Masters thesis

Friendship and authority in the pastoral office: a Christological approach

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Friendship and Authority in the Pastoral Office: A Christological Approach

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Abstract

This thesis seeks to navigate the role and relationship of friendship and authority in the pastoral office. In the contemporary Western world, friendship and authority are fluid terms increasingly being perceived as tensive realities, the former indicating a casual, mutual relationship between equals, and the latter calling to mind a top-down relationship of inequality. Such perceived tensions can be observed in the pastoral theological literature and popular opinion in ecclesial spheres, whereby authority is considered a barrier to friendship. In light of this data, this thesis seeks to formulate a distinctly Christian understanding of pastoral friendship and authority through the lens of *participatio Christi,* since pastoral ministry is a participation and sharing in Christ's own ongoing ministry through the Spirit.

Through the study of a key New Testament text, we discern Jesus' friendship as being characterised in cruciformity, intimacy, mutuality, mission, community, and his superior lordship-authority. Jesus does not consider his lordship a barrier to meaningful friendship with his disciples, but a necessary characteristic of it. Rather than depicting authority and friendship as being tensive realities, then, Jesus simultaneously emphasises both. We develop this into a more formulated friendship-lordship Christology, observing that in the person and ministry of Jesus friendship and authority are reshaped in relationship to one another, and especially through the cross.

From here, we formulate a clearer understanding of the nature and expression of authority and friendship in pastoral ministry. Rather than being tensive concepts, this thesis proposes a more integrated and Christocentric view of pastoral authority and friendship, rooted in the pastor's identity as one within the community of friends of Jesus. Engaging relevant and pragmatic issues, such as those of favouritism and the need for appropriate boundaries, it is illustrated that a reconciling of friendship and authority within the pastoral office is both possible and necessary.

Acknowledgements

When I was considering taking on postgraduate research, I felt convicted that after a number of years working in a church, and as an aspiring pastor, I wanted to study something practical – something that could make a real and useful difference to my Christian life and ministry. I am grateful for all the Lord has shown me through this year, for giving me a clearer understanding of the kind of minister I seek to be, and a deeper knowledge of Jesus as both my friend and my Lord. It is my prayer that this project would bear fruit that brings honour and glory to God.

As I have researched pastoral friendship, I have frequently reflected on how grateful I am to have had such great examples of pastoral ministry from my friends Danny Rodgers and Will Pearson-Gee. They have also blessed me with so many ministerial opportunities and have helped me to find my own identity as person and as a pastor-in-training. I'd also like to pay a special tribute to Steve Watkins who passed away not long before my submission of this thesis: Steve instilled in me a sense of an awe and wonder for the New Testament in its original language. I have had to omit some of my deeper New Testament study of John 15 from this project due to the scope of my thesis. However, a lot of New Testament Greek study went into ensuring my understanding of John 15 was properly grounded, and I have Steve to thank for equipping me in this good work.

As I look at this project printed on the desk in front of me, a stack of over 100 A4 pages, containing 37,000 words (including bibliography) and some 270 sources, I have to give a huge thanks to my supervisor Chloe Lynch. Through supervision, guidance, and encouragement, Chloe has enabled me to thrive in my academic research and grow as a theologian. I couldn't have done this without her, and I come to the end of this project with more confidence and feeling better prepared for the next challenge.

Fortunately, I have always been shrouded in support from friends and family. I have been blessed with a supportive family, especially my grandparents, dad, sister, and my mum – who was ordained a deacon this year and exemplifies the pastoral friendship described in this project in her own ministry. I have also been very blessed by my mother- and father-in-law with whom I have had many edifying and helpful theological discussions over the last year, and I have learned much from their wisdom.

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Lastly, I have to share my gratitude for my wonderful wife, Hannah, who is currently sitting next to me in a café, reading her book, as I make these finishing touches to my project. Han has been gracious enough to spend the entire first year of our marriage listening to me talk about this thesis, and not once has she shown herself to be sick of it. In special view of the subject of this project, Hannah really is and has been my best friend, and I have come to better know and experience the love and friendship of Jesus through her. Thank you for being such an inspiration, encouragement and light throughout this special year. This project is dedicated to you.

Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor
and glory for ever and ever. Amen!

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Introduction

One afternoon in 2022, I was sitting in my student room having lunch with a friend. I was moaning, rather obnoxiously, about how the modern church was failing to revere Christ as Lord by treating him less like our pal, mate, or buddy. "We've started forgetting Jesus is our superior because we'd rather have a bestie!" I ranted. My friend listened patiently, kindly tolerating my self-righteous lamentations, before pulling out her pencil case to carry on with her studies. My indignation quickly turned to severe awkwardness when I saw that on her pencil case, printed across the front in sparkly letters, was the slogan "Jesus is my best friend".

This was a humbling moment. My experience, as an evangelical in the UK, had been that Christians tended to fall into one of two camps. The first camp was those who focus on Jesus as their friend, leading to a spirituality with too little reverence for him. I felt I had observed this in contemporary services, where I turned up my nose at what I felt was their over-sentimentalised Jesus, and where the Holy Spirit became present through the supernatural magic of LEDs and heavy bass. The second camp was those who focused on Jesus, not as "bestie" but as Lord. This was, I felt, the right camp. Jesus was our superior and to be treated accordingly. The approach I saw in some contemporary evangelical churches of bestie-Jesus was a problem to be ironed out.

I had been spending time in a Reformed Calvinist tradition, which carried with it a high emphasis on the sovereignty, wrath, righteousness, and lordship of God in Christ. The contemporary Reformed literature, of which I had read a great deal, was all about the importance of repentance, holiness, and the fear of Christ, without much reference to Jesus as friend.[1] What felt like the more sentimental language of friendship did not sit comfortably with my experience of my own tradition. When I saw my friend's pencil case, however – which I still wish I had seen *before* my rant – I felt convicted that perhaps my experience was too limiting, because I knew she had a deeply reverent spirituality. I knew that for her Jesus

[1] Prominent Reformed pastor Paul Washer, for instance, in his *Gospel Assurances and Warnings,* offers twelve tests one can undergo to confirm one is a genuine Christian. The tests appeal to 'sin, repentance, and confession' and the importance of 'profess[ing] Christ to be God.' None of the tests, however, refer to knowing Jesus personally, intimately, being in relationship with him, or any relational language typically associated with friendship. Washer, *Assurance,* 152-153. Cf. Washer, *Power*; Washer, *Call.*

absolutely was her superior authority, and yet here she was claiming that he could also be her friend.

Inspired and convicted, I wondered whether there might be space to somehow know Jesus as both Lord and friend. Maybe one could focus on the authority of Jesus to the detriment of knowing him as friend, as well as friend to the detriment of his superiority. It seemed reasonable to me that churches often, in my observation, focused on one element over the other, because the two are so different that trying to fit them together is not easy. For the first time it occurred to me to ask the question: was it possible to know Jesus as both Lord *and* friend?

For me, however, this dilemma posed a more immediate question. I am interested in pastoral theology, and am training to be a church leader in an evangelical tradition. As someone who has spent years in various forms of pastoral ministry, and is now an ordinand in the UK, I am continuously considering the implications of my theological studies – and perhaps especially Christology –for my own practice. The pastoral office was one of authority, to my mind, and for numerous reasons that made friendship off-limits, or at the very least awkward. I felt I had observed various pastors embody their office apart from friendship in a way which, though seeming somewhat cold on occasion, did seem sensible. Accordingly, I had observed pastors try to be buddies with their congregants in ways which just made me cringe, seeming desperate to be liked. This always seemed problematic to me; all it took was for the pastor to give one congregant a warm hug and the other a formal handshake, and the friendship embodied in their office could seem inappropriate and a potential cause of conflict.

