

This study guide was prepared by the author. The following questions for essay/discussion/reflection can be used for personal study or in a class room or in a small group discussion or in any setting that allows the genuine spirit of head-heart-engaged study, personal or public. Feel free to send email to the author if you have any questions: Yung Suk Kim at youaregood@yahoo.com. Thanks for visiting this page and for the use of my book for study and ministry. For more information, visit [the book info page](#).

"I highly recommend this work to all who take seriously Paul's metaphor of 'the body of Christ.' Kim interprets the metaphor as an alternative vision of vital reconciling community, over against conceptions that emphasize boundary markers to establish social groups. What is at stake in the interpretation of 1 Corinthians, he argues, is not just the ways first-century Christians constructed and lived out social unity but the consequences of our choices for the way we live out our own responsibilities today." -- David Odell-Scott, Professor of Philosophy, Kent State University

"Thanks also for calling attention to your book on the body of Christ in 1 Corinthians. I read the attachment that you sent, and it sounds like your interpretation and ours are very supportive of each other. I do think the body image is about inclusive egalitarianism in the new life in Christ, and not about sharp social boundaries." -- *A message from Marcus Borg, the author of [The First Paul](#) (May 2009).*

Introduction: The Price of Unity

The goal of this chapter is to let readers understand the author's approach and thesis of this whole book.

Questions

- 1. Why is it important to read the metaphor *soma christou* (body of Christ) differently than a metaphorical organism in particular? What are some concerns that are raised by the author?**
- 2. How is a different reading of this metaphor possible or legitimate?**
- 3. In today's personal or public experiences in this world, does the use of this metaphor (body of Christ) raise any concerns?**

KEY TERMS, WORDS, CONCEPTS

Soma christou (body of Christ) as a metaphor, deliberative rhetoric, organic unity, Paul's theology, ecclesiological organism, ecclesial-organic, hierarchical

unity, *homonoia* (concord), boundary marker, marginality, belonging, conception of community, power conflicts, member of Christ, the gospel of the cross of Christ, exclusivism, “others,” universalism, differences and diversity, broken human bodies, political control of rhetoric, Stoics, living body, imperialism, neo-colonialism, authority and power, vision of community, the crucified body of Christ, hegemonic discourse, biblical interpretation, deconstruction, ethical responsibility, diversified global community, bodiliness and mortality, social cohesion, multiculturalism, globalism, border identity, solidarity, holistic outlook, text (context, and hermeneutics)

Chapter 1: Community as “Body”

The goal of this chapter is to analyze a variety of conceptions of community. Different scholarly traditions or approaches (theological and historical approaches, sociological or social-scientific approaches, and the approach of the history-of-religions school) have different ideas about the community. The question is, which one is better, or do we need an alternative?

Questions

- 1. What are some criteria for division of various scholarly approaches to the community? Compare and contrast them (use terms such as boundaries, identity and structure or power relationships).**
- 2. Can you name examples of each approach in today’s life experience (church, school, society and the world) to the conception of community?**
- 3. What are some hidden ideologies at work in the level of interpreters?**
- 4. Is it possible to have an alternative vision of community than the mentioned other approaches?**

KEY TERMS, WORDS, CONCEPTS

The boundary-protected community, the boundaries-overcoming community, the apocalyptic community, universal identity, salvation, holiness, New Perspective, vocation, divisive (hierarchical) boundaries, liberation, messianic kingdom, hegemonic universalism, the Hegelian dialectic, Hellenistic ideal, Judaism, authentic existence, salvation-history, Gentile mission, theological and historical approaches, sociological or social-scientific approaches, metaphorical organism, functionalist sociology, society, individuals, sociology of knowledge, symbolic

universe, social norms, sacred canopy, paterfamilias, the history-of-religions school, Hellenistic Christianity, Palestinian Christianity, kyrios, European colonialism, boundaries, social functions or conflicts, love patriarchalism, agency, the marginalized, New Consensus, functionalism, conservative social view, egalitarianism, Christ crucified, hybridity, multiple identity, structure or power relationships, *ekklesia*, *kyriake*, intervening space, creative tensions

Chapter 2: Community as the “Body of Christ”

The goal of this chapter is to understand a variety of understandings about the metaphor “the body of Christ” in biblical studies. The question is, which one is better than the other, or do we need an alternative?

