

“Paul’s partner and co-worker Titus has been an underappreciated figure in New Testament studies. Ken Stenstrup’s analysis of Titus is thus welcome. By explaining in simple terms the first-century Mediterranean context—such as cultural presuppositions concerning hospitality, gift giving, and collectivistic behavior—Stenstrup brings Titus to life, especially as he is portrayed in Galatians and Second Corinthians.”

—*Thomas D. Stegman, S.J.*

Associate Professor of New Testament

Boston College School of Theology and Ministry

“Ken Stenstrup’s volume on Titus ably recognizes and addresses the cultural distance that separates many contemporary readers from the world of the New Testament epistles. His attempt to breach this gap is two-fold. First, drawing from a “generational approach model” offered by the social sciences, he locates the writings of the New Testament, including those which speak to Titus’ character and role as Paul’s fellow missionary, within the prevailing tendencies of different developmental periods in early Christianity. Second, he introduces readers to anthropological understandings of how persons in Paul’s day viewed themselves and others as collectivist persons, perceived change and causality, pursued and granted honor, and engaged in conflict. Stenstrup’s book offers readers a helpful illustration of how the use of social scientific concepts and models can enable readers to bridge the gap between past and present and open up fresh ways of understanding the New Testament documents, the characters they portray, and early Christianity.”

—*Karl Kuhn*

Associate Professor of Religion

Lakeland College

“An incisive and cogent writer, Ken Stenstrup provides his readers with models that unravel the cultural norms, perceptions, and values that shaped first-century Mediterranean persons such as Titus. The author’s skillful analysis of how hospitality, gift-giving, and boasting functioned in the cultural world of Titus provides information essential for a fair reading of the New Testament. As one who successfully resolves sensitive issues within Jesus groups, Titus emerges as an innovative and respected change agent, one of Paul’s most trusted partners in his proclamation of the gospel of God.”

—*Joan C. Campbell*
Atlantic School of Theology
Halifax, Nova Scotia

“Stenstrup’s rigorous application of the ‘generational approach model’ in the analysis of New Testament documents mentioning Titus maintains the high quality of books in this series. Titus as presented in fourth generation documents (Luke-Acts and the letter to Titus) is very different from the ‘real’ Titus, co-worker of Paul, presented in second generation documents (Galatians and 2 Corinthians). Earlier believers routinely recast or re-presented their ancestors for the edification of their own generation. By his thorough examination of this process, Stenstrup offers contemporary believers a solid method for and classic examples of actualizing or contextualizing biblical texts in a new generation.”

—*John J. Pilch*
Visiting Professor of Biblical Literature
Georgetown University, Washington, DC

Paul's Social Network: Brothers and Sisters in Faith

Bruce J. Malina, Series Editor

Titus

Honoring the Gospel of God

Ken Stenstrup



A Michael Glazier Book

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For Nick and James

This is more or less PG-13 so it may be a couple of years.
But when the time comes, I hope you enjoy reading this
as much as I enjoyed writing it.

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PREFACE

Human beings are embedded in a set of social relations. A social network is one way of conceiving that set of social relations in terms of a number of persons connected to one another by varying degrees of relatedness. In the early Jesus group documents featuring Paul and coworkers, it takes little effort to envision the apostle's collection of friends and friends of friends that is the Pauline network.

This set of brief books consists of a description of some of the significant persons who constituted the Pauline network. For Christians of the Western tradition, these persons are significant ancestors in faith. While each of them is worth knowing by themselves, it is largely because of their standing within that web of social relations woven about and around Paul that they are of lasting interest. Through this series we hope to come to know those persons in ways befitting their first-century Mediterranean culture.

Bruce J. Malina
Creighton University
Series Editor

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This book began with my review of notes taken as an undergraduate at Creighton University. Another student there once suggested that with my interest in the Bible I might enjoy a class with Bruce Malina. Thirty years later that remains one of the biggest understatements I've ever heard. My thanks to Bruce Malina and all of those who have contributed to the Social Science Task Force of the Catholic Biblical Association over the past decades. I also thank my colleagues at Saint Mary's University of Minnesota for the sabbatical that allowed me the time to write this book, and especially Dr. John Reed for his initial reading of and feedback on an earlier draft of this manuscript. Finally, I thank those at Liturgical Press, especially Hans Christoffersen and Lauren L. Murphy for their help in improving subsequent drafts.

INTRODUCTION

A search of comprehensive reference works on the Bible would probably reveal information about two first-century persons named Titus. One was the son of Vespasian, the Roman emperor remembered for having begun the siege on Jerusalem. Before completing that siege, Vespasian was proclaimed emperor and the task of completing the campaign against Jerusalem was handed to his son Titus. By all accounts, Titus made his father proud. The Israelite temple system in Jerusalem was effectively destroyed around AD 70.

Another Titus had been to Jerusalem decades earlier accompanying Paul and Barnabas. Through the celebration of his feast day, contemporary Christians might know this Titus as a disciple or secretary of Paul or as an example of chastity. What follows is more specifically focused on what can be known about Titus from the documents of the New Testament. These documents indicate that Titus was a very important person in service to the early Jesus groups associated with Paul in the late 40s and the mid-50s. In one place Paul sums up his importance by stating that Titus is “my partner and fellow worker in your service” (2 Cor 8:23). Altogether there are only a dozen or so other statements in the New Testament that refer directly to Titus. But, the quality of these descriptions provide a good deal of information about Titus, his relationship with Paul, and their mutual efforts to promote their shared understanding of what new things the God of Israel was doing for his people.

Before unpacking these ancient descriptions, the rest of this introduction will explore some basic views about the Bible and

how the New Testament documents may or may not impact us. In particular, the effort is made to distinguish how an academic reading of the documents found in the Bible might be distinguished from perhaps a more familiar reading of these documents in the context of a tradition's worship.