My dispositions about the pastorate were to be challenged if Jesus could be both friend *and* superior authority, because Jesus was my ethical compass for pastoral ministry as the Good Shepherd. Our understanding of pastoral ministry is shaped by our Christology.[2] If it were possible for Jesus to embody a ministry that exemplified friendship without undermining his positional authority, then perhaps the same could be said for the pastor. This brings me to the central question of this thesis: what is the place and relationship of friendship and authority in the pastoral office, if our understanding of pastoral ministry is formed by our Christology?

[2] Cf. Ledbetter, *Reviewing*, 71; Lee, *Pastoral*, 8. O'Brien, 'Holy,' 79-80. To be discussed further in section I.IV.

Method

Having identified the research question of this project, we now comment on the place of reflexivity, which is might be described as a 'tool' to navigate 'the problem of subjectivity in research.'[3] Reflexivity refers not only to the judgements and arguments of the researcher, but to the researcher themselves, and their relationship to the world.[4] Broadly speaking, it calls for an awareness, at the very least, of the researcher's own background, assumptions, worldviews, positionality, and anything else that may affect the way the researcher researches. There are a number of factors about myself that affect the way I do research, and which will also affect the content of my research.

Regarding positional distance, I am, as mentioned above, an ordinand, and I therefore have a personal involvement to the subject matter. Since my project consists of literary research, rather than empirical, the positional distance to my research may be of less significance insofar as research ethics and methods of gathering information are concerned. Nevertheless, this project is relevant to my lived experiences, current occupation, and future ministry. Although this project relies on the scholarship in order to ground itself in as much objectivity as can be reasonably achieved, I retain a certain closeness to the matters researched.

It is not only my occupation that is relevant to my position as a researcher in this area. As will be evident, friendship and authority are relational paradigms, and their expressions are socio-culturally relative. My own context and background, then, as a white middle-class evangelical man in the UK, undoubtably affects how I embody and think about friendship and authority, and also the metatheoretical assumptions I carry.[5] My understanding of how paradigms of friendship and authority operate outside of my privileged socio-cultural context is limited, and we will below explore how my own context and backgrounds affects the content and structure of this project.

Despite such limitations, my paper nevertheless operates with an epistemological assumption in line with a critical realism that 'the world exists independently of our

[3] Cf. Finlay, 'Reflexivity,' 435-456.

[4] May and Perry, *Reflexivity,* 4.

[5] Cf. Osmer, *Practical,* 57, 73-78; *Teaching,* 306-308; Osmer focuses on metatheoretical assumptions in practical theology, and especially regarding 'the theory-practice relationship' in his 2011 article: 'Practical Theology.'

knowledge of it.'[6] Though my ability to access this knowledge is limited by numerous factors (as my knowledge or understanding of other socio-cultural contexts and situations is limited by my own), there exists truth to be found, and knowledge concerning objective reality can be gathered from a range of sources and disciplines, even if only in part. We now explore my project's methodology and how it is affected by my metatheoretical and epistemological assumptions.

This study follows the basic method of Laurie Green's pastoral cycle: Experience – Explore – Reflect – Respond,[7] which allows the space to develop an academically robust thesis while remaining rooted in the practical sphere. The method involves (1) considering an experience, (2) exploring the realities surrounding that experience, (3) reflecting theologically upon it, and (4) responding accordingly. As Green notes, it is easy to turn theological reflections into Experience-Respond or Explore-Reflect.[8] The former omits the importance of theological reflection, and the latter the importance of practical action. Staying broadly within the four-step process of the cycle ensures both are upheld.

Emmanual Lartey has offered an alternative cycle which implements a stage specifically dedicated to the reflexivity of the researcher.[9] While this is an important contribution, this paper takes a different approach, noting that reflexivity is necessary in each stage of the cycle, rather than being located as a component part. Below, as the method of this project is expounded, I will comment on how my socio-cultural context and metatheoretical assumptions affect the content of each section.

The first step of the pastoral cycle – relaying an experience – has already taken place above. As I have noted, my disposition was that Jesus was to be understood as Lord as opposed to friend, partly due to my experience of the Reformed evangelical tradition; it is out of my participation in this tradition that my relayed experience took place. However, meeting someone who knew Jesus as both Lord and friend (who, incidentally, was not a part of the Reformed tradition) convicted me to reconsider my position. As a starting point, I do not here make such clarifications in order to make generalisations about the Christology *of* the

[6] Osmer, *Practical,* 74.

[7] Green, *Let's.*

[8] Green, *Let's,* 18.

[9] Lartey, 'Practical', 128-134.

Reformed evangelical tradition, but to highlight my own experience *in* that tradition. The next stage of the cycle, which makes up Part I of this paper, seeks to

> bring more precision to [our] understandings. [We] do this by immersing [ourselves] in and through analysis of the situation to go alongside… preliminary anecdotal evidence. Here, [one] gathers factual information to put alongside their stories and allows their early feelings to open up new lines of factual enquiry.[10]

This will involve an exploration of realities surrounding my experience, and therefore a study of the sociological literature. My experience was that friendship and lordship/authority[11] are tensive realities: Part I will examine to what extent this is sociologically true, clarifying also what is meant by the central terms relevant to this study. My research will be specific to the modern West, and Britain more specifically, since this is the context of my own practice and ministry. Exploring alternative socio-cultural contexts may yield different results,[12] and though such research is equally important, it is beyond the scope of this paper. I make no claims concerning the applicability of my research to other socio-cultural contexts. Once this groundwork has been laid, Part II will engage theological sources to reflect on the issues at hand. As Green summarises, this stage involves seeking to reflect on 'how the Christian faith directly relates to the experience at issue.'[13] He notes that this is not limited to the Bible, but can draw upon a range of theological sources.[14]

In line with my own evangelical background and metatheoretical assumptions, this paper holds that theological truth is to be discovered most completely in Scripture. Though the exact shape of evangelicalism remains fluid, I echo Chloe Lynch's own experience of evangelicalism instilling 'a commitment to Christocentricism informed by Scripture.'[15] In this sense, Christ himself is the prime source of theology, and he is revealed most completely through the

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[10] Green, *Let's*, 21.

[11] This project uses language of pastoral authority, but also uses the term "lordship" when referring specifically to the nature of Christ's authority. For more, see section I.II.2.

[12] Cf. page 10.

[13] Green, *Let's*, 21.

[14] Green, *Let's*, 28.

[15] Lynch, *Ecclesial*, 214.

special revelation of Scripture. Scripture witnesses to Christ, and therefore the gospel, and a meaningful reception and understanding of that witness is made possible through the mediating work of the Holy Spirit. As a result, this project centralises Scripture as the primary source of theological reflection[16] in developing a distinctly Christological understanding friendship and lordship-authority.[17]

The centrality of Scripture does not isolate alternative theological sources, such as that of tradition and experience, in theological method.[18] In line with the 'epistemic necessity of hermeneutical humility,' the Spirit remains the one 'ultimate interpreter of the Word of God.'[19] Thus, it is the Spirit who communicates Christ to us through a *range* of theological sources, and in the evangelical method, this is understood to occur primarily through Scripture.[20] However, since the Spirit, who communicates Christ, lives and works within our experiences – local and corporate – so too do experience, reason, and tradition contribute to the shared Spirit-human collaborative act of hermeneutics.[21] This is to say the Spirit reveals Christ apart from Scripture (such as in our experiences of God) but never contrary to Scripture, as Scripture remains the chief witness of Christ, and the Spirit's primary revelatory source.[22] As we approach the stage of theological reflection in the pastoral cycle, then, we employ Scripture as our prime theological source, noting and learning from the contributions of tradition in discerning the mind of Scripture as it witnesses to Christ through the power of the Spirit.

