbath and the food laws). Paul's argument serves thus to confirm once more for his implied Gentile Christian audience their own status and credibility in the face of the claims of the Jews (Vorster 1991b:32). Doing so, naturally, also stands in the service of Paul's aim, which is, *inter alia*, to enlist the assistance of his implied Gentile Christian audience in carrying this Gospel to the Western hemisphere (15:24).

3.4.2.2 Interaction between the role players in the dimension of space

There is no reference to interaction between the role players in respect of the geographical dimension of space. To the non-geographical dimension of space, however, there is some. The prepositions indicating the non-geographical dimension of space are *ὑπό* (v 14), *ἐν* (vv 17-18, 20, and 23) and *ἐκ* (v 24). The preposition *κατά* (vv 13, 22) shows 'with respect to' and the διά's (vv 13, 25) with their nouns are cognate. The preposition *ἐν* in verses 17-18, 20, 23 are all locatives. These locatives, in turn, indicate the space in which sin operates.

Departure for the description of man's wretched condition (v 24) in the non-geographical dimension of space takes place with a contrast between the nature of the law and that of the *ἔγώ*, namely 'for we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal,' followed by a metaphor of slavery: 'sold under sin' (v 14). An important matter regarding verses 14-25 is the question of what we are to understand by Paul's use of σάρκινος...σάρξ - νοῦς...Ἐσω ἀνθρώπος and μέλη. The *σάρξ* of the person is depicted here as the playing field of sin. This is shown by 'but sin that dwelleth in me' (v 17); 'in my flesh dwells nothing good' (v 18); 'but sin that dwelleth in me (v 20); 'I see another law in my members...sin which is in my members' (v 23; cf also vv 15-16a, 19b, 21, 24, 25c; 7:5, 8).

According to Paul, two powers are at war in the *έγώ*. The one is the law of God (v 22), in which the *έγώ* continually delights with his mind. The other, another law (*ἕτερος νόμος*) which, for its part, makes the *έγώ* captive to the law of sin that resides in his members (v 23; cf Cranfield 1975:364). Whilst the one force (the law) continually sets the standard for righteousness (cf 7:7b), the other constantly gets the upper hand (v 23). How much of the Homeric concept of the externalisation of mental states, where many decisions and motivations of human behaviour were believed to have been instigated by an outward power (Forbes, Telle & Benade 1985:15), had filtered down to Paul's day is not certain. The idea does seem to be present, however, in so far as it touches sin in verses 8, 11 and 23 (in vv 17 and 20 though this force now acts within). Not only so but also shifting the blame for any deed concluded (Forbes et al 1985:15-16).³⁴

Lindijer ([s a]:164) says rightly that by the 'I' as 'flesh' the person is not only shown as being an earthly being, but that he is a sinful earthly being. Whilst crediting Lindijer for his observation, by sinful earthly being, in the context of Romans 7:14-25, I do not intend to understand a 'sinning' earthly being to the extent that no good at all can be done by the *έγώ* (cf again Dunn 1988:412). For Paul is clearly writing here to a Gentile Christian audience who had already experienced grace (cf 6:4, 6, 12-14, 16-18, 22). I do intend though to understand by Romans 7:14-25 that Paul is saying to members of his implied Gentile Christian audience, who might wish to return to the law, that in respect of what they experience and wish to control, that is, 'the passions of sin in the flesh,' the law is a dead end (cf 7:5, 6, 8-11, 14b, 18, 22-23).

But Lindijer ([s a]:164) is wrong when he says that the one who is *σάρκινος* in this context (7:14-25) is the one who had not yet received the divine *πνεῦμα*. This notwithstanding that (1) he/she still belongs to the fallen world and fallen humanity and (2) that nowhere is *πνεῦμα* mentioned in this passage. Paul does

not teach in either Romans 6:14 or Romans 7:4-6 that sin will no longer tempt the person. What he does say in Romans 6:14 is that ‘sin will not have “dominion” over you, because you are not under law but under grace’ (cf again Dunn 1988:412). What Paul is telling his implied Gentile Christian audience in Romans 7:4, 6 is that they are delivered from the ‘law’ and that there is a ‘new empowerment’ against sin, namely, the Spirit (cf Rm 8:1-13). It is important for our understanding of this passage (vv 13-25) not to overlook the fact that the audience addressed here is still that of Romans 7:1-12.

On the basis of the word σάρξ in verses 18 and 25 one might think that Paul holds to a dualistic anthropology here where σάρξ (= σῶμα = μέλη) and νοῦς (= ἔσω ἀνθρώπος) are juxtaposed as two parts of the human being. It seems as if he is placing the sinful body and the uncorrupted mind against one another. Would this indicate that Paul supports a dualistic anthropology (cf Brown 1988:26, 34)? Lindijer ([s a]:164-172) suggests not because were we to explain 7:14-25 on the basis of a dualistic anthropology, we would then read out of verses 14-25 that sin dwells in the σάρξ (= body; v 18), in the μέλη (= solely the bodily part of the person; v 23) and man with this σάρξ serves sin (v 25). Over against this stands the ἔσω ἀνθρώπος, who delights in God’s law (v 22), the νοῦς which serves God’s law (v 25) and which is opposed by sin, which dwells in the body (v 23).

But, observes Lindijer ([s a]:92) correctly, Paul cannot intend it in a strictly dualistic way (cf also Ridderbos 1959:159). He surely does not mean that there is a spiritual part of man, one with God, that wars against the naturally sinful body. For if that were so, we would have to present salvation as if the νοῦς is freed from the body (cf Brown 1988:26, 34). On the basis of Romans 7, we should perhaps present Paul’s view as follows: The body of itself is not sin (Lindijer [s a]:169; cf also Lindijer [s a]:92; Robertson 1931:376), but sin firmly lodged in it, uses it as a base (v 18; 7:8-11). From this base, then, it also

controls the other part of the $\xi\gamma\omega$, that is, the $\nu\omega\varsigma$, and prevents it from proceeding further than to merely will the good (7:5, 8, 11, 13, 17, 20-21, 23, 25).