Questions

- 1. What are major differences between different approaches to the body of Christ (the approach of “organic unity,” the approach of “corporate solidarity” and “the christological approaches”)? Compare and contrast them.**
- 2. What pros and cons can you find in each approach?**
- 3. Can you name some examples of each approach in today’s life experience?**
- 4. What is an alternative approach or understanding about the body of Christ? How can you evaluate it?**

KEY TERMS, WORDS, CONCEPTS

Organic unity, anti-imperial resistance, the body of Christ and *ekklesia*, love patriarchalism, social boundary, bounded system, unity and concord (*homonoia*), boundary marker, ecclesiological organism, corporate solidarity, Christ-Adam typology, a missionary body, Christological approaches, the lordship of Christ, Pauline mysticism, soteriology and ethics, Hellenistic mysticism, a new age, *paranesis*, multi-voiced *textus*, ecclesial interests, cross-cultural dialogue, elite discourse, hierarchical unity, minority voices, cruciform reality, Christ’s life and death

Chapter 3: Community “in Christ”

The goal of this chapter is to deconstruct the view of “in Christ” as a boundary marker in 1 Corinthians. The language of “in Christ” in a Corinthian conflicting context can be understood as a cynical rhetoric of Paul’s protest to the hegemonic voice of an “in Christ” group in Corinth.

Questions

1. What are various functions of the preposition “in” (dative case) used in Paul’s letters?
2. How does “in Christ” have to do with Paul’s rhetoric that he uses to address the Corinthian problems?
3. Can you find the Greco-Roman parallels to which Paul’s cynical language of “in Christ” might refer (1 Cor 4:10)?
4. Is the modal relation of “dying with Christ” consistent in Paul’s theology or in his letters in general?

KEY TERMS, WORDS, CONCEPTS

The dative construction of *en christo*, spatial relationships, instrumental relationships, temporal relationships, modal relationships, mystical union, boundary marker, “only in the Lord” (*monon en kyrio*), ecclesiological organism, universal body, cultural imperialism, melting pot theory of assimilation, creative, struggling space, unilateralism, individualism, the strong and the weak, ideologies, a rhetoric of protest, sarcasm, slaves, the poor, Paul’s theology of “in Christ,” Christ’s life and sacrifice, human suffering and rejection, the slave’s death, a liminal experience, the margins of humanity, dying with Christ, a new space and time

Chapter 4: The Body Politic and the Body of Christ

The goal of this chapter has two parts. One is to take a look at the Greco-Roman and Jewish world in terms of body politic and to relate to Paul’s body politic through the metaphor “the body of Christ.” The other part is to illustrate cases of

disembodiment of Christic body found in 1 Corinthians. The conclusion is that Paul takes side of the democratic-inclusive body, and that the Corinthian problems are criticized and deconstructed by this body politic with an emphasis on the deconstructive power of the cross (Christ crucified).

Questions

- 1. What are some major differences between the hegemonic body politic and the democratic-inclusive body politic? Point out ideologies (philosophy) that support each body politic.**
- 2. Which side of the body politic do you think Paul takes? Why?**
- 3. What do you think is the central cause of the Corinthian problems mentioned in the letter? (divisions, sexual immorality, eating meat sacrifice to idols, etc).**
- 4. Paul does not claim his rights as an apostle (benefits such as financial support). Does this rejection of financial support reflect his protest to the social system of patron-client in the Greco-Roman world?**