For many in the United States, the Bible is a principal source for faith. It is important whether it is read or not.¹ How Christians understand the Bible and particularly the New Testament is often shaped or at least influenced by their participation in a denomination. Many denominations utilize a lectionary, a book that lists or includes biblical passages to be read within worship. Focused on celebrating the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, Christian lectionaries for weekly liturgies progress through the gospels almost in their entirety every three years. Much to the surprise of some, however, no other documents from the Bible are ever read completely. The criteria for choosing non-gospel readings have to do with a text's ability to correspond to a key theme, topic, or term thought to be highlighted in the gospel selection. So, while some sections are read more than once a year (e.g., sections of 1 Cor 15), about half of the material from the non-gospel texts of the New Testament is not included in the Lectionary.²

Material about Paul's associate Titus serves as a typical example. Roman Catholics who attend Mass daily but never encounter the Bible outside of liturgy would hear about half of the letter to Titus. Written in the late first century, this letter depicts Paul commanding Titus to attend to matters yet to be accomplished on the Mediterranean island of Crete (Titus 1:5). By contrast, the Lectionary provides only two brief examples of what Paul and Titus actually did. And neither of these is read on any day of obligation. The Tuesday Mass of the eleventh week of Ordinary Time presents Paul's praise for those in Macedonia who, despite trying circumstances, had made significant contributions to a collection for the poor in Jerusalem. This reading also notes the interest in having Titus help the Corinthian community further their efforts for the collection (2 Cor 8:1-9). The next year (non-gospel Lectionary readings for weekday liturgies

alternate), specifically the Wednesday reading of the twenty-seventh week of Ordinary Time, presents Titus accompanying Paul to Jerusalem (Gal 2:1, 2, 7-14). As the verses in the parentheses indicate, not all of Paul's depiction is read. The omitted verses (3-6) note that Titus was not compelled to be circumcised and that Paul was not all that impressed with those the Jerusalem community perceived to be leaders.

While the process used for selecting texts for the Lectionary is far from clear, it seems likely that issues from the omitted verses were not considered important or appropriate complements to the gospel reading, Luke's account of the Lord's Prayer (Luke 11:1-4). Since homilies may or may not relate to these Lectionary readings and since some of those delivering them are required to complete only a handful of introductory level courses on the Bible (the requirements for most permanent deacons are even less), worshipers would not necessarily find out why the topic of circumcision was an issue in letters from Paul or, for that matter, how or why Luke's presentation of the Lord's Prayer differs from Matthew's portrayal (Matt 6:5-13). Nor in the alternate year would one necessarily hear about the issues involved with the collection Titus was to assist, or why Paul would have been concerned that not all in Jerusalem would be able to receive this gift without incident (Rom 15:25-33). So, worship settings do not necessarily provide an adequate setting for uncovering the best data available about such persons like Titus or Paul.

Beyond determining what from the Bible is read or how it is to be explained, doctrinal positions can also shape one's understanding of the Bible. For example, most Christian denominations would be able to articulate an understanding of the New Testament's references to Jesus' brothers and sisters. The passage in question might be something like Mark 6:3 where people from his hometown ask, "Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary and brother of James and Joses and Judas and Simon, and are not his sisters here with us?" Although one will not find any specifically named siblings in the Gospel of Luke (8:19-21), Matthew's gospel includes Mark's question nearly verbatim (13:55-56). Paul never mentions a group of siblings, but he does

have a similar reference. Prior to his description of a trip to Jerusalem with Titus, Paul's letter to the Galatians refers to an earlier trip where Paul had met "James, the Lord's brother" (Gal 1:19). For a tradition that would define Mary as a perpetual virgin, such brothers and sisters would necessarily be understood to have come from some other mother. One's heritage might suggest Joseph had children from a prior marriage or that these brothers and sisters were persons from Jesus' extended family. Reading the same documents, other traditions that never recognized any state of perpetual virginity might promote the understanding that Jesus was born of a "virgin," meaning that Jesus had no earthly father. But, then, invoking a notion similar to the section of Matthew 1:25 that states Joseph "knew her not until she had borne a son," a tradition might hold that, subsequent to the miraculous birth, Mary had other children with Joseph.

Accounting for the perspectives of Christians not associated with a denomination is a bit more difficult. Such persons and groups seldom provide an explicit statement about how the Bible is viewed or understood. Some nondenominational groups, however, promote the concept of a foundational or gateway Scripture. Those who have seen "John 3:16" flashed at a sporting event or plastered onto a billboard or bumper of a car might be at least partly familiar with this perspective.³ As a kind of cornerstone or foundational Scripture that presumably captures some kind of basic meaning or message for the entire Bible, one might accept the insight from this verse and then move on to encounter the thousands of other verses in the New Testament. But without any explicit consideration for how Scripture is to be read, it is difficult to know how one would reconcile the above verse suggesting "whoever believes" in the "only son" finds "eternal life" with other verses like 1 John 3:16 ("By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren") or 1 John 3:17 ("But if any one has the world's goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God's love abide in him?").

Whether one is more familiar with the Bible as presented in a Lectionary or as presented in a few of its more popular verses,

those who read the Bible in its entirety not only consider more data about Titus and other associates of Paul, they also more readily realize that the Bible is not like contemporary literature. One might notice its rather un-American views about what it means to be a male or a female or how one discerns if marriage is appropriate (1 Cor 7:7-9). The Bible offers strange views of when it is appropriate for a public stoning (John 8:7) or why wives should be “subject” to their husbands (Eph 5:24). The Bible offers different notions about newborns and why it is only after the seventh day that males from the hill country of Judah and Galilee would be named and circumcised (Luke 1:59; 2:21). Those who wrote and initially read the documents of the Bible seem to hold different notions about peace, or what the Gospel of Matthew meant when it portrayed Jesus assuring those around him that he came not to bring peace but the sword (Matt 10:34; cf. Luke 12:51 where “sword” is replaced with a less violent “division”). While it may appear rather odd to contemporary readers, Matthew’s initial audience had little difficulty understanding what Jesus meant when he told a man who had recently lost his father that he should “leave the dead to bury their own dead” (Matt 8:21-22). These initial readers understood what was involved in tithing or, for that matter, why someone would sell “everything” and give as needed or hand everything over to one who redistributed it as there was need (Acts 2:44-45 and 4:34-35). They even understood the integral role of slavery in their economy well enough to be able to accept the early Jesus movement’s notion that those called to be in Christ as slaves needn’t mind their status (1 Cor 7:21).⁴

Since all cultures share notions of self, others, the physical world (nature, time, and space), and how everything is held together (besides the Divine, even random chance is relevant here), it can be tempting for anyone today, Christian or not, to assume that the Bible reflects contemporary views of marriage or peace. And since the Bible is part of Christian origins, it might also be tempting for one to think that the Bible matches modern Christian notions about sin, slavery, salvation, or the Holy Family. At a very broad level it does. These were concepts in antiquity

and they are still concepts in our modern world. But it is also true that those who wrote about these issues nearly two thousand years ago were not like our contemporary neighbors. They held specifically different concepts about males, females, marriage, sin, economies, salvation, peace, etc.