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[16] Helen Collins has criticised the pastoral cycle for its lack of clarity concerning the Reflection stage of the process (*Reordering,* 33), and it is for this reason that we here clarify this paper's evangelical approach to theological reflection. Scripture is named by David Bebbington as one of the four central pillars of evangelicalism. Bebbington, *Evangelicalism,* 2-3.

[17] This thesis typically uses language of authority when referring to the pastor and language of lordship when referring to the authority of Jesus. Cf. section I.II.2.

[18] Cf. Oden, *Pastoral,* 11, and Andrew Bartlett, *Men,* 359-360 for a helpful summary of the place of tradition in biblical interpretation from an evangelical perspective.

[19] Lynch, *Ecclesial,* 214; Collins, *Reordering,* 79; 82-83.

[20] This paper prefers an approach of *Prima Scripture* to *Sola Scriptura*, as we reject the assumption that it is possible or even helpful to read Scripture entirely apart from our experiences, traditions, and methods of reasoning. Cf. Grenz, *Renewing,* 131-134.

[21] It is partly for this reason that this thesis, as a work of practical theology, also engages with sociological literature; divine revelation and the person and work of the Spirit is not found in the abstract, but in lived realities.

[22] Bartlett, who employs an evangelical method of biblical interpretation, emphasises that if there a conflict between tradition and Scripture, 'Scripture must prevail.' Bartlett, *Men,* 359.

The final stage of the pastoral cycle requires the formulation of a practical response in light of the sociological and theological reflections. Our reflection, centring around the person and work of Christ, provides a basis for practical response since the church participates in the ongoing ministry of Christ in the world through the power of the Spirit.[23] Participation in Christ is the bridge from which we can move from Christology to pastoral theology. Our Christological study in Part II offers a framework or understanding for how friendship and lordship interact in the person of Jesus, and since the church shares in Jesus' life, and in his ministry, we are then able to discern how friendship and authority might interact in practical/pastoral ministry. Thus, this final part seeks to navigate how the friendship and lordship Christology formulated in Part II can be navigated in pastoral theology by engaging with specific, pragmatic issues in the pastorate. Again, this will be shaped by my own context and situation: pragmatic responses in practical theological method are distinctly contextual. In this case, my conclusions *may* be broad enough to be applicable in various ecclesiologies beyond evangelicalism, but they are predicated upon the Western and particularly British cultural understandings of friendship and authority explored in Part I. There may (or may not) be a range of factors which make the implementation of the pragmatic conclusions of this paper in other socio-cultural contexts inappropriate in some respects. For instance, my suggestion that the pastor locate themselves within the congregation may be appropriate to one cultural context, but offensive to another.

Although the pastoral cycle offers a helpful framework for our study, we will not stick to its structure too rigidly. As Green rightly notes, the method has its limitations, and 'the distinctions between each phase of the cycle are… not always clear.'[24] With regard to this project, Part III will continue to engage in theological reflection insofar as we seek to formulate a practical theology of authority and friendship. This will be reflective, as well as responsive. Furthermore, as Green also notes, the pastoral cycle is fluid, and can be treated with reasonable flexibility.[25] This allowance of flexibility will be visible in this project in the weighting of the three parts.

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[23] More on section I.IV. Cf. Anderson, *Shape,* 54-56; Torrance, *Worship,* 20-21; Root, *Christopraxis,* 104; Lynch, *Ecclesial,* 45-46; Purves, *Reconstructing,* 151.

[24] Green, *Let's*, 25.

[25] Green, *Let's*, 49.

Having mapped out the method of this thesis, and relayed my experience, we now turn to the second stage of the cycle: exploring the realities surrounding my experience with particular respect to the tension between friendship and lordship-authority.

Part I: Surveying the Sociological and Ecclesial Issues

This part considers the language of friendship, and then also of lordship, in order to define the terms and also to observe to what extent they might be considered tensive realities. We will then also explore how such tensions can be observed in ecclesial circles as it relates to the pastorate. We close by considering the method by which we can formulate our own understanding of friendship and authority in pastoral theology.

I.I Fluid Friendships

Jospeh Scriven's prominent 1855 hymn *What a Friend We Have in Jesus* is comfortable referring to Jesus as both friend and lord.[26] In contemporary Western society, however, this has become far more controversial. Speaking of Jesus as friend can be considered inappropriate,[27] and risks depicting a 'chummy Jesus.'[28] Indeed, this was my own concern in my pencil-case-experience. And yet, Scriven's emphasis on Jesus as Lord would give the impression he did not think of Jesus' friendship as anything remotely "chummy". Here, we explore the nature of and use of friendship language to determine what is implied when speaking of Jesus as friend.

Considering the nature of friendship is complex due to the term's fluidity and varying interpretations across different cultures, and its lack of attention in the sociological sphere.[29] Friendship has no immediately obvious categories or boundaries by which it can be defined,[30] its meaning being largely shaped by relative context or culture.[31] The entirely social and voluntary nature of friendships also leaves them void of factors such as legal procedures and

[26] Scriven, 'Friend.' The same can be observed in some popular-level Christian literature. Cf. Clarke, *Jesus,* 3-8. Speaking of Jesus as friend has become particularly prominent in feminist theology. Cf. Moltmann-Wendel, *Rediscovering,* 38-40.

[27] John Suk argues that relational language, especially friendship language, about Jesus should be suspended in place of faith language. Suk, 'Friend,' 24, 27. Cf. Carson, *Jesus,* 103; Eng, 'Friends,' 68; Rzepka, 'Jesus,' 509.

[28] Carson, *Jesus,* 104.

[29] Vela-McConnel, 'Friendship,' 229.

[30] Asselt, 'Human,' 190. Cf. Adams and Plaut, 'Cultural,' 333-347.

[31] Faith and Order Commission (hereafter FAOC), *Friendship,* 18. Cf. Allan, *Friendship,* 13-20.

policies which typically offer clearer parameters and defining features,[32] such as in the institution of marriage.

In the US, it is argued that friendships tend to develop according to 'spontaneity, mutual attraction, and warm personal feelings.'[33] In other cultures, however, friendship can be closely associated with shared social obligations in a way which is not necessarily assumed in the US.[34] Consequently, friendships can vary significantly from one cultural context to the next.[35] This fluidity has led some to conclude that 'narrow definitions of friendship are not particularly helpful.'[36] Avoiding a narrow approach, at a baseline level, and accommodating of cultural differences, the *Concise Encyclopaedia of Sociology* defines friendship as a 'broad category of positively disposed interpersonal relationships with equality, mutual goodwill, affection, and/or assistance varying according to social circumstances.'[37]

When considering Western friendships in particular there appears to be a continuous and central emphasis on mutuality and equality.[38] William Rawlins' landmark study on friendship[39] (though noting the number of contextual and interactional dialectics which make the concept difficult to define) highlights a number of consistent threads in modern friendships. Although the characterisation of friendship varies throughout different stages of life,[40] the ideal friendship remains as a freely-chosen ongoing relationship, with a mutual recognition of the other's worth, a pursuit of equality, and 'a shared orientation of mutual good will, understanding, trust, support, and acceptance, and heartfelt feelings of platonic

