'Enterprise values' in the New Testament and antecedent works

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***Abstract**: This paper contributes to the debate about religion and enterprise by analysing proto-Christianity's theology of enterprise values. It shows that the Galilean Jesus Movement (from around AD 24–30) exhibited considerable hostility to the pursuit of wealth, and that this stance became more pronounced still for the post-crucifixion Jerusalem Love Community (around AD 27–66), which also rejected individual property holding and labour. The Pauline school, which commenced with Paul's missionary journeys to Asia Minor in the late AD 40s, began the process of sanctifying labour. Nevertheless, a pronounced suspicion of the profit motive, and of a concern for trade, can be seen throughout the New Testament, in common with many of the antecedent Ancient Greek and Old Testament works by which it is influenced.*

***Keywords:** entrepreneurial attitudes; enterprise values; religion; ethics; profit motive*

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This paper presents and analyses theologies of 'enterprise values' in the first decades of Christian thought. As has been argued elsewhere, Christianity and enterprise have been linked so repeatedly, in such a variety of ways, that a study of their very earliest relationship is a worthwhile exercise in its own right (Drakopoulou Dodd and Gotsis, 2007). The paper will also provide a tool for analysing modern enterprise ethics and ideologies, many of which draw explicitly or implicitly on proto-Christian doctrine, including the 'literal' word of the New Testament.

One of the epistemological risks in exploring the history of ideas is that of imposing modern concepts upon ancient texts. Current definitions and conceptualizations of enterprise are social constructions specific to temporal, spatial and community settings. That said, since the earliest days of human philosophical enquiry, thinkers have tackled questions related to wealth creation and its use, labour, self-responsibility, relationships between family and economic activity, the pursuit of profit-bearing opportunities, price-setting and the raising, accumulation and use of capital. Indeed, the discussion below will show illustrative examples of ancient reflection on each of these areas. As with other related work, these questions and concepts are loosely gathered together under the generic heading 'enterprise values' (Anderson *et al*, 2000; Drakopoulou Dodd and Gotsis, 2007). We will seek to avoid 'reading back' by setting these issues within their specific social, economic and philosophical context, sketching the different socio-cultural settings within which the New Testament emerged. So as to sustain the coherence of this historical narrative, the paper follows a chronological structure, rather than presenting each of the topics listed above in turn.

Methodologically, the paper is based on a range of

bibliographic materials. Fieldwork is not an option when the contexts we are exploring are separated from us by time as well as space. We have drawn on both primary and secondary sources to conduct a traditional bibliographic survey supported by subsequent abstract deductive analysis. The paper begins by first presenting in brief some of the antecedents to Christian thought, drawing on the Ancient Greeks and the Old Testament. This contextualization is needed to provide an adequate account of the early Church's beliefs, which were, although often innovative, also contingent in an important sense on earlier traditions.[1] Next, we consider the very earliest Christians, beginning with the Galilean Jesus Movement (about AD 24 to AD 30). We explore developments in enterprise values as church leadership passed to the Jerusalem Love Community of the 30s, 40s and 50s. Finally, we analyse the beliefs of the Pauline diaspora, which spread through Asia Minor from the late AD 40s onwards. Although these three first-century contexts – Galilee, Jerusalem and Asia Minor – vary substantially one from another, nevertheless the ancient world of the south-eastern Mediterranean and the Levant shared certain key characteristics over this period. One of these was that the economic sphere was not given the prominence that it enjoys today, in the conceptualization and lived experiences of the ancient world:

> 'In the ancient world what we refer to as the economic aspects of the social system (pre-eminently the city) were subordinated to other features of which the most important were kinship, politics and religion.' (Esler, 2000, p 13)

What mattered to people embedded within such a context was social capital, accumulated and expressed as belonging (kinship), as power (politics) or moral/theological virtue (religion). A system of clientelism saw the patronage of the nobility as a key mechanism for the exercise of this social capital and as an expression of moral rectitude. Thus, the three dominant social capital imperatives of kinship, politics and religion were overlapping and interconnected, rather than being discrete elements of ancient life. This can perhaps best be seen in the widely held metaphor of the Roman Empire itself as a large household, with Caesar as its paterfamilias. It is not an accident that the original meaning of economics is law [*nomos*] of the home [*oikos*]. Surplus income, and capital, served mostly to maintain and enhance the honour of a family within its surrounding social structures. The relative rigidity of these structures, and the belief that economic goods were finite, meant that attempts to improve one's socioeconomic position through, for example, trade, were frowned upon as likely to deprive others of these much-needed resources, and as inappropriate meddling with the status quo. In modern language, we can perceive a very strong conception of trade and other economic activities as a zero-sum game, with such activities so thoroughly embedded in their social context that economic objectives were inconceivable as a separate domain.