Concerned about addressing the tensions that can arise as modern readers encounter ancient texts, some denominations began to formulate constructive solutions. For example, beginning with a document called *Divino Afflante Spiritu* (1943) and then again in *Dei Verbum*, a 1965 document from the Second Vatican Council, the Roman Catholic Church articulated broad approaches for understanding Scripture and tradition as sources of insight for salvation. While there are several aspects to *Dei Verbum* that would prohibit most traditions from adapting it entirely, the general method for reading the Bible continues to be broadly adapted by many interpreters. Essentially, modern readers are asked to consider the Bible in light of the context of those who wrote it and the initial readers. The rationale for this approach is articulated here in part:

Seeing that, in sacred scripture, God speaks through human beings in human fashion, it follows that *the interpreters of sacred scripture, if they are to ascertain what God has wished to communicate to us, should carefully search out the meaning which the sacred writers really had in mind, . . . attention must be paid . . . to literary genres . . . [and] circumstances of . . . time and culture.*" (*Dei Verbum* 12; emphasis added)

In general, this book investigating Titus takes up the challenge to consider Titus in light of the entire collection of New Testament documents and, equally as important, to pay attention to the circumstances of time and culture, not despite but because of distances between "us" and "them." In order to appreciate Titus fully, we must first decide what data from the New Testament is most relevant. Then we must begin to find a way to negotiate our recognition that humans are broadly the same,

yet, at the level of culture and meaning, often hold important differences that can create difficulties for interpreting these ancient data. To help achieve these objectives, this study will rely on insights from social-scientific methods. As noted in a previous volume in this series, the social sciences seek to provide some of the “context that is necessary for readers who don’t share the language, culture, or perspectives to interpret the texts.”⁵ In order to provide such context, a social-scientific approach utilizes “perspectives, theory, models and research of the social sciences.”⁶ This study of Titus will utilize several models from previous social-science studies. Such models were often initially developed with no specific interest in the cultures presented in the Bible. But as time-tested models, these have been adapted to the biblical data in a number of more recent studies. (Some of these are listed in the endnotes and bibliography.)

A model merely describes how a system looks and works given the data available about that system. By analogy, one might consider the use of physical models of the solar system often used in elementary or grammar school. Constructed out of foam balls, string, and wire, these simplified (sometimes movable but seldom to scale) models offer, at the very least, a simplified view of the solar system. They seldom include asteroids or any depiction of atmospheres, but they do allow students new to science the ability to visualize our planet as the third in a series of eight or, if you are a traditionalist, nine planets from the sun. In later grades, students are asked to replace or complement these physical models with more conceptual models that better allow for one’s perception of scale or the orbits of the various planets. These may serve as a touch point for more abstract discussions about how the Copernican model eventually replaced the formerly received Ptolemaic model as a tool that better accounted for the increasing data being made available by new technologies like the telescope.

Models utilized in the social sciences are likewise simplifications of more complex reality. Like the models of the solar system, they help us think about the data available. More specifically, social-science models help us think about and understand

what people have done and continue to do in their interpersonal relationships. More abstract models may even be able to represent human behaviors in such a way that they generally account for a majority of persons, not simply the behavior exhibited by one's own culture. The value of such cross-cultural models for those who read the Bible is that they offer a way for a contemporary reader in the United States to consider the Bible as a collection of documents from an ancient and foreign world. As they account for differences in time and circumstance, models offer a process for negotiating the respective differences between cultures and help to create a kind of bridge over which these distances and distinctions can be appreciated in ways that sometimes go beyond the perspectives of the various traditions. Foremost, the use of such models allows for replication or refinement by others utilizing the same or similar method.

This study of *Titus* will begin with a description of a generational response to a new phenomenon and will discuss how groups evolve through time and how change agents function as persons who initiate and seek to sustain such groups. It will also draw on studies of ancient gift giving and explore the importance of hospitality for first-century persons like Paul and *Titus*. By the end of this book we might consider what it means to say that *Titus* was a collectivistic person competent to maintain ascribed honor in roles including hospitality and gift giving that contribute to the integrity of fictive kin relationships in groups anticipating the theocracy of a God articulated as patron. Most people who hear or read the Bible today within worship or devotional settings do not care to talk about it or its characters through the lens of a model expressed through such jargon. And, in general, that would seem to be a good thing. It is no more suggested that modern interpreters who employ such models consider praying to a "patron" than it would be suggested that those studying our solar system think of the earth or other planets having a support wire that extends from the South Pole to a base that exists below the sun (physical model) or that there are little dashes in space so that the planets know where to orbit (conceptual model). As a tool for learning, however, the process

of engaging conceptual models about groups, change, honor, hospitality, or patrons helps us understand what the ancient writers intended and meant as they communicated to others like them, but not so much like us. Those typically more focused on the Bible as it is used in liturgy or as a conversation piece for contemporary ethics might find these social-scientific tools very helpful when considering the data provided in all documents from the Bible. And, if one's interest is ultimately devotional or tied into postbiblical theologies, one would hopefully consider the results of this exploration and return to participate in that devotion or tradition with insightful questions, the foundation of any vibrant and healthy theology. Denominations will continue to shape doctrine with attention to the more immediate need to communicate the essentials of what is necessarily sufficient for the salvation of contemporary Christian believers. By contrast, this book simply explores some of the basics of what can be known about Titus relative to the context of his time.

The general flow of this book is from the broad to the more specific. So, some of the initial and basic information might be review for some readers. Unlike most academic study designed with appreciation for skills that advance sequentially along with an increasing interest in the topic, most of those who begin the study of the Bible do so with a wider range of previously acquired skills and dispositions.⁷ As an academic perspective interested in utilizing methods that can ultimately account for all of the data available, the insights from social-scientific studies will sometimes complement previously acquired skills and dispositions. At other times, however, there may seem to be a tension. This study is not interested in describing how all traditions evolved from the Bible. It is more narrowly focused on presenting Titus as a single character named only in some of those documents.