This being the situation the revolt, in turn, namely 'for that which I do I allow not' (v 15) can be understood and so the cry, 'who shall deliver me from the body of this death' (v 24). The cry for deliverance here should not be seen as a cry for the deliverance of the soul from the body (Brown 1988:26, 34), but rather of the whole person (Brown 1988:35, 46), the person as it can stand either in the service of sin or of righteousness (cf Lindijer [s a]:167).³⁵ 'The body of this death' we may safely take as obviously a further variation on 'the body of sin' (6:6), 'this mortal body' (6:12), 'my flesh' (7:18) and 'my constituent parts' (Dunn 1988:397; cf also Denney 1974:643; Cranfield 1975:366-367). I believe Dunn (1988:397) is correct in asserting that the previous variations also help to keep Paul's audience from misunderstanding the phrase in terms of a dualistic anthropology.

This death, in turn, is a death of which the $\xi\gamma\omega$ is acutely conscious in the condition described. It is the same death as that of verse 9, but it is intensely realised through the experience of captivity to sin (Denney 1974:643). That which the $\xi\gamma\omega$ longs to be delivered from is the condition of life under the continual onslaught of sin - out of the body of this death (v 24), under sin (v 14b, 25b) - a life which, because of sin, must succumb to death (cf 8:13). But from this dimension there is a route of escape (v 25a), a route of which Paul's audience, for their part, were already aware (cf 1:6-7; 5:1; 6:6-9, 14; 7:4, 6).

This being the situation in respect of the body sold to sin, as sketched for Paul's implied Gentile Christian audience, the question arises as to what this means for them. What bearing would it have on the tendency amongst them to want to return to the law in respect of control over the body and status (Brown 1988:59;

Moxnes 1988:63; Vorster 1991a:32)? How is what the Jews advertise the law to be to be valued now by those Gentile Christians who wish to turn to it (cf again Brown 1988:59)? What emerges clearly for Paul's implied Gentile Christian audience is (1) the utter wretchedness of the *έγώ* sold to sin (v 14; 18a, 24) and (2) in this the law, notwithstanding that it is spiritual (holy, just and good; 7:12), stands impotent, unable to help (v 18b).

A return to the law is pointless therefore for the issue is precisely that it is powerless. The end is that the *έγώ*, as a creature of flesh (v 14b), living under the law, does what sin commands (Denney 1974:643; cf also Ridderbos 1959:159). The law even as the law of God is not strong enough to defeat the power of sin. The key is something else, shortly to be expounded as a new power source, that is, the Spirit (see Rm 8; Dunn 1988:410). But as Paul's audience already had access to this 'new power source,' were already partakers of the 'new' life in Christ (5:1-2, 5-11; 6:2-8, 10, 14-15, 18; 7:4, 6), what were they to do? The answer is clear: they ought only to adhere to it (Vorster 1991a:159; 1991b:31-33; 1992:99-100).

For this Paul, then, also argues (1) by identifying with his implied Gentile Christian audience and (2) by 'redefining' their position to the law. By this action he at once, then, also confirms for his implied Gentile Christian audience their own credibility in the face of the Jewish claims to status and honour on the basis of their possession of the law as opposed to the Gentiles' non-possession. Next we turn to the persuasive strategies employed by Paul in this unit arguing his cause.

3.4.3 Persuasive strategies in 7:13-25

In respect of the argumentative strategies in this unit, we will consider (1) identification with the implied audience and (2) dissociation and how it is effected.

3.4.3.1 Identification with the implied audience

In both the foregoing units we stressed that in order to make his argument effective Paul identifies with his implied audience (Vorster 1990:64). In the previous unit we depicted that Paul once more staged a scene in which he and his implied audience were the two characters with whom his implied audience could identify. This also happens in this unit. While the personal deictic 'we' (v 14a) points to identification, the 'I' (vv 14b-24, 25b) does so equally. For the encounter depicted by the 'I' in this passage at the same time mirrors their own experience for Paul's implied Gentile Christian audience.

The identification in question retains the link with that in 7:1-6 and 7:7-12. The movement from *οἴδαμεν* here (v 14a) to *οἴδα* later (v 18) is highly significant. In respect of the use of *οἴδαμεν*, Cranfield (1975:355) observes that what is required at this point in Paul's argument as support for the contention of verse 13 is not the confession of the 'I' of this passage, but a statement which it may be assumed will command the general agreement of his audience. Whilst there is a temptation to read into Paul's use of *οἴδαμεν γάρ*(v 14a) a shared world of knowledge with his implied audience (cf again Vorster 1991b:254), it is likely, as was shown in respect of 7:1 too, that as at 1:8 and 15:14 (cf Dunn 1988:866; Vorster 1990:115-116, 123-125), what we have here is rather a politeness strategy once more, a juncture for identification, and an interchange for further discourse or digression (Dunn 1988:lviii).

In respect of the change to οἶδα, we have already identified the use of the 'I' as a politeness strategy, a means by which Paul's implied Gentile Christian audience could identify. Whilst Paul could plainly have used the expressions 'you' or 'we' as mentioned before, he prefers to turn the matter to what appears to be on himself because it touches the core of their problem here (cf again Brown 1988:59), and he does not want to embarrass his implied audience with forthrightness. Once again, therefore he leaves it open for his implied audience to identify with it for themselves. The use of the 'I' as a means of identification was most likely, then, also not foreign to Paul, since as a Jew he was familiar with the notion of a whole community being incarnated in the person of one member (Watson 1973:28-29; cf also Le Roux 1982:72-73; Nolan [1992] 1995:73).³⁶

I believe that an element of sympathy for his implied audience's situation might very well be detected in Paul's identification with his implied audience here too (vv 14-25). A sympathy which, in turn, then, also runs through every verse from verse 14 up to and including verse 24, and again in verse 25b. A sympathy that carries an undertone along the lines of 'I have sympathy with you in your situation, and can understand why you want to return to the law. But the solution, however, does not lie in the direction to which you incline. For while the law truly is "spiritual" (v 14a), I also regret that it will not profit you. For it is both your piteous lot and mine that we are flesh, and thereby also sold as slaves under sin' (v 14b).

In the same vein, then, too 'I also sympathise with you in that while you wish to do good, you are not able to (v 15), and therefore look to the law for help (cf again Brown 1988:59). But unfortunately the law, whilst not denying that it is good (v 16; so v 12), is not the answer because sin is the master (vv 17-23). There is only one solution to this, namely, Jesus Christ' (v 25a). The heart-rending cry of the ξύρω in verse 24 might very well, then, also be seen to

reflect such a sympathy - a sympathy for his implied audience, himself and humanity as a whole.