The paper builds on a series of recent papers by Gotsis and Drakopoulou Dodd (2000, 2002, 2004), which are concerned with economic themes within the New Testament.[2] The arguments within these detailed articles are based on analysis of primary sources (ancient texts) as well as commentaries, academic scholarship from a range of disciplines (theology, economic and social history, the history of economic thought and the sociology of religion). This paper presents the conclusions of the more detailed exegesis to provide an overview survey from the perspective of entrepreneurship. It commences with a brief review of the writing on 'enterprise values' of the Ancient Greeks and the Old Testament tradition, the two key influences on early Christian thought.

The Ancient Greeks

As Schumpeter notes, the natural starting point for any survey of Western thought must be the Ancient Greeks, since like their mathematics and geometry, their astronomy, mechanics, optics and economics constitute the fountainhead of practically all further work (Schumpeter, 1982, p 53). In spite of this, little of direct entrepreneurial relevance can be found in the classical Greek works. Galbraith (1987 p 11) attributes this relative lack of interest in business and work to the fact that labour was largely associated with the slave population, and hence '…had a derogatory aspect that helped to exclude it from scholarly consideration'.

The first work of note is the Constitution of Solon, dating from the sixth century BC, which demonstrates disapprobation of lending money for profit, a key theme in later debates between business and the Church. This disapproving attitude to moneylending and usury was also a hallmark of the Platonic and Aristotelian works, with the extraction of interest being viewed as a dishonourable exploitation of those in dire financial straits (see, for example, Schumpeter, 1982, p 60; Galbraith, 1987, p 12; Rolls, 1961, p 30). Aristotle opposed usury on the grounds that money should be a medium of exchange, and should not be permitted to multiply in and of itself. This critique pervaded and shaped attitudes throughout the Middle Ages, as did Aristotle's comments on just exchange values and fair prices. The resistance to the lending of money to would-be entrepre-

neurs constituted a social barrier to debt capital, thereby restricting access to opportunities. Entrepreneurial activities themselves come in for some (limited) comment from the Ancient Greeks:

> 'Entrepreneurial activities were circumscribed by social, ethical and other considerations. Those were mainly expressed by the Socratic philosophers. The principle that the entrepreneur was motivated by profit was a well recognized one… However, when this motive was uncontrolled and led individuals to an excessive accumulation of wealth, it was disapproved of by the philosophers.' (Karayiannis, 1992, p 67)

That is, whilst making a living is acceptable and honourable, what may be termed 'enthusiastic entrepreneurship' is viewed with suspicion and sometimes hostility. Plato in particular was resistant to moneymaking and the accumulation of private property, teaching that the elevation of wealth creation to prime position in one's life detracted from striving towards the more important goals of mental, physical and spiritual perfection (Karayiannis, 1990, pp 7–8, and 1992, p 71). The vision of the ideal city-state set out in Plato's *Republic* leaves very little room for private ownership and economic activity. By contrast, Aristotle is a firm supporter of self-interest, private property and family ties. Although opposed to usury, he supports natural 'chrematistics' (moneymaking) – the production of goods and services – because it helps to do away with poverty, and increases the standing of the city-state by providing the rich with funds to carry out public works and building (Karayiannis, 1992, pp 72–73; Aristotle, *Politics*, 1257b, 20–1258a). Nonetheless, he warns that 'the life of money-making is a constrained kind of life, and clearly wealth is not the Good we are in search of, for it is only good as being useful, a means of something else' (Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1096a, 5–10; see also Galbraith, 1987, p 15).

Xenophon was somewhat more positive, however, in his views on entrepreneurship, even recommending that city-states should make available loans and other resources, such as slaves, buildings and ships to be leased to entrepreneurs, since the city stood to benefit from increased economic and entrepreneurial development (Karayiannis, 2003, p 559). He also emphasized, nevertheless, fairness in transactions and the use of accumulated wealth in public works (p 560). The personal profit motive is only given partial approval when he recommends that entrepreneurs in ancient Athens should be 'covetous of gain in a moderate degree' (Karayiannis, 2003, p 560; Xenophon, *Oeconomicus*, pp xii, 16).[3]

Ancient Greek thought was to provide the cultural context for the early Church, especially as this spread beyond Israel and Judaea into the Hellenistic environment. Whilst recognizing that the output of entrepreneurship – newly created wealth – could have a positive effect for public works in the city, the Greeks saw the pursuit of wealth and (except for Xenophon) the provision of interest-bearing loans as ethically objectionable. The Ancient Greeks continued to be a significant influence on Christian thought, both in the Hellenistic world of the Roman Empire in the time of Jesus, Paul and the Early Fathers, and later on the medieval schoolmen, following the reintroduction of Aristotle and Plato to Europe by the Spanish Moors. Also important, however, was the influence of Jesus' own religious heritage, as encapsulated in the Judaic Old Testament.