Chapter 1 begins with an overview of the New Testament. Utilizing a generational approach model, the variety of New Testament documents will be assessed with a view to those that are particularly useful for a social history of Titus. Also included is a brief overview of how persons like Paul and Titus related to

small groups that made up the early Jesus movement and how these groups formed and evolved. Chapter 2 is more focused on the cultural perceptions of persons like Paul and Titus. This chapter draws some of the basic distinctions that exist between the ancient Mediterranean culture of Titus and Paul and the contemporary culture shared by many readers of this book. The chapter ends with a discussion of how Paul came to honorably respond to the gospel of God within that culture. Such background sets the stage for how one like Titus would have perceived Paul and his gospel. Chapters 3 and 4 then demonstrate how the basic insights provided in the first two chapters can be combined with documents that mention Titus, specifically the letter to Galatians (chapter 3) and the Second Letter to the Corinthians (chapter 4). As a summary, a concluding chapter (5) presents differences brought out in some of the subsequent traditions about Titus, especially those presented in the letter to Titus. The chapter also includes an overview of others who furthered traditions about Titus for their own time.

CHAPTER 1

Titus in Paul's Network

This chapter begins with an overview of the New Testament documents. These documents are next related to one another through a “generational approach model.” The model provides a few general characteristics of the various groups that produced these documents and thus allows us to consider which documents provide what types of data about Paul and Titus. The chapter concludes with a general overview of how Paul and associates like Titus typically interacted with others within the network. Included here are considerations of how Paul functioned as a change agent, how Titus and others worked with Paul to adapt this change, and how small groups develop over time.

Overview of New Testament Documents

In order to appreciate Titus as an associate within the early Jesus movement, it will be necessary to understand how that movement related to and operated with its principal figure, Paul. We know these people primarily through the New Testament, a collection of twenty-seven documents produced around the northeastern

region of the Mediterranean between the mid-first and early second century (ca. AD 50–120). Because they primarily describe the life of Jesus, some might assume the gospels are the oldest documents in this collection. The earliest, however, the Gospel of Mark, was written about AD 70, more than a decade after the latest letters written by Paul and his associates, and nearly four decades after the death of Jesus (ca. AD 30). The other three gospels were written even later, at least a decade after Mark (ca. AD 85).

Fourteen of the twenty-seven documents in the New Testament mention Paul and his associates. Since Paul never met or traveled with the earthly Jesus, there is little difficulty in understanding why Paul or associates like Titus or Timothy are never mentioned in the four gospels. It is not entirely clear, however, why Paul or his associates are not mentioned much in other New Testament documents.¹ Thirteen letters have come to have Paul's name attached to them. The narrative known as the Acts of the Apostles also describes Paul and some associates. In time, the "letter" to the Hebrews became yet another document associated with Paul. Modern critical studies of vocabulary, style, and especially ideology and subject matter have demonstrated that Paul did not write Hebrews or, for that matter, six of the thirteen letters ascribed to him and others.² Initially then, one could classify the New Testament documents referring to Paul and his associates into three types: authentic letters (Romans, Galatians, 1 and 2 Corinthians, 1 Thessalonians, Philippians, and Philemon); pseudepigraphic letters, that is, letters once thought to be from Paul but now considered to be "as if" from Paul (Colossians, Ephesians, 2 Thessalonians, 1 and 2 Timothy, and Titus); and the Acts of the Apostles.³

In general, the authentic letters present Paul and his cowriters as collaborative correspondents concerned with sustaining the integrity of the groups with which they and associates like Titus were connected.⁴ Though this collaboration can be overlooked or undervalued, the tendency to write collaboratively parallels the tendency to work collaboratively.

When compared to these authentic, collaborative letters, the letters written after Paul's death (ca. AD 62) and the narrative

Acts of the Apostles offer differing and sometimes contrasting portrayals of Paul and his associates.⁵ Like any document in the New Testament, Acts is broadly concerned with articulating what God had done and would yet do. But Acts articulates these actions through a recognizable agenda. Those who are mentioned as carrying on after the resurrection are presented in stereotypical fashion, acting with “one accord” (Acts 1:14; 15:25; see also the similar “together” 2:1, 46; 4:24; 5:12). Removed from the context of Paul and Titus by more than thirty years, Acts often presents Paul as one very much like others acting in one accord. Written about the same time as Acts, the pseudepigraphic letters lack a familiarity with the problems or challenges faced by respective audiences of the authentic letters. The letter to Titus, for example, portrays Paul as a less intimate, unilaterally commanding figure concerned with only generic matters. Titus is presented as one who must be directed through some very basic issues for the group in Crete.

The Generational Approach Model

This diversity of documents and perspectives might prompt certain questions: If Paul's letters are the oldest documents in the New Testament, why did it take so long for people to write about Jesus? Why didn't more New Testament documents mention Paul and other members of the network like Titus? Why do some documents present Paul as a unique apostle while others present him as another like the Twelve?

Many modern introductory textbooks address these concerns by noting how various texts are distinctive types of literature produced at various times following the death and resurrection of Jesus. These are important factors. But further insight into the circumstances surrounding these documents can be gained through the use of a generational approach model.⁶ As used here, a “generation” signifies any distinct group that can be arranged sequentially in a line of descent from the person or event of focus. Through consideration of many groups responding to a situation

of “significant and irreversible change,” the model broadly notes the following characteristics: A first generation is that group that has directly experienced a “significant and irreversible change” in its social situation. Such a drastic modification makes any interest or effort to sustain the former status quo, the old ways, impossible. By contrast, the second generation is characterized as in tension with the first generation and typically seeking to ignore many dimensions of that first generation. A further shift or swing happens as the third generation then seeks to remember or reclaim what the second generation ignored or forgot. In contrast to the second generation, the third generation is characterized as proud of the first generation and seeks to recapture this initial generation forgotten or ignored by the second.

Applied to the data of the New Testament, the first generation is made up of those with Jesus. Anticipating the arrival of God’s kingdom, this generation experienced the significant and irreversible change, the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus. By contrast, the second generation that ignored most of Jesus’ life, deeds, and many features of the first generation is that of Paul and his network. The third generation is then comprised of those who, with the writers of the gospels of Mark, Matthew, and John, were concerned about remembering what the second generation had ignored. At the same time these third-generation groups were establishing roots in the initial generation, there appeared subsequent generations relative to Paul and his associates. These are the writers and communities reflected in the pseudepigraphic documents mentioned above. The data of the New Testament suggest a fourth generation relative to the group with Jesus. This is reflected in the two-part work of the Gospel of Luke and the Acts of the Apostles, documents that tie together the slightly diverging views of each preceding generation into a more seamless progression.