In terms of what we have said about the $\epsilon\gamma\omega$, in this passage (vv 14-25), then, as shown in the previous unit too, the $\epsilon\gamma\omega$ equals Gentile Christians whilst at the same time not excluding Paul. Paul here, then, speaks both on behalf of his implied audience and himself, and with the 'I' form, throughout verses 13-25 is, in effect, saying 'we' all along. In terms of this the outcry in verse 24 can thus without fear of contradiction also be articulated: 'O wretched people that we are, who shall deliver us from the bodies of this death?' Similarly, then, to enunciate verse 25a as 'We thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord' is entirely in order.

3.4.3.2 Dissociation

In the previous units it was shown that in arguing his cause Paul makes use of dissociation of ideas by the argument of incompatibility (Perelman 1982:55, 126) accompanied by irony (cf again Vorster 1992:102). With Perelman (1982:55) we said that incompatibility forces a person to choose which rule to follow, which to relinquish or at least restrict in its scope in a conflict. In unit 1 we inferred that by dissociation Paul was indicating to his implied Gentile Christian audience that a return to the law was incompatible with their situation under grace because they had been put to death to the law (7:4); the law only being able to rule over those who have not died to it (7:1).

In unit 2 we concluded that Paul showed his implied Gentile Christian audience that the Jewish 'high prizing' of the law and their 'overconfidence' in it is incompatible with what is real, that is, the law could give neither 'life' nor 'status' (vv 8-11). In terms of Paul's purpose (cf again 1:11, 13; 15:24), the strategy of dissociation by the argument of incompatibility also finds expression

in this unit. To draw yet another example from Dunn (1988:Ixix) against the Jewish claims in respect of the law:

In his wisdom the legislator...surrounded us with unbroken palisades and iron walls to prevent our mixing with any other peoples in any other matter....So to prevent our being perverted by contact with others or by mixing with bad influences, he hedged us in on all sides with strict observances connected with meat and drink and touch and hearing and sight, after the manner of the Law.

Paul is committed throughout to showing his implied audience that the Jews' claims is out of touch with reality. That the Gentiles were aware of the claims the Jews made on the basis of their possession of the law has been shown (cf again Brown 1988:59). The Jews' situation, however, is ironical. For no matter what kind of fencing the Jews claim to have been surrounded with, it cannot succour them simply because the problem is not related to anything on the outside, but to that which is already on the inside, to 'the yeast in the dough of our nature' (Brown 1988:36).

The enemy already being in the camp (cf vv 17-18, 20-21, 23),⁷ what manner of protection or control over the flesh or body, then, can the law provide? The answer is obvious: 'no protection' and 'no control' (cf Gn 3:13; Rm 7:8-11). The irony referred to earlier commencing with verse 15, is in turn reflected by nearly every successive verse, for example, 'that which I do, I allow not...what I would, I do not...what I hate that I do (v 15); 'to perform that which is good I find not' (v 18); 'the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not...I do (v 19) and 'with the flesh (I serve) the law of sin' (v 25b).

And this in the face of the Rabbinic teaching (cf Ridderbos 1959:150) that 'in de strijd tussen de goede en boze neiging de Torah het beste, van God gegeven middel is om de boze drift te beteugelen.' If the foregoing is the situation, the Rabbinic teaching clearly misses the point, then and if so, what now? Where does it leave a Gentile Christian who returns to the law? The answer is obvious:

'In the lurch'! And this is unquestionably what Paul wanted his implied Gentile Christian audience clearly to know.

Seen from Paul's perspective,³⁸ as against the background of the ancient value system of the Mediterranean world (Moxnes 1988), as was shown earlier, the Jews claimed to occupy a position of honour and thus a position of power with the non-Jews, on the other hand, relegated to a position of shame and powerlessness (Vorster 1992:102). Paul, we noted earlier, responds to this national pride of the Jews by particularly attacking the Jewish claim to a majority status at the cost of the non-Jews, showing his implied Gentile Christian audience that what the Jews are claiming cannot be realised (cf Dunn 1988:116-117; Vorster 1992:102).

In this respect he had, then, already shown his Gentile Christian audience that by virtue of their connection with Christ (cf e g 3:21; 4:5; 5:1-2; 6:3-4, 14; 7:4, 6) it is no longer they, the Jews, but they, the Gentile Christians, who are now the ones who hold a position of honour and power (cf again Vorster 1992:102). What stood out now was that by a return to the law they would once again revert to their former position. The step-by-step revelation by the ξύω from verse 15 through 20 and 23, showing the ξύω's existential struggle with the flesh, is thus bent on exposing the Jewish illusion into which many Gentiles had evidently also been drawn (Brown 1988:59), namely, that the law is a palisade and iron wall against bad influences and perversion (cf again Dunn 1988:Ixix).

It emerges clearly from the scene staged for Paul's implied Gentile Christian audience in Romans 7:14-25 that control of the flesh and capture of honour and power on the basis of the law (see Moxnes 1988; cf again Dunn 1988:402) is not possible. It has become clear on the basis of the ξύω's experience depicted in 7:15-23, 25b that the Jews' claims to the law cannot hold. By the same token, then, it leaves Gentile Christians who want to return to the law in no better

position. For what emerges clearly is that in any would-be exigence in which they might have to control the self, the law stands powerless. It is not that it was not designed for that purpose; it was, but it is foiled by the flesh (v 14b).

What could negate the illusion of the Jews in respect of the law more than what we find in verse 23 and the cry that follows in verse 24? The very law that the Jews claim to have been surrounded with, cannot stay the $\xi\gamma\omega$'s capture to sin (23b; cf so Gn 2:17; 3:13). On the contrary, rather, in the presence of the law (v 16b), sin has free reign (vv 17 and 20) and total control over the $\xi\gamma\omega$, ('us', 'we'; vv 15-16a, 18-19, 23-24, 25b) and that once more, not because of the law, but because of the flesh (v 14b). The only solution for the problem encountered with the flesh is Jesus Christ (6:4; 7:4, 6; cf also 8:3-11).

How does this affect Paul's audience? The answer is not complicated. For in the final analysis, what future can a life under the law (6:14b) and the 'dominion' of sin (6:14a; 7:5) hold or promise? Depicting the existential struggle of the $\xi\gamma\omega$, with the law unable to assist in any way (vv 8-11, 16, 22-25a) must at once diffuse the Jewish boast to honour and power on the basis of the law, show the unreasonableness of their claims, and confirm their own status and credibility for Paul's audience (see again Moxnes 1988:63; Vorster 1991a:159; 1991b:32; 1992:100).