The Old Testament

Barry Gordon's (1986, pp 43–56) socioeconomic historical study of the development of Judaic attitudes to property, work, law and money is a useful analytical tool, and draws attention to the way in which these attitudes and beliefs were shaped by the economic situation in which the people of Israel found themselves. He categorizes the Judaic theology of wealth into a model based upon a series of seven religious responses to scarcity. These are, chronologically: toil, innovation, faith (of both Abraham and Moses), wisdom, law, mediating and the apocalyptic solutions of the dispossessed. As we shall see, Gordon views the early Christian solution to the scarcity problem – seeking the kingdom – as an extension of these precursor Judaic solutions. Each of these solutions is set into its context below, with the type of solution presented in italics.

The earliest Judaic sojourners/semi-nomadic groups understood *toil* and the struggle to provide for themselves in terms of the creation myths and the expulsion from the Garden of Eden, where work is a curse, in punishment for Eve's disobedience in eating fruit from the Tree of Knowledge.

Stories making sense of the next period of socioeconomic development emphasize the role of God in assisting man's *innovation* process, sometimes rather dramatically (as in the tales of Noah or the Tower of Babel), but also in more prosaic terms, for example when Cain's descendants' poor record as farmers forces them to innovate (Genesis, 4:17–22). As Gordon notes, 'they build towns, take up pastoral pursuits, become musicians, or invent metal-working crafts. Economic development is born of the merciful response of Yahweh to men's mistakes and misdeeds' (1986, p 45, and 1975, p 74). There is a shift here away from the view of all

work as a curse, towards a positive conceptualization of innovative changes in occupation, most of which, of their nature, involved some kind of self-employment.

Next, Abraham consistently shows *faith* by following God's commands, no matter how extreme they seem, and in return receives financial success (Genesis, 22–24). This material success enjoyed by Abraham as a reward for throwing himself on God's mercy, suggests that such economic development enjoyed a positive moral stamp, as a mark of God's favour. This is indeed a significant Old Testament theme, but it is in some tension with, for example, the work of the prophets, who, as we shall see, roundly condemn wealth and the wealthy.

Then, Joseph's bureaucratic and managerial skills, in conjunction with the special knowledge supplied to him by his God through dreams, form the basis for what Gordon terms a *solution by wisdom* (Genesis, 41) for the guest workers in Egypt. Careful stewardship of resources and the pursuit of personal advancement are both given a strong apologia in this developmental phase of Gordon's model.

Moses next follows Abraham's example, as he leads the tribes of Israel into the wilderness to wander in search of the homeland God has promised them, trusting to *faith* in God to provide the solution to their material needs (Exodus, 12–19). Once the Promised Land is reached – a land that remains God's, held only in trust by the people of Israel – a written law is needed to deal with the social and economic needs of the newly settled nation (Exodus, Deuteronomy and Leviticus). The *solution by law* came to dominate the life of the Jewish people, and its code includes extensive welfare provision for the poor, the writing off of debt at regular intervals, and injunctions on usury (Patrick, 1985, pp 85–87; Hengel, 1979, p 162). Nevertheless, the law codes also contain the promise that those who follow the law will enjoy material prosperity and promote work/labour as a divine ordinance (Gordon, 1986, p 48).

Then, some Old Testament books (Ruth, Job and Trito-Isaiah) see Israel's material prosperity as depending upon their nation's role in *mediating* between God and other nations, whilst the dispossessed exiles in Babylon resort to *apocalyptic solutions* (Joel and Daniel, for example), where their rich oppressors will be thrown down from power, and a new Holy Land and city created through a decisive intervention by God in world history. Finally, Gordon typifies the early Christians as a pilgrim sect, *seeking the Kingdom* of God:

> 'The solution by seeking the kingdom involves trust in the Father, recognition of personal dependence, low present valuation of future needs, and rejection of one's own material welfare as the focal point of activity.' (Gordon, 1986, p 56)