The First Generation

The initial group called by Jesus worked to promote the proclamation of an imminent theocracy to be established in and

around Judea and centered in Jerusalem. In social science terminology, the first generation technically operated as a faction, a group of people brought together by some person for a specific period of time in order to carry out a specific purpose.⁷ Jesus had been responsible for recruiting those who were to bring about that goal of God's kingdom and, while alive, continued to serve as a central person for both the inner circle of twelve disciples and for the others embedded in Jesus during his journeys throughout Galilee and, to a lesser extent, in Judea. The disciples of Jesus were his helpers, persons who came to adapt Jesus' concern to bring the kingdom.

There are no documents written by members of this first generation. Later generations, however, generally portray the goals of this initial generation in terms similar to the following excerpt from the Gospel of Mark. About three and a half decades after the death and resurrection of Jesus, Mark reports that after the arrest of John the Baptist, "Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of God, and saying, 'The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand'" (Mark 1:14-15). While brief, this highly compacted saying indicates that the generation with Jesus operated with two fundamental assertions. First, various Judean (Pharisees, Sadducees, etc.) and Israelite expectations about when, why, how, and where God would act were now irrelevant. The time of God's action was here and now. Second, what God was bringing was a kingdom. Such a theocracy, or "God rule," would render the current kingdom under the human-divine Caesar irrelevant, at least in Galilee and Judea. Of course, such language was insurrection. And under Roman control, the fate of most influential insurrectionists was death. While these nuances are not explicit in the writing of Mark, there would have been little surprise to find this gospel portraying the death of Jesus through a Roman-sanctioned public execution known as a crucifixion.⁸

With the death of Jesus, those who had been working toward the reception of a theocracy transformed from a faction into a "political religious party."⁹ Survivors necessarily began to function in ways paralleling the Pharisees, Sadducees, or Essenes,

other parties who claimed to have the understanding of how Israel's identity and actions should be manifest. It appears that some of those who had accompanied Jesus remained in or, considering John 21, soon returned to Jerusalem to live for some time there after his death. Paul notes two meetings in Jerusalem with survivors of this first generation. The first meeting with Cephas (Peter) and James occurred about six years after the death of Jesus. A subsequent meeting with those two and another, John, occurred later, nearly two decades after the death of Jesus (ca. AD 49).¹⁰

Given their appreciation of God's having raised Jesus from the dead, their idea of a theocracy could still be anticipated. But, obviously, the means to that end would no longer be through the faction associated with the earthly Jesus. Perhaps the theocracy was thought of as coming from above through the one God had raised from death, Jesus the Christ. Not a last name, the Greek term transliterated into English as "Christ" was a translation of the Judean term "Messiah." Anyone who held this title was recognized as having been anointed for a particularly divine purpose, to carry out a particular task.¹¹ As Christ, Jesus' task would have been to bring the theocracy to those Israelites who had now come to anticipate a reprieve from God's punishment for the first failed theocracy under the line of David (ca. 586 BC).

Specifics about the kingdom's arrival and its composition would continue to be nuanced long after most of those from the first generation had passed away. The latest biblical view from the fourth-generation book of Acts depicts the risen Jesus being asked if it was time for the restoration of the kingdom of Israel (Acts 1:6). Jesus' response is that "It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has fixed by his own authority" (Acts 1:7). The third-generation Gospel of Matthew presents the earthly Jesus announcing the "Son of Man" will come in glory and with angels. With that arrival, some who apparently never even knew or proclaimed Christ would be chosen for their acts of compassion while others would be sent to a fiery demise (Matt 25:31-46). In contrast to this third generation's kingdom to come, the second generation anticipated an imminent return of Christ.

His return would bring salvation for those who believed in Jesus as one once dead but now risen (1 Cor 15:2). One second-generation letter suggests that at least some in Thessalonica had become concerned with the heavenly kingdom for those who had passed away. Paul writes that those bound to be with Christ in heaven will meet the Lord upon his descent. And those who have already passed will precede those in Christ who yet remain (1 Thess 4:13-18). Since Thessalonica is about two thousand miles from Judea, it would seem that the second-generation view of the return did not perceive this as an event limited to those who made the effort to travel to or remain in or around Jerusalem.

The Second Generation

The activity of the second generation is best presented by their letters, the earliest written documents from the New Testament. Consistent with the broader model, this generation held certain tensions with the first generation and tended to “ignore” or managed to forget most of the previous generation’s defining characteristics. (Many of these will be reclaimed by the next or third generation.) Beyond their view of when the kingdom will come, second-generation persons like Paul and Titus tended to ignore the first generation’s initial interest in transforming Israel. Rather, second-generation letters portray a consistent concern to sustain Diaspora Israelites (in Galatia, Corinth, Philippi, or Thessalonica) despite a world of powers that would threaten both the honor of these groups and their physical well-being. These letters stress that those in Christ must continue to support one another in spite of these threats from beyond the group. The second-generation groups are not directed to replace, defeat, or transform these realities, but they are to anticipate God’s delivery or salvation from them for those who are “in Christ.” Thus, in distinction to the first-generation group, which was oriented toward an objective political theocracy, the second-generation groups are more social activity groups. Their principal function is to keep the group together and await God’s delivery. As noted above, this delivery will occur in a way similar to God’s delivery

of Jesus from the power of death (1 Cor 15:12-58). In the meanwhile, early Jesus movements associated with Paul, like other second generations, had to figure out how best to inhabit two worlds. Generally, Paul seems to have advised that people were to sustain the protocols of respect for those involved in the more direct, day-to-day control of this world (Rom 13) even while a fuller life in Christ was expected. These distinctions do not intend to imply that the behavior and identity of the Pauline groups did not matter or had no impact on outsiders. They merely point out that the primary target of change was not a transformation of Roman-controlled politics, but the continual transformation of those in Christ. Pieces of this transformation can be seen in the letters' descriptions of grace or, more specifically, God's gifts manifest within the respective groups (see, e.g., 1 Cor 12-14). It is for this transformation that Titus and others serve.