[32] Vela-McConnell, 'Sociology,' 229-230.
[33] Stewart and Bennett, *American,* 101.
[34] Branson and Martinez, *Churches,* 145.
[35] Branson and Martinez, *Churches,* 145.
[36] Allan, *Friendship*, 9.
[37] Ritzer and Ryan, *Concise,* 237.
[38] Dunbar, *Friends,* 25-26; Rawlins, *Friendship,* 271.
[39] Rawlins' study centres around middle-class American culture at his time of writing, in 1992. Rawlings, *Friendship,* 5. For more on the dialectics of friendship between different social classes, see: Allan, *Friendship,* 35-38, or greater depth, *Sociology,* chapters 5 and 6 for middle-class friendships and working-class friendships respectively.
[40] Rawlins labels friendship a 'saga' (*Friendship,* 25) which starts at childhood and changes throughout adolescence (79), young adulthood (103), adulthood (159), later adulthood (217), and later life (239).

affection or concern.'[41] Within this, friendships remain flexible and can be characterised in various forms, with different levels of closedness and intimacy.[42] Consistently, adolescents through to older adults describe that they have three basic expectations of their close friends: that they can talk with them, rely on them for support, and enjoy doing things and spending time with them.[43]

British friendship sociologist Robin Dunbar, in clarifying what constitutes a friend, offers a number of descriptors rather than a concise definition. He describes friendships as close non-familial relationships which 'in many ways… are all about a sense of obligation and the exchange of favours.'[44] He expands with a number of descriptors which seem to fall into three further categories: (1) a mutual personal knowledge of the other, (2) a shared openness and willingness to ask for favours and give help, and (3) a mutual enjoyment of one another's company.[45] These are, he argues, the everyday, basic, and common-sensical understandings of friendship in the 'face-to-face world.'[46] Where much of the data provided by Rawlins and Dunbar is characteristic of friendship more widely,[47] there are a number of ways in which contemporary friendship differs from traditional friendship. To this we now turn.

I.I.2 Friendship in a Mobilised Society

In addition to friendship's geographical and cultural factors, the term as we understand it in the West has also been affected by significant historical factors. In the last century, various sociological shifts have taken place in British culture which have significantly altered the nature and characterisation of friendship. Perhaps the two most influential of these are the social revolutions of transport availability and social media networking.

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[41] Rawlins *Friendship,* 271.

[42] Rawlins *Friendship,* 271.

[43] Rawlins *Friendship,* 271.

[44] Dunbar, *Friends,* 26.

[45] Dunbar, *Friends,* 26.

[46] Dunbar, *Friends,* 26. 'Face-to-face' friendships are to be distinguished from the digital friendships discussed shortly.

[47] Not least the emphasis on equality. Cf. Branson and Martinez, *Churches,* 148; Allan, *Friendship,* 24.

Prior to the revolution of mobilisation, particularly by car, friendship was closely bound up with physical proximity.[48] Therefore, 'friendships would be drawn from the local community, with limited choice, and nowhere to go following a breakdown of relationship.'[49] There was thus a high emphasis placed, for example, in investing in the relationship and resolving conflicts. Fallouts would prove highly consequential for both personal relationships, and the close-knit communities within which they were situated. The Faith and Order Commission summarises that 'in places of enforced geographical proximity… friendship often matters to survival… [it] is an imperative of life in close communities.'[50] It was for everyone's benefit, then, that friendships existed as highly stable mutually supportive relationships to be nurtured and sustained for what was likely to be a life-long relationship, especially in a pre-car society.

Since then, the availability of personal transport has made leaving close relationships much more feasible. In 1961 there were 7 million licensed vehicles in Great Britain, by 1981, 19.3 million, and by 2002, 30.6 million.[51] By 2022, this number reached 41.2 million.[52] Accordingly, the average distance travelled each year on roads has also increased, from 313 billion kilometres in 1971[53] to 521 billion (or 323 billion miles) today.[54] As a result of factors such as these, along with other technological developments, there is a weaker sense of close geographical community, leading to different friendship expectations. Richard Dunbar offers an example of how 'old friendships from school days faded very quickly because they were replaced by new friendships acquired as a result of meeting new people at university.'[55] Increased mobilisation provides more opportunities for developing new friendship communities, and therefore less dependency upon already formed friendships in local communities.[56]

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[48] FAOC, *Friendship,* 19.
[49] FAOC, *Friendship,* 19.
[50] FAOC, *Friendship,* 20.
[51] Summerfield and Babb, *Social Trends 34*, 187.
[52] UK Gov. *VEH0101a.*
[53] *Mission-Shaped,* 2.
[54] UK Gov. 'Road'.
[55] Dunbar, *Friends,* 301.
[56] McLaughlin, *Greater,* 27.

This seems to have had a direct effect on friendship expectations. A 1995 study by Karen Walker illustrated that affluent middle-class communities with greater mobility had different expectations from their friendships to less affluent and mobile working-class communities.[57] In particular, though the place of a 'high degree of commitment' continues to be emphasised in contemporary friendship,[58] Walker's study illustrated that groups with higher mobility were more likely to see friendships as centring around enjoyment, voluntary association, and personal fulfilment.[59] Rebecca McLaughlin summarises that friendships have become more of a 'nice to have.'[60] This is not to say that voluntary friendship did not occur previous to mobilisation, but that it also carried with it a much higher emphasis on 'utilitarian components – friends help one another, are useful to each other and work towards the good of the other.'[61] In a mobilised society, factors such as navigating disagreement, practising loyalty, committing to one another, and offering practical support in friendships have become far less necessary. Conversely, friendships have also become much more fragile and consumerist.[62]

I.I.3 Digital "Friendships"

This watering-down of friendship has been enhanced and accelerated over the last two decades in particular through the rise of social media. Sherry Turkle distinguishes between 'friends' and having been 'friended' on social media as two different phenomena.[63] The latter is limitless, where one can befriend thousands of others online, including persons one has

[57] Walker, 'Always,' 273-296.
[58] Vela-McConnell, *Unlikely*, 23.
[59] Walker, 'Always,' 273-296.
[60] McLaughlin, *Greater*, 27.
[61] FAOC, *Friendship*, 20.
[62] FAOC, *Friendship*, 20. Interestingly, the number of Americans reporting to have a "best friend" has decreased dramatically from 75% to 59% from 1990 to 2021. Cf. Cox, 'State.'
[63] Turkle, *Alone*, 182. Sherry Turkle uses Facebook as her example. Although Facebook is potentially slightly out-of-date today amongst younger social media users, most friendship and sociological studies on social media centre around Facebook as the most long-term and dominant online social platform.

never before met.[64] There is no distinction in the digital space between the never-before-met, the casual acquaintance[65] and the close personal friend. Contrary to traditional friendships, many online "friendships" can be terminated at the click of a button without significant consequence,[66] and do not therefore operate on the same grounding of mutual trust and commitment.[67] Instead, they can centre around little more than matters as trivial as status updates, at least on Facebook, [68] or in watching someone's 24-hour stories on networks like Snapchat. Again, this is not to suggest traditional friendships did not participate in mutual casual enjoyment, but that they also depended on a level of loyalty and commitment which is no longer required for social relationships to be considered friendships in the digital sphere. Instead, it has been argued that contemporary friendships often centre around 'breezy, lighthearted affairs in which the friends [are] always having fun… but that isn't love, that's sentimentality.'[69]

Dunbar notes the triviality of online friendships (which he distinguishes from 'real human friendships' from which 'we expect a degree of reciprocation') where one can "befriend" anyone from family, friends, to 'soap opera characters' without distinction.[70] On the social media BeReal, popularised during the Covid-19 pandemic, it is not possible even to send "friends" any message or written communication beyond comments in a public forum.[71] Modern research continues to emphasise the importance of establishing meaningful

[64] Although having thousands of friends is possible, it is worth noting that the average Facebook user actually has a "friend count" of between 50 and 300, averaging at 169, which is remarkably similar to the Dunbar Number of 150. Cf. Dunbar, *Friends,* 35.