Gordon, then, paints a picture in which, at some stages of his model, certain enterprise values receive divine approval: from innovative self-employment, to personal economic success, managerial wisdom and the pursuit of personal advancement. However, he also notes that the earliest Old Testament stories view work as a curse, that property in the Promised Land is 'owned' in the last instance by God (McConville, 1984, p 11; Patrick, 1985, pp 182–185); that care for the poor is a paramount obligation (see also Von Rad, 1966, p 106; and Fager, 1993, p 114) and that faith, in several stages of the model, is far more important than concern for material success (or indeed, survival). What Gordon's model perhaps fails to do justice to is the equally prevalent backlash against many of these more positive attitudes to enterprise value themes. The prophetic passages of the Old Testament, for example, repeatedly and ferociously attack the wealthy, the personal pursuit of wealth, the accumulation of capital and the use of sharp practices by the rich in their commercial activities (Flanders *et al*, 1988, p 191; Hengel, 1979, p 160; Heaton, 1977, p 60; Wolff, 1987, p 24). On this last point, as an example, Heaton cites more than 25 passages in which such practices are condemned, in 11 Old Testament prophetic books from Amos to Zephaniah. These highly dubious business ethics included usury, underweighing and overcharging, bribing judges, and so on (Heaton, 1977, pp 60–61).

A similar ambivalence towards enterprise values in Ancient Greece can be noted, and we will show that it continued throughout the period under discussion. Both sides of this debate can also be seen in New Testament works, although the general outlook here is more pronouncedly hostile towards enterprise values, and reflects most closely the Old Testament prophetic tradition of which it is so clearly a continuation.

The New Testament

An introduction to the New Testament church

Written in a much shorter time period than the Old Testament, and as the voice of a reasonably homogeneous cultic community, the New Testament in general exhibits less diversity than the Old, and specifically with regard to matters economic and entrepreneurial. However, differences do exist – albeit less pronounced in degree and nature – and our subsequent discussion will be facilitated by the categorization of the very early Christian church into three broad periods. This categorization is not universally recognized as legitimate by theologians, but it is a very well established and appropriate heuristic (Theissen, 1978; Hengel, 1979; Drakopoulou Dodd and Gotsis, 2000; Gotsis and Drakopoulou Dodd, 2002,

2004). The Jesus Movement can be seen as the first stage in the development of the religion, and comprises the group of people, plus their belief systems, which emerged in Galilee around the person of Jesus of Nazareth, continuing for some years after his death. The Jesus Movement was essentially made up of wandering preachers, including Jesus himself, whose role included not only the teaching of their (settled) congregations, but also a living out of the ascetic ideal associated with their faith, on behalf of these congregations. Hence their more extreme pronouncements appear not to have been intended as binding life rules for the entire nascent church, the vast majority of whom continued to work in the normal fashion.

The second phase in proto-Christianity is located in post-crucifixion Jerusalem, and centres around some of the Apostles (for example, Peter), but especially James, the brother of Jesus. The hallmark of this developmental stage is that the community lived in strong anticipation of an imminent second coming [*Parousia*] and showed a remarkable detachment from more mundane and practical considerations. For example, the division between the ascetic cultic leaders and the laity disappeared, so that certain key injunctions now applied to the entire church community. Amongst these was the set of norms that proscribed working for a living in favour of prayer, advocated communally held and utilized property, and rejected the pursuit of wealth and material goods most decisively. The community was able to live on the liquidation of wealthy adherents' assets for a number of years, but as the second coming failed to materialize, and due in part also to serious famines in the area (especially that in AD 48; Mealand, 1980, p 88), eventually the Jerusalem Love Community found itself, quite literally, starving. James himself was martyred in AD 62, and Jerusalem was laid waste by the Romans in AD 70, sending any remaining community members into the exile of diaspora.

The third key stage in the New Testament Church involves Paul's mission to the wider Graeco–Roman world, and overlaps chronologically with the Jerusalem Love Community. Indeed, Paul was an energetic – if sometimes exasperated – fund-raiser on behalf of the 'saints' in Jerusalem (and it is hard not to detect a hint of irony in his tone when he uses this word), as their material condition rapidly deteriorated. Perhaps for this reason, Paul loosened the demands as to abstaining from work, in particular, imposed by Jerusalem, and he and his school propounded the tenet that work should be a prerequisite for church members.

Having briefly reviewed the setting and broad belief structures – at least as regards matters of relevance to this argument – some more detailed analysis of each stage is required.