KEY TERMS, WORDS, CONCEPTS

Paul's social world, Stoicism, the body politic, unity and harmony, peace and security, Roman Empire, the hegemonic body, Plato, Aristotle, Cicero, Seneca, Augustus, Menenius Agrippa's speech, hierarchical chain of command, reason (*nous*), *logos*, slavery, Virgil's Aeneid, hierarchical dualism, the democratic-inclusive body, Cynic, Diogenes, *parrhesia*, free speech, Christ crucified, Varro, Horace, Juvenal, Tacitus, crucifixion of slaves and Jews, the voices of marginality, a radical theology of the cross, social diversity, Christic embodiment, the disembodiment of Christ, Christic body, an attributive genitive, divisions, sexual immorality, a Corinthian slogan, marriage-related matters, eating meat sacrificed to idols, rights of Paul, patronage, the gospel of Christ, women's head coverings, the Lord's Supper, love patriarchalism, functionalist, resurrection, enthusiasts, denial of death

Chapter 5: The Life of the "Body of Christ" in First Corinthians

The goal of this chapter is to examine the metaphor of “the body of Christ” in the whole letter with a focus on the discursive figurative structure of the body. One of the central key words is “Christic body” (rendered as an attributive genitive, Christlike body, as we see similarly in Rom 6:6: the body of sin as “sinful body”). There are three movements of body metaphor in this whole letter: body as cross, body as community and body as resurrection.

Questions

- 1. Does this outline of the discursive figurative structure in 1 Corinthians show distinctive issues and message in Corinthian situation?**
- 2. Compare and contrast various genitive cases applied to the body of Christ? Namely, between 1) the objective genitive (a body belonging to Christ as an organism metaphor), 2) the subjective genitive (Christ’s own body as physical), 3) the attributive genitive (Christlike or Christic body).**
- 3. Do inverted parallelisms in the analysis of the whole letter work in supporting the argument of the chapter and thesis of the whole book?**
- 4. How can you account for the possible transformative relationship, if any, between the metaphor of the body of Christ, Paul and the Corinthian community?**
- 5. What do you think about the difference between Paul's use of the metaphor of "the body of Christ" in 1 Corinthians and the later use by the authors of the so called Deutero-Pauline letters such as Ephesians and Colossians?**
- 6. Does Paul distinguish between *soma christou* ("body of Christ") and *ekklesia* (church) in 1 Corinthians? If he does so, why is it important to distinguish each other in the Corinthian context?**

KEY TERMS, WORDS, CONCEPTS

Paul’s own letters, the Deutero-Pauline letters, language for “the body” in 1 Cor, an ethic of the Christic body, one-step ethic, two-step ethic, figure, discursive structure, inverted parallelism, Paul’s theology and ethics, the cross as God’s power, the Corinthians’ failure to embody Christ crucified, the Corinthian body as Christic embodiment, a new body, three thematic parts (the cross, the community, transformation), image of body figures, theology of body figures, love as a divine gift, love as a command, love as a radical challenge, love as

interpersonal faith, a loving community (*ekklesia*), the raised body of Christ, the confession of hope, God's mystery and power, Paul's "yes" to the world, Christ crucified as a symbol of God's justice

Chapter 6: Practicing the Diversity of Christ's Body

The goal of this chapter is to contemplate on the diversity of Christ's body. The central question is, How can we practice the metaphor of Christ's body, not as a boundary marker but as a living metaphor of Christic body in a diverse, conflicted world today. This chapter leaves more questions than answers regarding the idea of diversity. That is where the book ends because it is our job to continue to work together.

Questions

1. What is true diversity and its conditions? How does the body of Christ have to do with the idea of diversity?

2. How is different, if any, between the notion of differences and of diversity?

3. Is it possible to have a phrase like "critical diversity"? If possible, how can we get there?

KEY TERMS, WORDS, CONCEPTS

Diversity, biblical interpretation, differences or complexities in our life, "otherness," a hermeneutical lens, discernment, balance, multiculturalism, the gospel of Christ, God's solidarity, Christ's death, self-critical awareness