[65] Lynch, 'Preacher,' 441.

[66] Fröding and Peterson, 'Virtual,' 201-207.

[67] Lynch, *Ecclesial,* 128.

[68] McCracken, 'Separation,' 29.

[69] Cf. Wadell, 'Place,' 209.

[70] Dunbar, *Friends,* 46.

[71] The Independent, 'What is BeReal?' Not all social medias use explicit language of friendship, instead using language of mutual following, but as Lynch has pointed out, 'whether or not they use the language of friendship, the way they have taken friendships into the virtual realm has, implicitly if not explicitly, had a thinning effect upon how Western society conceptualises friendship as idea.' Lynch, 'Preacher,' 443.

friendships,[72] but this has become increasingly alien as friendship has been taken up into the digital space, as has been especially the case with 'Gen Z.'[73]

It has been argued that there are benefits to digital friendships, such as in how they make possible the sustenance of long-distance friendships in ways which were previously impossible.[74] Although this may be true to an extent, it mainly applies to the post-mobilisation world. For most of history, as we have seen the structure of community as local, meaning keeping up friendships over long distances was not necessary. Furthermore, as Rebecca McLaughlin notes, 'we need embodied friendship. We need to hug and eat and walk and laugh with friends.'[75] The partial benefit of being able to keep in touch digitally weighs lightly on the scale against the sense of commitment, loyalty, stability and other aspects of personal relationality offered in traditional friendships.

In light of the adaptation of friendship language in the mobilised and digital age, speaking of Jesus as "friend" can carry significantly different implications in the mainstream today than it did a century ago, or indeed two thousand years ago. Today, friendship more often implies a relationship of self-actualisation, casual enjoyment,[76] and often of equality[77] (in contrast to what might be expected from an office of authority).[78] It does not place the same emphasis on mutual loyalty, commitment, and seeking the good of the other seen in traditional friendships; factors one might expect from a pastor.[79] This does not suggest that all friendships have become trivialised, but (1) that the term "friendship" is itself more trivial, with fewer relational expectations of stability and loyalty, and (2) that "friend" is a malleable

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[72] Franco, *Platonic,* 72-73.

[73] Twenge, *Generations,* 469.

[74] McLaughlin, *Greater,* 56; Lynch, 'Preacher,' 443; FAOC, *Friendship,* 22.

[75] McLaughlin, *Greater,* 56. Robert Putnam has reflected on the benefits of personal friendships for mental and physical wellbeing: *Bowling,* 341. These claims have been reinforced by a 2022 BMC Public Health report: Lee et al., 'Social.'

[76] Casual friendship was recognised in the ancient world. Aristotle recognised three forms of friendships: utility, pleasure, and virtue. Casual friendships would have been recognised by Aristotle in the second category of pleasure, but only the third category of virtue was indicative of ideal friendship.

[77] Vela-McConnell, 'Sociology,' 230-232.

[78] To be discussed in the following section.

[79] Beeley, *Leading,* 8, 12, 14-15.

or 'elastic' concept,[80] and we cannot therefore assume that friendship language from different contexts carries the same connotations and characterisations.

We have yet to characterise the shape and form of Jesus' friendship. However, we can at least note that interpretations of its characterisation will likely vary according to different socio-cultural contexts, and that a contemporary Western understanding of friendship with Jesus very likely contrasts with what the term communicated in a pre-digital and pre-mobilisation ancient middle-eastern context. The term can thus be considered today as an irreverent way to speak of one's relationship with Jesus due to its increasingly casual connotations and its lack of emphasis on stability and loyalty. The emphasis on personal fulfilment also places additional focus on friendship as a relationship between equals, which situates it in tension with relationships that imply a difference of authority, as we will see in the next section.

I.II Lordship Language

"Lordship" language does not carry quite the same elasticity as does "friendship", referring in some sense to a position of 'power and authority.'[81] In Christian contexts, the term more often than not carries positive and spiritual connotations as it centres around the lordship of Christ.[82] In keeping with the 1855 hymn by Scriven, for example, it is because Jesus is Lord that one can approach him in prayer 'and find solace there.'[83] Lordship language in modern British society, however, though carrying the same essential meaning as referring to a 'superior', is rooted in a socio-political context of much controversy.[84]

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[80] McLaughlin, *Greater,* 12.

[81] Manser, *Dictionary*, n5394.

[82] This is not without exception. For example, "lording it over" is employed in the New Testament as a negative idiom (1 Peter 5:3).

[83] Scriven. 'Friend.'

[84] Cf. *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 'Lord', for meaning of lordship language. By the dawn of the 20th Century, though the term could be used as an informal reference to the head of the household, it more often referred to 'members of the nobility' and 'feudal superior[s]', and especially to 'member[s] of the House of Lords… this is the chief modern usage.' Chrisholm, 'Lord,' 992.

I.II.1 Peerage, Politics, and Power

Lordship language in the socio-political realm can be most clearly observed in the House of Lords,[85] a body preceding the democratic system of the Commons, which finds its origin in the medieval feudal practice of royals electing major landowners to provide resources and offer counsel.[86] Being the archetypal image of lordship in British society, the term carries increasingly negative connotations as the majority of British citizens are unhappy with the undemocratic system of the Lords.[87] According to a 2012 YouGov survey, lordship in the UK is increasingly considered (1) a barrier to 'greater democratic representation', (2) a system with a lack of accountability, and (3) 'hangover from the days of old.'[88] Although we speak of the House of Lords as a leading example of lordship, the third argument highlighted by YouGov speaks to the lordship language of British nobility more widely, being rooted in a pre-democratic feudal system. A number of reforms took place in 1911 and 1949 to 'limit the right of the unelected House of Lords,[89] but these have thus far proven insufficient. Therefore, although lordship language in modern British society still refers in some sense to a position of power and authority, it carries mostly negative connotations, echoing an unjust and elitist feudal system which is out of touch with modern democracy.

Lordship language in the ecclesial sphere can to some extent carry the same connotations. The UK has seen a complicated but close relationship between the church and state; Church of England bishops have long been situated in the House of Lords,[90] and they have from their political posts exercised ecclesial authority.[91] However, the last couple of centuries has seen

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[85] See above footnote, though the contemporary Encyclopaedia Britannica does clarify that "lord" can also denote 'a peer of the realm' who may not be 'a member of the House of Lords.' Cf. *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 'Lord'.

[86] McLean, *Wrong,* 224.

[87] YouGov, 'House of Lords – Reform or Retain?' One Guardian columnist writes that 'The Lords is a scandal in plain sight' in need of immediate abolition. Harris, 'The Lords is a Scandal in plain sight. If we don't abolish it now, then when?'

[88] YouGov, 'House of Lords – Reform or Retain?'

[89] McLean, *Wrong,* vii.

[90] Morris, *Church,* 116. This has become a subject of contention among Brits, the majority of whom believe that the bishops are out of touch with public opinion and should not be allowed to vote in the House of Lords. Cf. YouGov, 'Bishops in the House of Lords.'