The Jesus Movement

The Jesus Movement emerged in rural Palestine – almost exclusively in the province of Judaea – during the period of time when Jesus of Nazareth (approximately 6 BC to around AD 27) and his earliest disciples were preaching there. It appears to have commenced in about AD 24, and continued for some years after Jesus' death. The main sources of information about the Jesus Movement are to be found in the first three New Testament Gospels (Matthew, Mark and Luke), usually referred to collectively as the Synoptic Gospels. Whilst the Gospel of John stands apart from the others in many respects, theologically and in terms of content, there are very many overlaps and parallels between the Synoptic Gospels. Although dating New Testament material is highly contentious, the dominant view is that Mark's Gospel represents the earliest tradition, and that this early tradition (perhaps Mark's Gospel itself) was used as a source by Matthew and Luke, who had access to an additional source (known as 'Q'), which is now lost. There are furthermore some stories unique to each writer, and the theological slant of each Gospel also varies. Luke, for example, pays special attention to the lot of the poor, social justice and the role of women. (His *Magnificat* 'celebrating the poor and the outcast' is revolutionary in every sense of the word [Rowland, 1988, p 14].) Each Gospel was written for religious purposes, and not as a commentary on issues related to enterprise, so to undertake an analysis of their views on such issues is to do a little injustice to the overall consistency of the texts. However, it is possible, as Drakopoulou Dodd and Gotsis (2000) have shown, to carry out such work.

The Jesus Movement was essentially composed of peripatetic charismatics, whose message (which Luke calls 'good news for the poor') was prophetic in nature, and rooted in a call for believers to win salvation by placing spirituality above material concerns. This stood in marked contrast to the dominant Jewish theology of the time – that of the Pharisees, which took as its foundation rational and intellectual analysis of the Old Testament corpus and the rigid observation of laws that emerged through this process. In Gordon's terminology, the Pharisees promoted a solution by law, whereas the Jesus Movement was much closer to Old Testament solutions by faith. However, unlike parts of the Old Testament, material reward (on earth) is not envisaged for those who give themselves up to utter dependence on God.

Given that the material world is explicitly seen as a stumbling block on the route to spiritual salvation, it is hardly surprising that the Synoptic Gospels 'often express a critical attitude or even an explicit hostility to wealth, material goods, property and family values'

(Drakopoulou Dodd and Gotsis, 2000; see also Hengel, 1979, pp 171–178). Indeed, the Movement's wandering charismatics themselves gave up home, family, work and all personally held property. As illustrations of this belief system, one might consider the demonization of 'Mammon'[4] (Matthew, 6:24; Luke, 16:13); the call to abandon material possessions (Matthew, 10:9–10 and 19:27–30; Mark, 6:8 and 10:28–30; Luke, 9:3 and 10:4); the story of the rich farmer (Luke, 12:16–21); the parable of the rich man and Lazarus (Luke, 16:19–31), the parable of the sower (Mark, 4:19); and the story of the rich young man (Mark, 10:17–31).

Nevertheless, this very clear and consistent rejection of the pursuit of wealth – and of any work except that which is cultic or religious in nature – is only a part of the Jesus Movement's economic and enterprise theology. Two other very important and somewhat paradoxical points need to be made. First, the wandering charismatics – and especially Jesus himself – were not solely ascetic in their behaviour. The Pharisees were constantly berating Jesus for feasting, for eating and drinking too much, and for not paying enough (or indeed, any) attention to, for example, legislation about fasting or Sabbath food gathering and preparation (Mark, 2:13–17, 2:18–22, 14:3–9; Matthew, 11:19; Luke, 10:8–9, 7:34, 7:36 ff, 11:37, 14:1–2, 12–16).

Second, as we have already noted, the congregations to whom they preached do not seem to have been expected to follow the strict code of the charismatics in all aspects of their lives. The charismatics, indeed, depended on the charity of these people, which is recorded in several places in the Synoptic Gospels (Luke, 7:36–50; Luke, 8:1–3; Luke, 19:8; Mark, 7:9–14; Mark, 15:43; see also Hengel, 1979; and Theissen, 1978). This theme of almsgiving as the correct use of one's property, and later as an explicit justification for its reasonable creation, was to become a major theme in later years. Prescriptions applied to the bulk of the Jesus Movement's members, however, when it came to concentrating their efforts on wealth creation, rather than becoming 'right' in the ways of the movement. It should also be noted that very many of the Jesus Movement's teachings are illustrated by parables drawn from the working life of rural Judaea – especially farming and fishing – and no negative connotations attach to these labours.