Another part of the transformation anticipated for these second-generation groups was the ability to suspend at least some of the customs and requirements that may have been appropriate prior to God's newest revelation, God's raising Jesus from the dead. Said another way, second-generation persons like Paul and Titus were not at all interested in sustaining all the customs and behaviors apparently still considered requisite by some of the survivors of that first generation. Circumcision, dietary restrictions, and certain calendar observations are noted as expressions appropriate enough for Israelites leading Judean lifestyles. But these were no longer necessary features of a life in Christ. To the contrary, the second generation was clear that if they hadn't already become irrelevant to those Diaspora Israelites who long ago found themselves living great distances from Jerusalem, they were now irrelevant given the new thing God was doing.¹² Paul and those with him did not find the earthly Jesus irrelevant, but they did find the risen Christ more relevant, indeed, crucial.

As an extension of this perspective, one can note how Paul and his cosenders only occasionally mentioned fundamental or core traditions that are traced to the earthly Jesus. Paul's mention

of a Eucharist meal (1 Cor 11:23-24), a meal that Mark and Matthew will describe as a re-signification of the Passover meal, and his note that “the Lord commanded that those who proclaim the gospel should get their living by the gospel” (1 Cor 9:14)¹³ are two noteworthy exceptions to the otherwise general tendency to avoid mentioning the concerns of the generation before. In other words, the letters from Paul and his associates have little information about the life and times of Jesus, son of Joseph. They are more focused on what God’s raising of Jesus meant for non-Judean, more generally Hellenized (Greek) or Diaspora Israelites. These are the Greeks Paul speaks to who had, over the course of centuries, come to share fewer and fewer behaviors with those Israelites closest to the temple.¹⁴ Paul’s concern with contacting this specific group of Israelites is especially drawn out in his recollection of a trip to visit with Cephas and others in Jerusalem. The letter to Galatians notes the distinction that while Paul was to focus on non-Judean Israelites, others like Cephas and James were to concern themselves with the Judeans (those in and around the Jerusalem temple) who had come to appreciate the vision of God raising Jesus from the dead even while retaining some of the customs more typically associated with the temple (Gal 2:7-8; also, see below, chap. 3). Decades after this letter to the Galatians, the fourth-generation book of Acts will portray Paul and others taking their message about Christ to Israelites only to be rebuked. In response, Acts has Paul turn his efforts primarily to non-Israelites. (This shift is specifically described on three different occasions: Paul in Antioch, 13:46; Corinth, 18:6; and Rome, 28:17-28.) At the time of Luke’s writing, the temple in Jerusalem had been destroyed for at least a decade and a half. Prior to its destruction, however, Paul and associates like Titus were primarily concerned with non-Judean Israelites.

The Third Generation

The third generation relative to Jesus sought to revitalize some of what the second generation had ignored or did not bother to

include. While Paul and his cosenders happened to mention that the Lord thought it was okay for those who proclaimed the gospel to receive support for their effort, Paul and his cowriters provided very little information about what Jesus said or did. They never mention Jesus being named or baptized, they never describe much about his presence in and around the Jerusalem temple for study, prayer, participation in festivals, or, for that matter, Jesus' efforts to make whole those persons whose illness or abnormalities would have excluded them from interacting with the temple-mediated God. While Paul, Titus, and other associates held their own views on the importance of dietary or other behaviors typically associated with those who lived in the area around Jerusalem, third-generation gospels generally portray Jesus re-signifying the meaning and importance of dietary and calendar matters. It isn't what goes in that can defile so much as what comes out (Matt 15:11). The bread and wine are no longer about a past exodus but about him (Matt 26:26). While the death of Jesus is mentioned here and there (2 Cor 4:10; Gal 3:1) as a precursor to the more often mentioned resurrection, the second-generation letters include little elaboration of Jesus' last days in Jerusalem, being arrested, or publicly dishonored. And while second-generation texts repeatedly communicate Jesus as one raised by God, these documents make no mention of the events that took place in the garden after his death. For example, there is absolutely no consideration of Mary Magdalene's contact with Jesus, a feature of the postresurrection events shared by all four gospel accounts (Matt 28; Mark 16; Luke 24; and John 20). We know these events and many others only because of the efforts of the third-generation authors who were concerned with including what the previous generation had ignored.

While recapturing what had been ignored, each of the gospels was being written with attention to concerns generated by its particular circumstances around AD 70–85. For example, while the scribes and Pharisees are far from ingroup characters in Mark's gospel, the Gospel of Matthew demonstrates an elevated contempt for this party of Judeans. More than a decade after the destruction of the Jerusalem temple, Matthew's gospel presents

Jesus not only as a kind of quintessential next chapter in Israel's story but also as a specific counter to the heinous Pharisees. Matthew's contempt for the Pharisees is perhaps best seen when Jesus teaches his disciples to pray. The fourth-generation author of Luke is not devoid of criticism of the Pharisees. But he presents a softer Jesus teaching his disciples the Lord's Prayer simply because some wanted to learn to pray like the disciples of John the Baptist (Luke 11:1-4). By contrast, Matthew presents Jesus teaching the very same prayer in distinction to both the stereotypically hypocritical Pharisees who seek honor by praying in public and the equally stereotyped non-Judeans (Matt 6:5-13).

The Fourth Generation

The fourth generation is foremost characterized by its awareness of previous generations, especially as it tries to tie these together into a reasonably seamless trajectory. This perspective is clear in the prologues or dedications given at the beginning of the Gospel of Luke and the Acts of the Apostles. Written by one who had been following the events for some time, Luke's gospel is to be an orderly account considerate of previous narratives (Luke 1:1-4). Similarly, the book of Acts begins by noting its interest in carrying on with the perspectives from the "first book" and further relates Jesus to the larger process that began in Scripture (the Old Testament) and continued on through the first decades after the resurrection of Jesus. Sometimes this concern with tying it all together appears to have required Luke to remove or rewrite events or subject matter that was seen to be unnecessarily controversial. For example, the introduction noted that Luke does not include the specific names of persons said to be the brother of Jesus (James in the second generation) or his siblings (Joses, James, Judas, and Simon in the third-generation gospels). The fourth-generation Luke portrays Jesus saying only that those who hear and do the will of God are "my mother and my brothers" (Luke 8:19-21; cf. Matt 12:46-50; Mark 3:31-35). While difficult to prove a negative, it is possible and productive to note patterns. And when one isolates both the material left

out of Luke and what is found only in this gospel, there is a recognizable agenda. The two-part work presents a progression from Genesis through to the events following Jesus' death and resurrection in its own way, seldom addressing tensions that exist between it and earlier writings. Removed from the second generation of Paul and his associates by at least thirty years, the fourth-generation Acts of the Apostles presents Paul as one linked to Peter. With others, both Paul and Peter are linked with Jesus through healings and proclamations before both the common and elite.¹⁵ The net effect and, hence, the suggested agenda, is to bring the entire phenomenon (regardless of persons involved) together under the direction of Holy Spirit and acting with one accord.