[91] In the 18th Century, for example, the House of Lords placed a preaching ban on a minister for preaching unfavourable political opinions. Morris, *Church,* 156.

this relationship somewhat dissolve. Although clear connections remain, such as the monarch being labelled the supreme governor of the Church of England among other things, Jeremy Morris notes that 'little else remains of the Church's former constitutional position.'[92] Indeed, the institutional church has not received any direct state funding since 1824.[93] Instead, lordship language in the ecclesial sphere more often calls to mind the lordship of Christ. In this, a degree of politicisation may still be assumed, because the office of Christ as lord is in some respects a political role.[94] However, in Christian Spirituality, the lordship of Christ may apply a certain benevolence to the title which is not necessarily shared in popular thought.[95]

What can be said, however, is that lordship in contemporary Western thought more often than not represents an improper and unjust position of superior power and authority over others which is tensive with the contemporary Western depiction of friendship, which assumes a relationship of personal fulfilment, equality, intimacy, and mutual enjoyment.

So far, we have employed language of power and authority in relation to lordship. We now turn to consider these terms in order to scope what they imply and their usefulness as we speak of the lordship of Christ in particular.

I.II.2 Issues of Power and Authority

Identifying and defining power has been the subject of extensive debate. Steven Lukes has laid out various perspectives on the nature of power, and their numerous points of tension which continue to be unresolved.[96] He summarises that power 'has multiple and diverse meanings, appropriate to different settings and concerns.'[97] Among the many interpretations of power, the most mainstream definition may that of John Locke: power as being 'able to make, or able to receive, any change'[98] (Lukes extends this to also include the power to resist

[92] Morris, *Church,* 222.

[93] Morris, *Church,* 222.

[94] Christ's lordship and messiahship are closely intertwined, and the latter is a distinctly political title. Cf. Wright, *New,* 307-320. *Jesus,* 481-486.

[95] The term as it relates to Jesus is often associated with his authority and victory over sin, death, and the devil. More in section II.III.3.

[96] Lukes, *Power,* 34, 43-53, 63-65.

[97] Lukes, *Power,* 66.

[98] Locke, *Human,* 111.

change).[99] Bertrand Russel defines power as 'the production of intended effects.'[100] In this sense, everyone has at least some degree of power.[101] Power furthermore exists in every social situation, and is itself a neutral concept; its expression as positive or negative is relative to its context and use.[102]

Such descriptions are intentionally linguistically broad to accommodate the elasticity and breadth of concepts of power. French and Raven famously identified five forms of power: legitimate, reward, coercive, referent, and expert.[103] Power language often carries negative connotations because of its coercive form, which refers to power exercised through manipulation, threat, or punishment.[104] Power and control are sometimes spoken of as synonyms, and treated as referring to the ability one person has to do something to another.[105] Spinoza is perhaps a leading figure in this regard, speaking of power as control and dominion: 'one man has another in his power when he holds him in bonds; when he has disarmed him and deprived him of the means of self-defence or escape.'[106] Speaking of power can thus call to mind images of force and domination.[107] Prominent sociologist Max Weber described power as 'the probability that one actor within a social relationship will be in a position to carry out his own will despite resistance,' drawing again upon forceful language.[108] Power is therefore a broad term, and though it can be expressed in many forms, it is often associated with one particular form, which is coercion.[109]

Authority, by contrast, is a more specific subset or species of power which exists as a form of legitimate power: it stems from a legitimate right to influence.[110] It is legitimated, either

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[99] Lukes, *Power,* 74.

[100] Russel, *Power*, 25. Marguerite Shuster defines power similarly as 'the ability to produce intended effects in the world.' Shuster, *Power,* 156-157.

[101] Reynaert, 'Web,' 4-6; Langberg, *Redeeming,* 4-5.

[102] Reynaert, 'Web,' 6-8, 12-14.

[103] French & Raven, 'Bases,' 150-167. Raven later added a sixth form of power in the form of informational power. Cf. Raven, 'Power/Interaction,' 217-244.

[104] French & Raven, 'Bases,' 152.

[105] Polsby, 'Community,' 3-4.

[106] Spinoza, 'Tractatus', 273-275.

[107] Langberg, *Redeeming,* 4.

[108] Weber, *Theory*, 152.

[109] Cf. Kearsley, *Church,* 10-11.

[110] French & Raven, 'Bases,' 153; Austin, *Authority,* 20.

positionally or relationally by others.[111] It is to be distinguished from coercive power, then, which is not necessarily externally legitimated. Bachrach and Baratz helpfully distinguish between power as coercion: achieving 'compliance by threat of deprivation,'[112] and power as authority, whereby one complies because the content of a command is reasonable and arrived at through a legitimate procedure.[113] Though such a distinction is helpful, we should be careful not to suggest authority-power and force-power are entirely contradictory. Hannah Arendt, for example, argues that where force is used authority has failed.[114] This may be going too far; the police, for example, can embody a form of force power through a legitimated means when they arrest a suspect. Nevertheless, such overlap is anomalous because authority has, Victor Austin summarises, an 'essential function of willing the matter of the common good' and exists that humanity might flourish.[115] Therefore, 'authority is not, essentially, the power of coercive force. When coercion becomes necessary, authority is not able to be all that it could be.'[116]

There are therefore two benefits of speaking of Christ's lordship as referring to a position of authority rather than power. Firstly, lordship is a legitimate appointment to power as an authorised title. The members of the House of Lords have power because it has been appointed to them within a legitimised and authorised system (even if it an unpopular system of authorisation).[117] Therefore, to speak of Christ as Lord is to refer to a position of authority.

Secondly, it may be helpful to speak of Christ's lordship as authority because it, at least to some degree, avoids the negative association of power as coercion; it can be treated as a separate category of power. In the popular level, however, the distinctions between power

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[111] Carroll, *Authority*, 46-47.

[112] Bachrach & Baratz, 24.

[113] Bachrach & Baratz, 34, 37.

[114] Arendt, 'Authority,' 92. Of course, this perspective can only be pushed so far as there are occasions where force is necessary to enforce authority, such as is the case in the police.

[115] Austin, *Authority*, 28-29.

[116] Austin, *Authority*, 21.

[117] As Carroll notes, a person may exercise authority in 'a way that acknowledges the gifts of others… and helps them claim their own authority,' or a person may 'may exercise authority in a hierarchical, top-down, authoritarian fashion that keeps [a group of people] dependant or submissive.' Although this sounds more like coercive or force power, 'so long as the group acknowledges the leaders' right to exercise power, the leader is acting with authority.' Carroll, *Authority*, 27.

and authority are not always so clear cut as the terms are sometimes treated as being interchangeable.[118] For some, authority implies a coercive top-down power,[119] and the culture of the Modern West is one in which all authority is to be at least questioned or rejected together.[120] Where there was once a higher respect for authority, the growing movement towards an increasingly egalitarian culture situates authority as a barrier to be crossed, rather than a necessary and useful framework of society.[121] Furthermore, since authority is at its most basic level an authorised power, there is nothing inherent in the term to categorise its shape or character; authority can be exercised in various egalitarian or hierarchical forms or even, as is the case in the police, coercive forms. Therefore, although authority language may prove more helpful than power language, it leaves numerous questions unanswered and needs further classification as it relates to the lordship of Christ in order to gain a clearer understanding of the form and expression of Christ's lordship-authority.[122]

Max Weber famously identified three central forms of authority power: charismatic, traditional, and rational-legal.[123] Lordship authority might be more closely associate with traditional authority, but we here do not seek to enter into this level of analysis. Instead, we speak in the broadest sense of lordship as the possession and expression of authority: a legitimate form of power independent of coercive or force-power. From this baseline, we can then expand upon the substance and shape of that authority through our study of the lordship of Christ in Part II. That is to say, rather than assembling a formulated definition of authority and then reflecting on how Christ fits into that paradigm, this project, which adopts a Christocentric approach to practical theology, and sees practical ministry as a sharing in Christ's ministry, instead seeks to formulate a more complete understanding of authority through Christological reflection. For now, we can say simply speak of authority as a legitimate or "authorised" power.