Given the circumstances, what Paul makes clear to his implied Gentile Christian audience therefore is that a return to the law (7:1) is incompatible with their position under grace (cf 6:14; 7:4, 6). The dissociative element is embedded therein, namely, 'you believe that through the law you can exercise "control" over the body, this is an "illusion," the "real" situation (cf Perelman 1982:126-137) is that the law cannot aid you there for the body is "sold to sin"' (v 14b; cf also Gn 2:16-17; 3:13).

In conclusion, then, in line with the thesis that Paul is writing to a Gentile Christian audience with whom he wants to identify by a redefinition of the Gentile Christian's position to the law, at the start of this unit it was asserted that the argument in this part is essentially that (1) the law had not brought death to humanity (v 13) but the self, the *έγώ*, has been taken over by sin (v 14b) and its members suffused to such an extent by it (vv 18-24) that the 'I' ('you', 'we') cannot rise to God's standard in spite of the law (cf 3:21) and (2) deliverance from this situation comes only through Jesus Christ (v 25a; so 7:4, 6 etc).

In the interaction of the role players in the dimension of time it was shown that what we have here is not the interchange of time where the 'encoded' Paul moves either to the past or the future, but the interaction of the 'encoded' Paul with his 'encoded' audience takes place in the present, in the implied audience's own situation, that is, a tendency amongst them to want to return to the law. In terms of that what faced Paul here was thus an almost existential problem with the flesh, for control of which (Brown 1988:59) and status Gentile Christians looked to the law with its attendant identity markers (circumcision, sabbath and food laws; Moxnes 1986:63; Vorster 1992:102).

In the interaction of the role players in the dimension of space it was shown that the 'encoded' Paul argues that the fault lay not with the law (v 13b; 14a; cf also 7:7, 12) but the 'heart' of the problem was the 'I' ('you,' 'we') as flesh sold to sin (v 14b) and as such cannot be controlled despite the law. As regards the persuasive strategies used by the 'encoded' Paul, I showed (1) the junctures at which he identifies with his implied audience and how the identification takes place and (2) that in the conflict between the law and grace, just as in the previous units, he shows by dissociation of ideas by the argument of incompatibility which rule his implied Gentile Christian audience should

relinquish and which they should follow and adhere to (cf again Perelman 1982:55).

Once more Paul has no disquiet in this respect: 'It is the rule that by the dictates of the law the body can be disciplined and status realised, that has to be relinquished, and the rule of Jesus Christ as the only answer to the problem with the flesh and sin (cf 7:5, 8-11, 15-24, 25b) and the means to status, that has to be adhered to, and thereby thus to "walk in newness of life" (cf 6:4-7, 11-14, 16, 19, 22) by "the Spirit" (7:4, 6; cf also 8:12-13). Having made these observations there still remains a word in this section with regard to the rhetorical function of Romans 7 within the context of Romans 5-8.

At the outset to this study I stated that Paul is writing to a Gentile Christian audience with whom he wants to identify by a redefinition of the Gentiles' position to the law and that Paul's rhetoric in Romans 7 is particularly aimed at forestalling a return by Gentile Christians to the law. In respect of the demarcation of rhetorical units it was noted that the delineation of a unit as such is determined by a given argument or phase of an argument. In terms of this, guided by Kennedy (1984:33-34), three rhetorical units were demarcated in respect of Romans 7: 7:1-6, 7:7-12 and 7:13-25. It was also stated that these units link up with one another to make up the whole.

In rhetorical unit 1 (7:1-6) I showed that the argument centres on the fact that the law cannot rule over the believer because in terms of grace the believer is no longer subject to the law (6:14; 7:1, 4, 6). In rhetorical unit 2 (7:7-12) that the gist of the argument is that rather than securing 'life' for humanity the law had become the means by which sin has brought humanity into the domain of death (7:8-11). As such, then, it is no refuge against the passions of sin in the body (cf especially 7:8a, 11). The core of the argument of the last of these units

(7:13-25) is that the law cannot help to control the body simply because the body is sold to sin (7:14b, 18, 23, 24, 25b).

In the final analysis all the units function together in Paul's argument to curb a return by his implied Gentile Christian audience to the law. This naturally stands, then, in terms of his purpose with the letter as a whole, *inter alia*, to enlist the aid of his implied audience to take the Gospel to the West. We raised the question of the function of Romans 7 within the context of Romans 5-8 and as a run up to Romans 5 we showed that in Romans 1-4 the 'encoded' Paul is communicating with his implied Gentile Christian audience from a perspective of Judaism (cf again Kraabel 1987:54-58; Kraemer 1989:36-37), but in Romans 5-8 he is addressing them directly. In Romans 1:1-15 Paul deals with a few preliminaries; in 1:16-17 he presents the theme of his gospel and in 1:18-32 God's wrath on humanity from a Jewish perspective.

In Romans 2 he assails the over-confidence of many of his fellow Jews in their election because of their possession of the law (cf again 2:1-16) and shows the prerequisites for being a Jew (2:17-32). In Romans 3 he shows that God's judgement is on all without exception (3:20, 23) and that righteousness is by faith and not by works (3:21-22). In Romans 4 Paul uses Abraham as an example of one justified by faith (4:1-3). In Romans 5 he assigns them status; gives them a new perspective on the believer's present and future (5:1-11) and a new perspective on God's righteous purpose with mankind (5:12-21). In Romans 6 he confirms for his implied Gentile Christian audience their newly assigned status, showing that they had been buried with Christ (6:1-3) and ought therefore to walk 'in newness of life' (6:4).

All this Paul naturally argues in terms of his purpose, namely, (1) to effect the cooperation of the non-Jewish believers in Rome and to consolidate them with non-Jewish believers of his past under his authority and (2) to use Rome as an

operational base for the expansion of the Gospel to the West and enlist the support of the believers in Rome in a material sense (cf again Vorster 1992:99). But a danger lurked, namely, that there was a tendency amongst Gentile Christians to want to return to the law (Brown 1988:59). A serious dilemma thus faced Paul for (1) not only is this incompatible with a believer's position in grace (cf 5:1-2; 6:4, 14; 7:1, 4, 6) but (2) it will also foil Paul's plans (1:11-13; 15:24).