Many of the pseudonymous authors writing as if they were Paul similarly demonstrated an interest in reclaiming roots in a first generation. But again, when compared with the authentic letters, it is clear that these later letters recapture the second generation with both significant and subtle changes. These changes have long been thought to reflect the later writer's interest in depicting Paul as if he were still alive and still responding to the questions and concerns that came only decades after his death. In other words, the later writers portray Paul responding to the contemporary questions of the later author's day, not those of the second generation. In general, the later documents present the collaborative Paul as a more remote and unilaterally commanding leader. We will see that while the authentic letters present Titus as very much his own man, the later generations portray Paul commanding directives to Titus that are to be followed without question. Many of these directives would have been so obvious to anyone who spent time with Paul that there would have been little motivation for the authentic Paul to have belabored these basic matters to a trusted associate like Titus.

Applied to the data of the New Testament, the model of generational change over time allows contemporary readers to appreciate the diversity of documents and points of view presented within the New Testament. It also shows how these points of view can change slightly over time and demonstrates how one's ap-

preciation for context can influence one's understanding of the data in these documents. For example, when a person or event is discussed in multiple documents, the generational approach model presents a way for a modern reader to negotiate these respective portrayals. As this study presents the portrayal of Titus in Galatians and 2 Corinthians in distinction to the portrayal in the letter to Titus, the model will allow for an appreciation of how this figure could be recast or re-presented for a subsequent generation. Finally, and most important for this study, the model points out that anyone concerned about better understanding Titus as one of several in Paul's network would do well to begin with insights gathered from the second-generation letters.

An Overview of Paul and His Closest Associates

Beyond a framework within which to consider the variety of New Testament documents written over time and from different perspectives, the social sciences also provide tools that can help one consider the basic social interaction going on within this all-important second generation of writing. For example, Paul is often described as an apostle. He describes himself as such, sometimes specifically noting he had been called by God (1 Cor 1:1; 2 Cor 1:1; Gal 1:1; etc.) and set apart for the gospel (Rom 1:1; Gal 1:15). Letters from Paul, however, also describe some "brothers" who are "apostles" (2 Cor 8:23, NAB; it is more often translated as "messengers," RSV, NRSV) of those called. In other contexts, those with Paul are referred to as apostles (1 Cor 4:9 and 9:5). Paul is also aware that there had been "apostles" before him (Gal 1:17). Paul seems to include James, the brother of the Lord as an apostle (Gal 1:19) and might also include Junias and Andronicus as apostles (Rom 16:7). Apostles are also associated with being "ambassadors for Christ" (2 Cor 5:20), coworkers (1 Cor 3:9; 2 Cor 6:1), and perhaps even those who respond to the reality of the resurrection of Jesus (Rom 1:1-6). Paul also mentions "superlative apostles" (2 Cor 11:5; 12:11) who would compare themselves favorably to Paul.

Other documents from other generations hold different notions about the role of an apostle. As noted above, later writers present Paul as an apostle who unilaterally orders people like Titus and Timothy to install elders or enforce a group's adherence to generic behaviors. As the third-generation Gospel of Matthew comes to a close, the eleven are sent to "make disciples of all nations," baptize people, and teach them "to observe" all Jesus had commanded (Matt 28:19-20). (While not given the specific title, the Twelve were noted as apostles in Matt 10:2.) With its mission of both the Twelve (9:2-5) and the seventy (10:1-20), the fourth-generation Gospel of Luke might look like it is more inclusive of apostles. Acts, however, depicts a stronger correlation between apostles and the Twelve. These teach and perform "wonders and signs" (Acts 2:43; 5:12). They also receive financial support in order to redistribute it where needed (4:35). They make important decisions (16:4), lay hands on people (6:6), and are noted to be able to give people the spirit through such an act (8:18). From a perspective less focused on the everyday difficulties of groups newly "in Christ" and more on modeling witness (Acts 1:8; 4:33), Paul is characterized as one like others who provide such witness. Such generational and inner-generation characterizations of what an apostle does suggest that another way of characterizing the second-generation Paul would be more insightful than simply calling him an apostle.

As noted above, second-generation writings portray a typical concern with bringing news to others about what God was now doing through the death and resurrection of Jesus. As part of their concern for those who received this innovation, the second generation sought to establish and sustain communication with those adapting this news. Such data suggest Paul and others can be more precisely understood as "change agents."¹⁶ In more modern, individualistic contexts, change agents might be associated with creating a "payback matrix" or leading brainstorming exercises. From a broader, cross-cultural perspective, however, a change agent is anyone sent by a change agency to perform basic tasks that provide information leading to a need for change. In other words, a change agent functions on behalf of another.

First, a change agent develops a need for change. Second, communication between the agent and those adapting the change must be established and maintained. Third, a change agent must be able to diagnose problems or setbacks preventing change. Fourth, the intent to change must be something taken on by the group. In other words, a change agent needs to motivate the group to change. A fifth task is to see that this intent to change is translated into action toward change. Sixth, a change agent must seek to stabilize change and thus prevent discontinuation of the change. With all of the above achieved, the change agent is ready to allow the group to function without the change agent. In other words, the final task of the change agent is to terminate the relationship, to allow the group to function with a clear understanding of itself as a group.

The authentic letters depict Paul and others like Titus as motivated to establish a relationship with groups in order to have them adapt the news of God's new relationship with Israelites made clear through the raising of Jesus from death. As noted earlier, rather than continue the first generation's concern to transform the world into a theocracy, the evidence of the second-generation letters suggests Paul and his associates sought a transformation of the group. Such change could be contrasted with a former life (1 Cor 1:26; 6:10-11; 12:2; Gal 3:23; 4:3, 8-10; Phil 3:7). It could also be characterized as a partial, but not yet complete, transformation to come from God. In the meanwhile, Paul and his associates were intent on sustaining various forms of communication that would help them diagnose and respond to problems. Far from socializing for the sake of socializing, second-generation letters are typically focused on immediate and serious issues that, if left unaddressed, could threaten the stability of the various groups addressed. (Chapter 3 will more fully demonstrate how these threats could impact communication.)