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[118] Carroll, *Authority,* 27.

[119] Gordon, 'Uncontrolling,' 44.

[120] Carroll, *Authority,* 20; Austin, *Authority,* 85. Cf. O'Brien, 'Holy,' 78.

[121] Carroll, *Authority,* 20-24. Though authority might be distributed in an egalitarian or democratic framework (Austin, *Authority,* 16-19), as noted above, authority in the popular level is more commonly interpreted as top-down.

[122] Carroll, *Authority,* 27.

[123] Weber, *Economy,* 215-216. Cf. Spencer, 'Weber,' 123-134.

As we consider the use of friendship and lordship language in modern Britain, it is unsurprising to see how friendship and lordship might be dichotomised. The former has over the last century more often referred to a casual or sentimentalised relationship of mutual enjoyment and equality. The latter, by contrast, for the majority of British citizens brings to mind an increasingly out-dated medieval system of unjust power distinctions. It stands in opposition to the egalitarian emphasis of the contemporary West, which instead elevates democracy and social equality. Equality and mutuality thus stand at the heart of the friendship-lordship tension. Reynaert notes how 'mutuality and power imbalances are somewhat tensive, because a mutual relationship is considered ideal when there is no abuse of power. In an equal relationship, with greater symmetry, there is less threat of power abuse.'[124] Friendships require a level of equality and/or mutuality that is tensive with the power imbalances that are a function of all sociological reality, let alone the authority relationships that formally structure power imbalances.

I.III Ecclesial Authority and Friendship

Having mapped out the substance of the tension in the sociological sphere, I here suggest that an analogous tension is found in the ecclesial sphere whereas friendship and authority are treated as incompatible in the pastorate.

Before exploring this, we should first address the language of leadership and the alternative language of pastoring. A number of writers have noted the sharp increase in leadership language,[125] especially over the last 40 years,[126] which has also influenced pastoral theology, as pastors are increasingly referred to in the language of leadership.[127] Furthermore, Allder argues that 'authority and power… are the first words that come to mind when the term "leadership" is mentioned.'[128] Therefore, we will engage with leadership language

[124] Reynaert, 'Web,' 5.

[125] Skinner, 'Power-less,' 113; Ledbetter, *Reviewing,* 15; Owen, 'Leading,' 85.

[126] Owen, 'Leading,' 85.

[127] A number of theological works in this section employ language of leadership. In the popular level, many prominent ministries and ecclesial bodies use leadership language, including Ligonier Ministries, 'Respecting Church Leaders'; David Wright for *Answers in Genesis*, 'How Should we Treat our Church Leaders?'; and Diocese of Rochester: 'For Leaders.'

[128] Allder, 'Leading,' 1.

insofar as it is used in the relevant literature. This project, however, prefers to use language of pastoring. Although having its own potential shortcomings,[129] it is more rooted in biblical categories and avoids employing secular language loaded with certain assumptions.[130] Theologians continue to attempt to reclaim and redefine leadership language in a way which is appropriate for the ecclesial context,[131] and there is a place for the discussion of leadership language,[132] but it goes beyond the scope of this project.

I.III.1 A Historical Perspective in the Ecclesial Sphere

The historic view of the pastor has often been one in which authority has been exercised over the congregation in a 'top-down' fashion which makes impossible the level of mutuality needed for friendship.[133] Traditionally, the ordination of pastors set them apart from the body of the congregation; there existed a clear hierarchy of spirituality with bishops being situated at the top, followed by pastors, monks, and then congregants at the bottom.[134] This effectively depicted pastors as being of a different societal class to their congregants, possessing a 'sacred power' which was beyond the laity.[135] Henry Green argues that this clerical elitism has been a feature of ecclesial governance from as early as the second century.[136]

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[129] Some have questioned whether the agricultural language of shepherding is appropriate for a modern and increasingly urban society. For a brief survey and response, see Bennett, *Metaphors,* 130-131

[130] O'Brien argues that leadership language is loaded with certain assumptions and associations, including that of exercising authority over others to achieve certain goals. O'Brien, 'Holy,' 78. Croft, *Ministry,* expands that leadership language is more often being used instead of pastor language (26), that such language, though having its own merits, is dangerous when adopted uncritically by the church (27), not least because it risks creating a disjunction between the popular depiction and reality of ordained ministry (26). Cf. Purves, *Reconstructing,* xxxi; Lee, *Pastoral,* 60; Ineson, *Ambition,* 122.

[131] E.g. Baker, 'Leadership,' 5-8; Fringer, 'Godlike,' 39-42.

[132] Cf. Lynch, *Ecclesial,* 38-39.

[133] Carroll, *Authority,* 27.

[134] Carroll, *Authority,* 55-56.

[135] Dulles, *Models,* 169; Cooke, *Ministry,* 265-266.

[136] Green, 'Power,' 222-229. Kearsley warns that, given the background of pastoral power, that 'caution about authority… is in order.' Kearsley, *Church,* 180.

In the contemporary church, it is expressions of authority in this form that have brought about denunciations of authority altogether.[137] Many in the contemporary Western church seem to prefer a church that is critical of authority,[138] which is a significant contrast from the traditional view that pastors possessed something of a 'quasi-natural authority' in their local communities and parishes.[139]

This more egalitarian trajectory of the pastorate is reflected to varying degrees in both Catholic and Protestant ecclesial circles. The Catholic Church's Second Vatican Council, for example, emphasised the equality of the people of God in unprecedented fashion.[140] The Protestant tradition emphasises equality among the church body in the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers.[141] In some contexts, this movement away from power imbalances and structures of authority is associated with friendship. The Quakers, for example, seek a friendship ecclesiology which rejects the authority of the pastorate and instead locates authority in the communal body. The Quaker 'Friends method of governance relies not on hierarchical structure to make decisions but rather on a "sense of the meeting" by the entire group.'[142] Friendship in this sense rejects hierarchical authority, and lordship authority is hierarchical.

Despite this movement, some degree of asymmetry, if not hierarchy, remains in the ecclesial structures of all branches of mainstream Christianity.[143] This is partly because the office of pastor is intrinsically authoritarian, as shepherds 'exercise… authority over their flocks.'[144] Austin distinguishes between questions of the form of authority, and questions of the necessity of authority.[145] Negative experiences of power imbalances have led to a rejection

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[137] Although we are not discussing the details of this historic shift, the Protestant Reformation should be noted as a significant cultural change concerning clerical elitism. Cf. Evans, *Problems,* 202-204.

[138] Dillen, 'Power,' x.

[139] Gärtner, 'Beyond,' 29.

[140] *Lumen Gentium,* 32, in Abbott, *Documents*. Cf. Carroll, *Authority,* 57; Avis, *Authority,* 4-5.

[141] Beasley-Murray, *Dynamic,* 44.

[142] Ledbetter, *Reviewing,* 37, 41.

[143] Beasley-Murray reflects that even Protestants, who boast of an equal priesthood of all believers, cannot seem to 'draw out the implications of this Reformation slogan.' Beasley-Murray, *Dynamic,* 44; Carroll, *Authority,* 57.

[144] Beeley, *Leading,* 8.