To summarize the argument so far, the Jesus Movement was two-tier in nature, comprising wandering charismatics who lived out, on behalf of their congregations and probably as a kind of cultic prefiguring of the Kingdom of God, a life that rejected utterly any non-religious work, property ownership or accumulation, along with family ties. Yet all of these things that the Jesus Movement rejected can be argued most strongly to be prerequisites for enterprise, if translated into that context: hard work, a firm commitment to the pragmatic reality of the commercial world, the pursuit of wealth, the gathering of capital and the importance of family in enterprise. In contrast to this radical position preached and enacted by the wandering charismatics, the mass of believers were not expected to break all links with their everyday life.

The tensions inherent in the teaching of the Jesus Movement reflect those also found within both the Old Testament and amongst the ancient Greeks. Whilst there is an almost instinctive, visceral rejection of the pursuit of wealth as an end in itself, and a mistrust of an attachment to material possessions, nevertheless, a more pragmatic undertone recognizes that human life is not sustainable without work, industry (however underdeveloped) and the generation of surplus income (either for almsgiving or for developing public works).

The Jerusalem Love Community

After the crucifixion, an established community of Christians grew up in Jerusalem, and their views on matters related to enterprise are perhaps best encapsulated in the Epistle of James. Although it is not uncontroversial to place James's Epistle as emanating from the Jerusalem church, and to date it at some time between AD 44 and 48, Gotsis and Drakopoulou Dodd (2004, pp 8–11) argue, on the basis of a wide range of evidence, that this life setting [*sitz in leben*] strongly appears to be the most plausible. Ascribed, perhaps accurately, to the leader of this church, James (Jesus' brother), the epistle applies the rigorous prescriptions of the wandering ascetics to all community members. Gotsis and Drakopoulou Dodd have summarized its teachings on economic issues as follows:

> 'James' work pays special attention to the piety of the poor as they are tested by economic exploitation and oppression. It attacks in the strongest possible terms the capital accumulation of the rich, and the unjust means used to acquire this wealth. James' epistle also condemns merchants for trusting to their vision of the future.' (2004, p 7)

There is no paradoxical tension whatsoever to be found within the Jerusalem Love Community (part of whose story is also told in Luke's Acts of the Apostles). Their stance on property is clear: it is to be held and used communally (Acts 2:44–47, 4:32–36). As in Luke and parts of the Old Testament – most notably the prophets – the poor have a heightened spiritual significance (Gotsis and Drakopoulou Dodd, 2004, p 19). Of special relevance for entrepreneurship scholars, however, is the stance that the Jerusalem Love Community takes against

merchants and traders, as articulated in James's epistle. James's critique of traders focuses especially on their planning activities (4:13–17), which he sees as futile and distracting, given the uncertainty of the immediate future and the need to concentrate on religious matters. (It should not be forgotten that the heyday of the Jerusalem Love Community was in the 15 years after the crucifixion, when believers literally expected the second coming to be imminent.) Similar criticisms are made of capital accumulation, poor treatment of workers (especially non-payment of wages), 'fixing' of lawsuits and speculative hoarding of agricultural produce. All of these business-oriented activities are described as sinful since they place too much emphasis on the ephemera of this world; they propagate clear injustices against the poor; they diminish the opportunity for charity; and they involve avarice or greed for wealth. Here, the direct parallels with the prophetic tradition of the Old Testament are clear.

James also criticizes successful merchants for snobbery and dressing up in expensive clothes to go to church. We have already seen that using trading surpluses to effect a change in social status directly and swiftly was more widely frowned upon within the ancient world. For James's egalitarian community, it was especially inappropriate. Before moving on to the rather different enterprise theology of the Pauline school, it should also be noted that the very stark beliefs of the Jerusalem Love Community had their parallels in other contemporary belief systems:

> 'Certain characteristics of the wealthy, such as individual acquisitiveness, hoarding, and conspicuous consumption were attacked by other dominant philosophies of the time, most notable Stoics and Cynics.' (Gotsis and Drakopoulou Dodd, 2004, p 31)

The Pauline diaspora

Paradoxically, although the Pauline diaspora represent the last stage of New Testament theology, the textual material relating to the group is amongst the earliest at our disposal, with 1 Thessalonians usually dated at about AD 51/52 (much earlier than the Gospels). Almost half of the books in the New Testament are letters ascribed to Paul, although probably between five and seven of the thirteen letters are literally Pauline, with the others written by the Pauline 'school' in his style.