It is for this reason, then, that he identifies with his Gentile Christian audience, redefines their position in terms of the Gospel to the law, and by the dissociation of ideas shows them which rule they are to follow and adhere to (Vorster 1992:99). The rhetorical function of Romans 7 within the context of Romans 5-8, can be said, then, is specifically to stay a return to the law by members of Paul's implied Gentile audience by saying: (1) 'you cannot return to the law, for not only have you been put to death thereto' (7:1-6), but also (2) 'you do not stand to gain life by a return to it but on the contrary rather to lose the "life" you now have (7:4, 6; cf 5:12-21; 6:4-11, 13-14; 22-23) once again' (7:8a, 9b, 11) and (3) 'the law cannot help you to control the flesh because it has been, and is still sold to sin (7:14b-24, 25b), the only answer is Jesus Christ' (7:25a), which Paul, then, in terms of the Spirit, also explicates more fully in Romans 8 (cf 8:1-13). In this way Romans 7 then also contributes to the whole of Paul's purpose in the letter.

At this point it is important to note that in the treatment of the 'psychological approach' I strongly contended against an 'individualistic' approach in respect of Romans 7 and introduced a nuance to it. I still contend that the problem in Romans 7 does not centre on an individualistic psychological issue but a concrete problem, namely, a control of the body. In terms of this it is therefore not a question of an inner consciousness that works up a feeling of guilt for sin that has been committed and from which deliverance is to be had as Augustine

(354-430 CE) and Luther (1483-1546) would have us believe. Therefore I still do not wish to proceed in the direction of an individualistic approach and reiterate that Romans 7:14-25 rather concerns the powerlessness to get the body under control (cf again vv 22-23). Paul also does not specify that it is an individual body, in other words, it can be the bodies of the whole company of Christians.³⁹ In this respect the collective pronoun (*έγώ*) as a rhetorical device, as I have shown, is, then, also pertinent. We now turn to the conclusion of this dissertation.

Endnotes

1. In respect of a return to the law by Gentile Christians see also Paul's letter to the Galatians (Gl 3:3; 4:4, 9; 5:1) where the situation was ripe.
2. The situation is highlighted, then, also by a prayer with regard to it, namely: 'Sovereign of the universe, it is known full well to Thee that our will is to perform Thy will, and what prevents us? The yeast in the dough of our nature...May it be Thy will to deliver us...so that we may return to perform the statutes of Thy will with a perfect heart' (Brown 1988:34).
3. That this is so is borne out by *ἀνθελαύομεν* (7:4) and *ἀνθελαύειν* (7:6).
4. Cranfield's (1975:338) observation in respect of *νυνί* confirms this, namely, that *νυνί* here has its temporal force. Used with the aorist, it can denote the beginning of a present, contrasted with a previous, state of affairs or action (cf 5:11; 11:30, 31; Eph 3:5). See also Liddell and Scott [1889] (1978:537) *νυνί* with δέ has strong emphasis, that is, 'now, at this moment.' And Robertson (1931:367): 'in the new condition.'
5. Cf Paul's remark in respect of this to the Galatians (Gl 3:11).
6. The verbal, noun and pronoun forms are retained here and at other places as they occur in the letter to the Romans to better illustrate the deictics.
7. In this respect Dunn (1988:Iviii) observes that 'the congratulatory language of 1:8 and 15:14 is no doubt exaggerated, but must at least have some basis in fact, otherwise it would be read as sarcasm - which is hardly what Paul would want.'
8. Dunn (1988:Ixix) finds Judaism 'a sort of fenced off area in which Jewish lives are led.'

9. The phrase ἐν τῷ σαρκὶ (v 5) equals ἐν παλαιότητι τρόμματος (v 6). The phrase 'En τῇ σαρκί, Denney (1974:638) correctly finds, equals ὥν τὸν νέφον (6:14).
10. Cf. here also Vorster (1991a:175): 'Onomwonde word die eis van merke...vir beide groepe naamlik Jode en heidene gestel' (Rm 2:6, 10; cf also 3:9).
11. In this respect Ridderbos's (1959:143) observation that the preposition ἀπό with the genitive shows the way is correct.
12. See in this respect also ἀβελψοτ 7:1 and 7:4 as well as 'you were...grafted in' which follows later in 11:17 and 24.
13. Cranfield (1975:331) places Dodd on record as saying that 'the illustration has gone hopelessly astray...he lacks the gift for sustained illustration.'
14. Polhill (1976:429), in spite of having said that the husband is now free from the law, deems it best not to press Paul's illustration but to realise that the only real point of the comparison is that death puts an end to obligations.
15. Cf Brandt (1970:50) 'the line of discourse...interrupted to answer objections that might be raised' (cf Harper-Collins 1992:1069; Deist 1984:135).
16. Μή γένοτο is used with regard to what is shortly to be proved to be a present fact (see Smyth 1963:408; Moulton [1963] 1980:122).
17. Ridderbos (1959:150) observes in this respect that 'door de wet wordt de zonde pas tot zonde.' See here also Denney (1974:640) who says that 'apart from the law we have no experience either of its character or its vitality.'
18. Dunn (1980:380) observes that this is one of the most vigorous personifications of sin as a power, underscoring the human experience of sin as an oppressive force acting upon the individual (see also Ridderbos 1959:150; Cranfield 1975:350).
19. Ridderbos (1959:150-151) claims this period to be the time 'voordat de wet zich liet gelden...de tijd in ieder mensenleven, dat de aanspraak van de wet de mens nog niet bereikt, nl. in de jaren, dat hy als kind nog niet van de wet bewust is....Paulus bedoelt met da overgang stellig niet een wettelijk gefixeerd tijdstip, maar het zich doen gelden van de wet voor het bewustzijn van de mens.'
20. Ridderbos (1959:151) contends that 'Ελθοντες en de daarop volgende werkwoorden beschrijven een geleidelijk en zich over een langere tijd uitstrekend en herhalend gebeuren als op een bepaald tijdstip plaats vindend.'

21. In a comparison of: 'man created' (Gn 2:7), thereafter: 'given the commandment' (Gn 2:16-17) which equals: 'the coming of the commandment' (Rm 7:7), and the sin/serpent coming on the scene with the commandment on its tongue (Gn 3:2 = Rm 7:9b), this becomes clear. Cf also Milne (1980:15-17) who, although he takes a different stand on the matter, admits that both the terminology and ideas are too suggestive to be unintentional.