To help in the process of sustaining the best communication possible, Paul sought out the assistance of honorable persons both from within his circle and from the respective groups that were forming in Christ. These persons could be thought of as the

first adopters of the innovation. Sometimes, these persons are mentioned by name. Stephanas is remembered as one of the first whose household had received the gospel and continued to live in service to the saints or holy ones chosen by God for this new day (1 Cor 16:15). Chloe is another from Corinth who at least initially played an important role for the success of the innovation (1 Cor 1:11). When communicating through letters, Paul probably relied on trusted others for their delivery. Such persons were probably competent in making sure the letter or information therein was accurately received. The second-generation letters show that these others who worked for the innovation—coworkers and coadapters for the awareness of the new thing God was doing—became an essential part of Paul’s work. Somewhat similar to those who were asked to drop everything they had to follow Jesus, some of those who aided Paul would likely have been a more regular part of Paul’s circuit. Such persons did not necessarily travel with him constantly (though Timothy did for a time), but they appear to have traveled in his circles and to have kept in contact with the same groups. Rather than persons with official titles, it might be best to think of such persons as holding the interest, ability, and means to circulate with Paul more often than most. These persons probably needed to be capable of conversing with Paul about what was and was not valued for a life in Christ. These persons also seem to have had a degree of sensitivity to and appreciation for the nurturing of a group through its various problems or with its various concerns. Like Paul, such persons must have at least been familiar with the general interest to diagnose problems, solidify the intent to adapt change, stabilize membership (from ingroup tensions), and prevent discontinuance. As dedicated to the goals of the change agency, they were often very much like the change agent, especially as they sought the stability for the groups. In general, they were able to “foster obedience to the demands of the innovation and allay dissonance.”¹⁷

It is possible that one like Titus may have lacked Paul’s expertise in using Scripture. It is also possible that few if any of the named coworkers were the recipients of visions like those

received by Paul. Yet, what they might have “lacked” was probably more than compensated for by something like a certain social expertise. Perhaps one like Titus was more familiar with the nuances associated with conventions of Greek culture in a particular region. Such familiarity could have served Paul as a bridge to better bonding between himself and a community like that at Corinth. Such bonds would have become indispensable as Paul and others sought to promote continually better reception of the new thing God was doing.

Groups within the Network

The term “group” will continue to be used to describe those with whom Paul and his network associated. This term is preferred because it is broad, referring generically to a small gathering of people who see themselves as a single social entity. The term “church” found in many translations of the New Testament is anachronistic, not appropriate for the time under study. A “church” more like the institution contemporary Christians are aware of was coming, eventually. But for Paul and his initial contacts, the preferred way of referring to the various groups was simply “those gathered.”

Generally, small groups follow a pattern.¹⁸ Grounded in the desire for meeting perceived needs or, more generally, change, groups develop through a process of forming, storming, norming, performing, and, eventually, adjourning. In general, the initial stage of forming is characterized by uncertainty as members explore how the group might meet perceived needs. As the various members eventually become more assertive within the group, the storming stage is associated with conflict as various members seek respective needs. At the norming stage, conflicts among members give way to mutually agreed upon behaviors that allow for a more positive reception of membership. Performing is that stage characterized by the group’s working together to solve problems. Finally, with problems solved or changes completed, the group can gradually disengage from one another, adjournment.

Contemporary readers can assume there was a stage of forming for the second generation. But details about this stage are infrequent within the second-generation letters. Collectively, the seven authentic letters suggest persons like Paul and Titus found success with groups in relatively larger cities. As hubs for trade, larger cities were suited for the exchange of both goods and information. Given the second-generation sense of urgency to reach as many as possible, it is plausible that Paul and others would have sought out such hubs for their efficiency. The letters of the second generation do not provide the same kind of itinerary as that provided in the fourth-generation book of Acts. These letters, however, do suggest that Paul's efforts to bring the innovation lasted over a decade. Given his contacts with cities like Athens (1 Thess 3:1), Ephesus (1 Cor 16:8), Corinth, Thessalonica, Philippi, and those in the region of Galatia, it is clear that Paul could not have stayed at any one place for extended lengths of time. Other glimpses into the forming stage come from brief asides like those at Philippians 4:16 or 2 Corinthians 1:19. The latter notes Paul did not initially work alone in Corinth. In Philippians Paul notes that he had been supported by the Philippians while working in Thessalonica. Similarly, while working in Corinth Paul relied on support provided from some from Macedonia (2 Cor 11:9). But beyond such brief asides there is very little data about any specific order of initial operations taken on by those who worked with the groups founded by Paul and his associates. What is clear is that these groups came together in response to the gospel Paul and his network worked tirelessly to bring.¹⁹

Neither are the stages of norming, performing, and adjournment well attested from the second-generation letters. The letters broadly indicate that the groups were to aim at a norm wherein the group behaved in a manner that constantly reflected their awareness of its status in Christ. The majority of issues in these letters, however, are concerned with reacting to the issues of the storming going on within groups and only hint at a future stage of norming. Nor are letters associated with Paul typically about performing. The efforts Paul makes to both explain the meaning

of the collection for those in Jerusalem and to move it to completion would be a kind of limited exception. In the end, however, beyond whatever temporary relief it may have provided, the collection is primarily a gesture that will manifest any group's awareness that they are not alone in their appreciation of God's activity in raising Jesus from death. Finally, as Paul began to make plans to journey farther west, he was probably aware that such travel would further separate him from groups to the east. But since Paul does not indicate how long he had planned to be in Spain, it is unclear if he would have viewed this trip as initiating any kind of transition. What is clear is that his plans are all conditional, dependent on the fact that some of those in Jerusalem both accept the gift and allow for his further travels. As groups wait for the God of heaven to act further in a world influenced by the powers that be, the primary concern continues to be how to sustain themselves through problems with perseverance and patience. Factions, misunderstandings, influence from outsiders, and uncertainty all show that storming abounds. Further depictions of this storming stage, as well as descriptions of Titus as one who would qualify as a first adapter or coworker, will be addressed below in chapters 3 and 4. The next chapter provides an overview of how persons like Titus were perceived by first-century peers.