Paul saw his role explicitly as extending Christianity into the cities of Graeco–Roman Asia Minor, as well as into Greece and Rome themselves (Meeks, 1983, p 11; MacDonald, 1988). By including non-Jews in his mission, and by moving the habitus for the new religion into culturally and intellectually Hellenic environments, Paul was forced to wrestle with issues such as cultic food laws and the circumcision of converts. The need for theological innovation was thus clear, and was also more likely to find a receptive audience in these urban centres, which experienced much greater economic development, and were more sophisticated and Hellenistic in outlook (Meeks, 1983, p 10; see also Theissen, 1982). Gotsis and Drakopoulou Dodd (2002) summarize the Pauline teachings on economic matters as follows:

> 'Moving from his underpinning paradigm of the household unit supporting itself through hard work, we have seen that the surpluses thereby produced permit solution to the economic problem through almsgiving. No significant distributions of capital are recommended… Productive capital, in particular, is protected by the Pauline ethic of hard work and self-sufficiency. International charity amongst the new Christian churches is understood as representative of a new theological system of international flows of money and grace. The whole-hearted pursuit of wealth is explicitly condemned, nevertheless, and the "poor" retain a special theological distinction.'

The Pauline school also returns the focus to the family household, the key socioeconomic unit of the ancient Mediterranean. The family is seen positively as the model for the new and growing church communities and as the locus within which social and economic rules apply (Meeks, 1983, p 87). Economic self-sufficiency is given special emphasis in the Pauline works, and Paul himself periodically took up his trade of tent-making to support himself (1 Thessalonians, 2:9; 2 Thessalonians, 3:7–9; 1 Corinthians, 4:12). Barry Gordon (1989, p 53) has gone so far as to write of 'the extraordinarily heavy emphasis which Paul placed on self-sufficiency as a primary goal of economic activity at the micro-level'. Related to this is an acceptance that labour has some specific benefits to offer:

> 'because work may express the motive of love, because it may prevent one's becoming a burden to others, because in it one may dispel misapprehensions of non-Christians, work is necessary and meaningful' (Beardslee, 1961, p 62).

Clearly, what we do not yet see is a fully developed work ethic: that would not come until the Reformation, when, if Weber is correct, it would play a key role in the development of modern entrepreneurial capitalism. Nevertheless, the first step down that road was taken by Paul, and his writings on the subject were to have a profound influence, both on communitarian Christianity (for example, the monasteries) and in urban medieval

Table 1. A summary of 'enterprise values' in the New Testament and its antecedent works.

	Solution to the problem of scarcity	Making (business) loans with interest/usury	Business activities in pursuit of personal profit	Labour/hard work	'Managerial' skills
Plato	'Republic' communal city state	Opposed	Opposed	Ungentlemanly	
Aristotle	Aristocratic public-mindedness	Opposed	Within limits	Ungentlemanly	
Xenophon	Entrepreneurial individuals and city-states	In support of making loans as a state policy	Strongly in support of	–	Wrote what may have been the first small business manual
OT Sojourners	Toil	Usury is prohibited throughout the Old Testament	–	A curse from the Fall	
OT Settlers	Innovation		Innovation is rewarded	–	Expressed as innovation
OT: Abraham and Moses	Faith		Economic success is *a sign of* divine favour rewarding faith		–
OT: Joseph	Wisdom	–	–	–	Wisdom brings economic success
OT: Promised Land	Law	Strongly opposed: debts written off	Following the law brings material prosperity	Labour is a divine ordinance	
Jesus Movement	Faith/seeking the Kingdom	Strongly opposed	Work is *not* for the wandering charismatics, who should give up everything; laity should work		
Jerusalem Love Community	Faith/shared consumption of liquidated assets	Strongly opposed	Because the Second Coming is imminent, prayer is more important than work, or economic success, for ALL members		Planning for the future is hubristic and blasphemous
Pauline diaspora	Self-sufficiency and charity		Profits provide the income for altruistic charity	Hard work is a divine task	Good management of the household unit is a virtue

Europe. It is worth asking, then, why Paul developed this theology of self-sufficiency and hard work.[5]

It is perhaps not surprising, given the above, that tension with the Jewish Jerusalem Love Community was a hallmark of the Pauline diaspora, and was not restricted to the economic and work-related themes to which we will give our attention. Paul was a dedicated fund-raiser for the Jerusalem church, but there seems little doubt that their increasingly desperate financial straits formed one of the key reasons that he so staunchly advocated economic self-sufficiency, and rejected the need for adherents to abandon their working life. Both of these points represent a return to the role ascribed to the mass lay members of the Jesus Movement, but Paul also applied them to the spiritual leaders of his new churches. He took a diametrically opposite view here to that articulated – and enacted – by the Jerusalem Love Community. Given the new locus of the nascent church in Hellenistic cities, the role of the wandering charismatic was absorbed into the settled community, and as this happened, its more radical symbolic role became dramatically reduced [6] (Theissen, 1978, p 115). Equally, Paul needed to deal with the issue of the socially and financially better off joining his churches, a problem not faced to any great extent in poor rural Judaea, and dealt with in Jerusalem by the liquidation of assets and pooling of resources.