22. In this respect Dunn's (1988:378) observation is also pertinent: 'Adam is the one whose experience of sin within the epoch he began typifies and stamps its character on everyone's experience of sin within the epoch he began.'

23. A comparison of the words 'you will not die' (Gn 3:4) with 'I' died (Rm 7:9) highlights this. See also Dunn (1988:400) who observes that 'Sin uses the commandment intended as a check on man's inquisitiveness actually to stimulate that inquisitiveness, to transform inquisitiveness into acquisitiveness.'

24. In respect of the Jews' confidence in the law see also 'In his wisdom the legislator...surrounded us with unbroken palisades and iron walls to prevent our mixing with any of the other peoples in any matter....So, to prevent our being perverted by contact with others or by mixing with bad influences, he hedged us in on all sides with strict observances connected with meat and drink and touch and hearing and sight, after the manner of the Law' (Dunn 1988:Ixix).

25. In this respect see Alford (1968:380) vivus eram - 'I lived and flourished.'

26. The question of the freedom from the law was clearly set out by Paul for the Galatians too (cf G1 5:1).

27. Cf also Cranfield (1975:348) here 'while men do actually sin in the absence of the law, they do not fully recognize sin for what it is, apart from the law' (cf 3:20).

28. In this respect Denney's (1974:641) observation 'that sin might come out in its true colours, by working death for man through that which is good. Sin turns God's intended blessing into a curse; nothing could more clearly show what it is, or excite a stronger desire for deliverance from it' is pertinent.

29. See here κατεργάζεοθαι, γινόσκειν, θέλειν, πράσσειν, ποιεῖν (v 15); θέλειν, ποιεῖν, σύμφανται (v 16); κατεργάζεοθαι (v 17); εἰδέναι, θέλειν (v 18); θέλειν, ποιεῖν, κατεργάζεοθαι (v 19); κατεργάζεοθαι (v 20); εὑρεῖν, ποιεῖν (v 21); συνήδεοθαι (v 22); βλέπειν, αἰχμαλωτεύειν (v 23); δουλεύειν (v 25).

30. See in this respect the following utterances of Paul 'we should walk in newness of life' (6:4); 'that henceforth we should not serve sin' (6:6); 'reckon yourselves dead indeed to sin' (6:11); 'Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey the lusts thereof' (6:12); 'Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God' (6:13); 'even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness' (6:19).

31. Cf also Dunn (1975:272-273) and Gundry (1980:240).

32. See here also Phil 3:10-11 where Paul expresses his wish to become conformed both to Christ's death and to his resurrection.

33. Maxnes (1988:73) also has not missed the tension in respect of sonship received but yet to wait for (Rm 8:16-23).

34. In this respect compare 'not was I the cause of the act, but Zeus and my portion of the Erinys' with 'but sin taking occasion' (vv 8, 11) and 'but now it is not I that do it, but sin that dwells in me' (vv 17, 20).

35. In this respect Lindijer ([s a]:114) also observes: 'Paulus gebruikt σάρκα ook om er de gehele mens mee aan te duiden, zoals hij op aarde leeft en werk....Ook wijzen wij er op, dat Paulus met σάρκα eveneens niet alleen het lichaam aanduidt, maar ook de gehele mens. Wij vinden dit gebruik bijv. in Rom. 6. 12v., waar τὰ μέλη σώματος (= σώμα) weer wordt opgenomen door ζωντούσι.'

36. For examples of this use see Ps 44:6; 129:1-3; Is 12:1f.; 40:27; 49:14, 27; 61:10; Jr 10:19-22; Lm 1:9ff.; Mi 7:7-10. For additional examples of Paul's use of this mode see 1 Cor 6:12, 15; 10:29f.; 11:31f.; 13:1; cf also Gl 2:18 (Watson 1973:28-29).

37. In this respect see again Dunn (1988:384) 'the Torah spells life to the Israelites but death to the Gentiles because they did not accept it.'

38. Cf again Kraemer 1989:36-37; also Kraabel 1987:54-58 with regard to the diversity of Judaism.

39. In respect of this observation see 'you'/'we'/'us'/'our' in 5:1-3, 5-6, 8-11; 6:1-6, 8-22; 7:4-7a, 14; 8:4, 9-13, 15-18, 22-26, 28, 31, 32, 35-37, 39).

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

The aim of this dissertation was to answer the question of ‘the rhetorical function of Romans 7 within the context of Romans 5-8’ for in Romans 7 the continuity of the conversation from Romans 5-8 appears to be interrupted. In terms of this enquiry it was also important to study a number of approaches that are presented for understanding Romans 7. Accordingly, the psychological, the Law and Gospel and Israel’s history personified approaches were examined.

The reason was to see to what degree these approaches might help one to understand the rhetorical function of Romans 7 within the context of Romans 5-8. The outcome of this was that none of them suffices for an understanding of the rhetorical function of Romans 7 within the context of Romans 5-8.

The psychological approach was found to fail for various reasons. (1) It posits that Romans 7 reflects Paul’s pre-conversion experience when Paul was, in fact, not so much concerned with the individual how he/she was to find salvation but with the group, the relation between Jews and Gentiles in God’s plan and purpose (Stendahl 1976; Sanders 1982; Moxness 1988; Vorster 1991a, 1991b, 1992). (2) In the light of the problem that Augustine (354-430 CE) and later Luther (1483-1546 CE) had experienced the advocates of this approach had taken the tenet of ‘justification by faith’ in the letter to the Romans as their premise and thereby read their own understanding into Romans 7. (3) The advocates of this approach had further, then, also failed to take into account the first century historical background of the text and the wider context of Romans 7 (Rm 5, 6 & 8), which, if they had not failed to give attention to, was

sure to have led them to resolve differently regarding the rhetorical function of Romans 7 within its wider context (Rm 5-8).

The Law and Gospel approach also had to be rejected for a number of reasons. Segal (1986) had (1) neglected the wider context of Romans 7 (Rm 5-8), (2) failed to identify Paul's audience correctly, depicting it as a Jewish Christian rather than a Gentile Christian audience (Rm 1:5-7, 13) and (3) taken the 'Jewish food laws' as his point of departure. Consequently he also read his own understanding into Romans 7.

In the Israel's history personified approach it was found that neither Moo (1986) nor Karlberg (1986) arrives at a correct understanding of the rhetorical function of Romans 7 within the context of Romans 5-8. Nowhere does Moo (1986) distinctly distinguish Paul's audience but his observations lean more towards a Jewish audience. Karlberg (1986) incorrectly postulates Paul's audience as Jewish Christians. Both Moo and Karlberg were wrong in their identification of the 'I' of Romans 7:7-25.

Moo (1986) assumes that in 7:7-12 the 'I' represents Israel's encounter with the law at Sinai and in 7:13-25 Israel's subsequent struggle under the law; Karlberg (1986) that the 'I' in 7:7-13 is a personification of the 'old man' in Romans 6:6 and in 7:14-25 represents Paul's post-conversion experience as representative of every believer. The reason for Moo's (1986) and Karlberg's (1986) failures it has further been shown is that they have likewise failed to take into consideration the wider context of Romans 7 and consequently also offer interpretations for understanding Romans 7 that are unacceptable.

This dissertation postulates that to understand the rhetorical function of Romans 7 within the broader context of Romans 5-8 it is necessary to understand that Paul is writing to a Gentile Christian audience with whom he

wants to identify by a redefinition of the Gentile Christian's position, in terms of the Gospel with reference to the Law. Moreover, in order to establish the rhetorical function of Romans 7, it was necessary to establish both the identity of Paul's audience in Rome and the purpose of the letter thereby giving expression to the rhetorical critical requirement of context.

As for the nature of Paul's audience several arguments with regard to the question of the nature of Paul's audience in Rome were presented: 'Was it a Jewish Christian audience'? 'Was it a Gentile Christian audience'? 'Was it a combination of both'? In drawing my own conclusion with regard to Paul's audience in Rome I was led by the fact that in a rhetorical situation the audience is not the real audience but a construction of the speaker with which the 'real' audience, in turn, can then identify (Fraiken 1986:95; Vorster 1989:24, 27; Vorster 1990:122; 1992:99).

In line with that and on the basis of the indicators in the text (cf e g Rm 1:5-7, 13; 11:13) I was led to conclude that Paul's audience in Rome was a visualised (implied) Gentile Christian audience. As such led to the further conclusion that Romans 7 must also be seen as having specific reference to Gentile Christians, notwithstanding that at first glance it might not appear to be so (cf 7:1 'those who know the law'). In terms of the indicators in the text with regard to the position of the Gentiles together with the Jews in God's purpose and plan (cf 1:16-17; 3:9, 20-22; 9:24-26; 10:12; 15:10), my observation was, then, further strengthened in this respect.

As for the purpose of the purpose of the letter, so as not to conclude offhand what I believed Paul wishes to achieve, I thought it well to examine the theses of several scholars. I believed this might help to clarify the rhetorical function of Romans 7 within its wider context (Rm 5-8). Accordingly I perused the points

of view of Donfried (1974), Wuellner (1976), Jewett (1982), Dunn (1988) and Vorster (1991a, 1991b, 1992).

I found that Donfried (1974) takes Romans 14:1-15:13 as a starting point and posits that the purpose of the letter is to address a concrete situation in Rome. While not denying that it appears that there could possibly have been some disagreement about certain issues among the Christians in Rome, there is a great deal of testimony against the idea that Paul would write to an audience relatively unknown to him to address such an issue. The parenetic portion (Rm 14:1-15:13) from which Donfried (1974) takes his departure, I showed, cannot support his claim that the purpose of the letter is to address a concrete situation in the life of the Christians in Rome, but should rather be seen in terms of the whole of Paul's objective, which includes being helped on his way to Spain (1:11-13; 15:24).

Despite its shortcomings, Wuellner's (1976) thesis brings us closer to Paul's purpose with the letter. For he recognises that (1) the purpose of the letter must not be sought in terms of a concrete situation in Rome, but centres on two major concerns of Paul (a) Paul as agent of the Gospel to Jerusalem and to the ends of the earth, to Spain and (b) Paul as agent of the Gospel to those in Rome, and (2) the letter must be seen as argumentative, with the understanding of argumentation as the use of discourse to influence the intensity of an audience's adherence to certain theses.

In respect of (1) above Romans 7 also contributes to it in the sense that Paul makes every effort to retain his implied Gentile Christian audience within the confines of grace (7:4, 6, 8-11, 14-25a). In respect of (2) above, even though Wuellner (1974) does not show how Paul proceeds to persuade his implied audience to uphold the common values that they share as agents of faith

throughout the world, he has smoothed the way for a new advance on the problem of the purpose of the letter to the Romans (Vorster 1991b:2).

Jewett (1982) also does not fully answer the question of Paul's purpose with the letter. Jewett's (1982) main concern centres on the correct genre of the letter. In terms thereof he advocates that the letter to the Romans must be seen as an ambassadorial letter to advocate in behalf of the 'power of God' a cooperative mission to Spain. The value of Jewett's (1982) observation is that it stresses diplomatic elements which stand in the strategy to identify. Such elements are, in turn, also found in Romans 7 (cf e g 'brethren,' 'those who know the law'; 7:1).

Jewett's (1982) limitation is that he seeks an early example or letter type into which to clothe Paul, but the ambassadorial letter does not subscribe to this. For while we have identification in the letter, an aspect for which Jewett (1982) does make allowance, we also have dissociation in the letter. Jewett has missed the latter element because he does not look at the body of the letter and for that reason, then, also does not develop the aspect of dissociation in the letter. Accordingly I have found that Jewett's (1982) proposal fails to fully answer Paul's purpose with the letter.

Dunn (1988) maintains that Paul's purpose with the letter is threefold: (1) missionary, (2) apologetic and (3) pastoral. At the beginning Dunn (1988) appears to say no more than what scholars before him said. He does make a very important observation though, which Donfried (1974), Wuellner (1976) and Jewett (1982) before him do not, namely that whilst Paul stood in the same tradition as a given section of Judaism (cf again Kraabel 1987:49-50, 54-58; Kraemer 1989:36-37), he seeks to bring the Gentiles into the covenant without any of the identity markers which distinguished one as a Jew.