Conclusion

One reason why proponents and opponents of enterprise alike have been able to find textual support from the Bible for their positions is the diversity of views contained within the books themselves. Gordon's model illustrates in synopsis that a diversity of socioeconomic contexts, plus concomitant theological developments, led to convergent solutions to the problem of scarcity throughout the Old Testament, for example. The changing theological views of the New Testament have been set out in greater detail, and some tensions are indeed evident. Table 1 highlights the differences and similarities that have been presented in this paper.

In spite of these differences, certain enterprise values are unacceptable throughout the literature surveyed. The pursuit of wealth as a life goal is roundly rejected – from the Ancient Greeks, right through the Old and New Testaments, to the Church Fathers. Charging interest on loans is also condemned by all, except Xenophon, severely limiting potential flows of capital to would-be entrepreneurs not already in ownership of substantial

assets. Sharp business practices and exploitation of workers are universally condemned, and specific prescriptions for business ethics are made. These include using fair measures, paying suppliers and workers on time, not overcharging or engaging in price discrimination, and not 'fixing' legal processes. In general, the poor are given spiritual priority over the rich and those who would become rich.

Clear contradictions within the biblical tradition include the following. Paul's injunction to self-sufficient labour is in direct contradiction to Old Testament solutions by faith, and to the life and thought of the Jerusalem Love Community, as well as those of the wandering charismatics of the Jesus Movement. Repudiations of the wealthy (as found in the Prophets, the Synoptics and Jerusalem) can be offset against the promise of material rewards for faith made to Abraham, and then the people of Moses. James's condemnation of traders planning to seek opportunities in other cities is directly contrary to Paul's own itinerant tent-making practices.

These tensions continue to be evident today in contemporary overlaps between religion and enterprise. It is perhaps, then, unsurprising that this dilemma between the need for socioeconomic progress and anxieties about the moral implications of individualistic self-enrichment can also be found in ancient texts. Perrotto (2003) has gone further, arguing that, as well as hostility to enrichment, new knowledge and technological innovation were also perceived as highly threatening to established orders in the ancient world. He cites in support of this argument myths such as that of Prometheus (punished for bringing fire to man as much as for transgressing hospitality rules) and the expulsion from the Garden of Eden (where it is indeed the Tree of Knowledge that is forbidden). Against his examples, one could cite one interpretation of the Icarus myth (technological innovation as the route to an escape from oppression) and the Old Testament solutions through innovation. Nevertheless, it seems incontrovertible that this tension can be extended beyond individual enrichment and related socioeconomic development, into the technological and knowledge-driven means for achieving such enrichment. The entrepreneur – and especially the innovative, individualistic entrepreneur – was a contested archetype from ancient times. The entrepreneur challenges the status quo, brings disruptive change, sees things in a way others cannot, and pursues his or her venture vision at the expense of other goals. What we hope this paper has done is to demonstrate the ancient religious roots of the tensions that exist between the legitimation of enterprise values and their repudiation.

Notes

[1] Judaism was the most significant influence on the early church movement in Galilee and Jerusalem, whilst the influence of Hellenism became clearer through the Pauline years and beyond.

[2] Extensive use was also made of Drakopoulou Dodd (1995), which covers a much longer time frame, extending the study to the late 1980s and the Thatcherite enterprise culture.

[3] Karayiannis (2003) has further demonstrated that Xenophon was also unique in making detailed recommendations as to the practice of entrepreneurship, including an awareness of market information, knowledge of the production process, efficient management control and a strategy of cost reduction.

[4] This Aramaic word for 'possessions' is left untranslated in the Greek New Testament, which suggests, according to Hengel (1979, p 172), that is has become a proper noun, a name for something close to an evil spirit, or an idol.

[5] Paul uses the Greek work *kopos*, which still means toil or exhausting labour (Gotsis and Drakopoulou Dodd, 2002; Beardslee, 1961, p 4).

[6] These changes have also been ascribed to the delay in the Second Coming, the date of which Paul maintains we can never know (1 Thessalonians, 5:1) , and which cannot, therefore, be expected to deal with believers' economic needs any time soon.

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