Dunn's (1988) observation not only confirmed my own point of view that Paul is writing to a Gentile Christian audience with whom he wanted to identify by a redefinition of the Gentiles' position to the law, but also draws attention to the fact that there is dissociation in the letter - a dissociation of ideas, by the argument of incompatibility, with regard to the Jews' misunderstanding of their own position in respect of God and the Gentiles because of their possession of the law - an aspect which, I have shown, features prominently in Romans 7.

Vorster (1991a, 1991b, 1992), to my mind, gives a better presentation of Paul's purpose with the letter. Not only did I find his thesis more comprehensive than those of the other scholars, but also because he had captured aspects that had not been captured by Donfried (1974), Wuellner (1976), Jewett (1982) and Dunn (1988). Consequently I accepted Vorster's (1991a, 1991b, 1992) thesis as giving the fullest and most satisfactory exposition of the purpose of Paul's letter to the Romans. The aspects referred to are that Paul's purpose with the letter was (1) to effect a cooperation of the non-Jewish believers in Rome and to amalgamate them with non-Jewish believers of his past under his authority, (2) to use Rome as a base for his future promulgation of the Gospel to the Western hemisphere and (3) to adjure a credibility crisis in respect of Gentile Christians with reference to the status of the Jews (Vorster 1992:99-100).

A question that naturally had to be answered was what the latter stood in connection with. The reason was that it stood in connection with a tendency among Gentile Christians to want to return to the law. In this respect Brown (1988) was helpful. For Brown (1988:59) observes that this tendency among Gentile Christians to want to return to the law resided in a difficulty that they were experiencing with regard to a control of the body (cf 6:12-13; 7:5), a control, they believed, the law could help them with (Brown 1988:59). Not only so but also that the law could at the same time provide them with a status equal to that of the Jews (Vorster 1991b:32), and secure them a position of honour

in terms of the ancient value system of the Mediterranean world (Moxness 1988:63).

There was a danger though that should this tendency get the upper hand it would (a) not only mean a regression to a formerly held inferior status in which the Jews had cast them, because of the Gentiles' non-possession of the law, even though they might partake of Jewish practices and customs, but also (b) foil Paul's plans in terms of the purpose of the letter, namely (1) to effect cooperation between the non-Jewish Christians in Rome with non-Jewish Christians of his past under his authority, thereby also expanding the power base of the non-Jewish followers of Christ, (2) use Rome as a base for his future expansion of the Gospel to the West (cf again Rm 1:11-13; 15:24), and (3) adjure a credibility crisis in respect of the status of the non-Jewish believers in Rome with regard to the status of the Jews.

While it is true that we can see how Romans 7 can further cooperation, promote the expansion of the power base of the non-Jewish followers of Christ and adjure a credibility crisis with regard to the status of the Gentile Christians with reference to that of the Jews, since both the strategy of identification and dissociation appear in Romans 7, it is also true that it cannot be seen from Romans 7 how it would influence Paul's plans to Spain. In respect thereof, then, it follows though that should Paul not be successful in preventing a return to the law by the Gentile Christians in Rome, he would not be able to realise his plans in respect of the non-Jewish believers in Rome, both in so far as uniting them with the non-Jewish believers of his past under his authority and obtaining their material assistance for the expansion of the Gospel to the West.

The rhetoric of Romans 7, then, is also to curb such a return to the law. In terms of which I have, then, also shown that Paul (1) identifies with his Gentile Christian audience as holders of a mutual value system, (2) confirms their

credibility in terms of the Gospel, in the face of the Jews' claims on the basis of their possession of the law and (3) by dissociation, by the argument of incompatibility, holds up to his implied audience the incompatibility of return to the law with that of their own position under grace. In the unfolding of Paul's argument this, then, also becomes clear. In respect of Paul's argument in Romans 7, guided by Kennedy (1984), I saw that Romans 7 lent itself to division into three rhetorical units (1) 7:1-6, (2) 7:7-12 and (3) 7:13-25. With regard to the rhetoric of Romans 7 in itself as such, it was necessary to (1) identify the role players in the units, (2) show their interaction with one another in the dimensions of time and space, and (3) give attention to the persuasive strategies that Paul used to argue against a return to the law.

The method employed confirms my thesis in respect of the rhetoric of Romans 7. In chapter 1 I listed a number of approaches offered for understanding Romans 7. This dissertation is also an approach. What I wish to prove is that no approach to date has satisfactorily explicated the rhetorical function of Romans 7 within the context of Romans 5-8. Attempts have undoubtedly been made, as the approaches listed confirm, but did not arrive at the real issue with which, I believe, Romans 7 is concerned.

The research has traditionally spiritualised Romans 7 and divided it into eras. This dissertation is an attempt to show that we can take Romans 7 far more 'literally' than it has been up to now, in the light of what we have seen with Brown (1988), namely, that the control of the body was a problem for the ancient person. Not only so but also that the law was not going to be the medium whereby the body would be controlled. Furthermore that that covenant status which Paul's implied audience already enjoyed through Christ (Dunn 1988:Ixxi) could be lost in the event of a return to the law. If the law cannot give it, it is not there, and what remains is only justification through Christ (3:20-22, 4:2; 5:1-2; 6:4, 14; 7:4, 6; 25a; 8:1-13).

To my mind, the matter that gave rise to the rhetoric of Romans 7 is clearly not about an ‘individualistic psychological’ issue, any ‘Jewish ceremonial law’ or ‘Israel’s encounter with the law at Sinai,’ or otherwise. The rhetorical function of Romans 7 is to be seen solely in terms of Paul’s purpose with the letter, in terms of which it was important that he make every effort to prevent the Gentile Christians in Rome from going on the way of the law. For that reason, then, he identifies with his Gentile Christian audience in their situation (1) directly (7:1, 4-6, 7, 14) and (2) by means of the rhetorical ‘I’ (7:7-11, 13-25).

As shown, the said identification is to be detected both in the interaction between the role players in the dimensions of time and space and in the persuasive strategies. In respect of the latter, the strategy of dissociation of ideas, which, in turn, also serves the dominant strategy in the letter, namely, identification, performs an important function. For by this avenue, by the argument of incompatibility, Paul also shows his implied audience the incompatibility of a return to the law with their position under grace. In terms of that Romans 7 might even be seen, then, to also function as a sort of anticipatory warning or subtle threat about what could happen should members of his implied audience bind themselves to the law.

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Note: The Biblical quotations in English in this dissertation are from the Authorized Version (KJV) except where indicated and translated otherwise.