[145] Austin, *Authority,* 26.

of authority structures. However, pastoral duties demand a degree of authority-power, and for this reason, pastors have been urged to be cautious to relinquish the authority-power that is necessarily for their role.[146] Every time the pastor preaches, for instance, he or she exercises a certain authority-power over the congregants, who are expected to listen until the sermon finishes, at the pastor's own discretion.[147] Additionally, in pastoral care, there is an 'unequal distribution of power between the pastoral caregiver… and the pastoral care receiver.'[148] Pastors also, in some official respect, 'bear responsibility' for the church,[149] which necessarily implies a legitimate appointment to power, and therefore authority.[150] Therefore, authority is an intrinsic part of the pastoral office.[151] The question cannot be whether pastors should have power, but of the nature and expression of pastoral authority. For example, pastors could use their authority to exercise power over others, in a domineering fashion, or with others, in an empowering fashion. We shall return to such questions in Part III.

Since the pastoral office is one of authority, there is often a perceived incompatibility of friendship with congregants. Pastors with a higher view of their office have shown themselves more reticent to befriend congregants.[152] Even among more egalitarian contexts, according to a 1972 study, pastors preferred to befriend other pastors, and formed friendships with parishioners largely for ministerial purposes.[153] This alleged dichotomy between friendship and authority in the pastorate has continued into the contemporary Western ecclesial sphere.

I.III.2 A Contemporary Western Perspective in the Ecclesial Sphere

The office of pastor has been named a barrier to deep friendships for a number of reasons. One example offered by Louis Bloede is that the ecclesial responsibility of the pastor leaves

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[146] Messer, *Contemporary,* 103-106.

[147] Dillen, 'Power,' xi.

[148] Pollefeyt, 'Intimacy,' 102.

[149] Akin and Pace, *Pastoral,* 154.

[150] Despite attempting church leadership without authority, The Quaker Group of Friends, who recognise no official pastorate, have hosted training seminars to equip certain members in church service management, or 'managing meeting houses.' Quakers in Britain, 'Managing Meeting Houses.'

[151] Cf. Austin, *Authority,* 99-100.

[152] Hammond et. al. 'Clergy,' 197.

[153] Hammond et. al. 'Clergy,' 198.

them unable to share frustrations that could betray confidences, or offending some in the parish by spending too much time with some and too little with others.[154] As a result he writes that while 'a closer relationship with some persons than with others is inevitable, but a wise pastor will not let it get out of hand.'[155] Fred Bacon, in his training manual for Baptist pastors, adds that sentimental friendships can be problematic when the pastor will often need to have difficult pastor-congregant conversations.[156] Yvonne Bradley highlights the pastoral role of responsibility, the need to take risks, and make tough decisions despite the opinions of others.[157] Such responsibilities demand a level of authority that may make mutual / equal friendship with congregants either impossible or inappropriate. Therefore, it might be said that friendship and authority are often (though not always)[158] understood as tensive opposites on a pastoral spectrum, and pastors are warned to be careful to avoid situating themselves too far on the end of friendship, because authority is essential to the vocation.

This view is not limited to scholarship but is situated in the mainstream on many ecclesial blogs, which helpfully indicate popular opinion. A 2017 blog asserts that 'your pastor is actually not your friend' because there will be times when 'you need a pastor… someone with some sort of authority.'[159] Frederick Schmidt expands that pastors cannot be friends because friendship is based on mutual chemistry and common interests, and it is unwise to allow factors such as these to determine the ways in which pastors communicate with and relate to their congregants.[160] As prominent writer Carey Nieuwhof summarises, the barrier to friendship in the pastoral office is all about power.[161] Any friendships formed from the pastoral office, though in some respects seeming sincere, will always be tempered by an inescapable balance of power which looms over their relationship. When the pastor leaves the post, Nieuwhof argues, the friendship will likely terminate because the relationship was not

[154] Bloede, *Effective,* 166-167.

[155] Bloede, *Effective,* 167.

[156] Bacon, *Being,* 40.

[157] Bradley, 'Servant,' 43-54.

[158] Where some see friendship and pastoral authority as diametrically opposed, others are more comfortable speaking about the role of friendship in the pastorate. David Hansen, for example, speaks of 'pastoral friendships' as 'acts of love.' Hansen, *Art,* 147. Cf. Lynch, 179-194.

[159] Reluctant Xtian, 'Why'

[160] Schmidt, '3 Reasons,' *Day 1.*

[161] Nieuwhof, 'Why'

relational but positional.[162] 'Even if your leadership's approach leans egalitarian, and you see yourself as equal to your team – not above them – the challenge remains: you hold power.'[163] Power is thus situated as the problem keeping authority and friendship at odds in the pastorate.

Sam Wells navigates this tension by suggesting there are certain forms of friendship compatible with the pastoral office. Writing in *The Christian Century,* when pressed on whether being a pastor prohibits his friendship with parishioners, replies with the following: 'as long as it doesn't stop me from being your pastor.'[164] In doing so, he highlights that he distinguishes between two forms of friendship: the first being about mutual trust and comfort, and the latter being about mutual intimacy and companionship. 'Yes to the first; no to the second.'[165] He thus indicates that friendship may be appropriate to the pastorate, but only in a certain and moderate form.

Influence Magazine takes a slightly different approach by emphasising the distinction between having friends and being friendly, arguing that pastors should be friendly in terms of their general behaviour and communication, but when it comes to forming close friendships, 'pastors are advised to look well beyond the walls of their churches.'[166] This is because of the partiality and potential favouritism that comes with friendships, and also because friendships require a vulnerability that is inappropriate for pastors to exercise with congregants.[167] *Influence Magazine*'s answer is: friendly (as a demeanour), but not friends (as a relationship).

Other perspectives are undecided. A columnist for the Faith & Leadership website summarises that 'the standard and dominant view is that the office of pastor has clearly defined boundaries and roles… I was trained both in seminary and in college that the pastor should never make friends with the congregation. Having friends… [risks] the undermining of pastoral authority.'[168] He goes on to elaborate how he was taught that ordination creates a

[162] Nieuwhof, 'Why'.
[163] Nieuwhof, 'Why'.
[164] Wells, 'Pastors.'
[165] Wells, 'Pastors.'
[166] Influence Magazine, 'Should.' Cf. Blatterer, *Everyday,* 46-56.
[167] Influence Magazine, 'Should.'
[168] Childress, 'Porching.'

'holy distance' between the pastor and congregation. As to whether this is the right approach he reflects: 'maybe so. But maybe not.'[169] How the friendship-authority tension is to be navigated in the pastoral office remains unclear.[170]

So far, we have established what is meant when speaking of friendship and lordship, and why the terms seem to be becoming increasingly dichotomised in contemporary society and in the church. In contrast to traditional understanding, friendship has become increasingly associated in recent times with casual enjoyment, equality, intimacy, and personal fulfilment. Lordship/authority language, by contrast, as the benefits of the feudal system become less self-evident, is increasingly associated with unjust power distances which resist the self-actualising characteristics of contemporary friendship. Friendship and lordship characteristics have become juxtaposed: familiarity and hierarchy; equality and inequality; intimacy and separation. Notably, these central defining and tensive concepts are those that have become most prevalent over the course of the last century. In this section, we have seen the effects of this influence in the contemporary pastoral literature and in mainstream opinion, with many viewing power distinctions as a chasm separating friendship and the authoritative role of pastor. A number of pragmatic questions have also been raised which situate the alleged friendship-authority tension in ministerial context, particularly in issues relating to favouritism, vulnerability, and responsibility. Having explored the sociological and contemporary Western ecclesiological nature of friendship and lordship/authority, we now turn to the question of how we might formulate a more distinctly Christian approach.

I.IV Next Steps

In Part I we have explored sociological perspectives on friendship and authority in order to understand why they are today perceived as tensive in the context of the pastorate. Next, in Part II, we will reflect theologically on these matters by reflecting on how this tension is held within the person of Jesus, who is named both friend and Lord. This Christocentric approach is legitimate because all ministry, including that of the pastorate, is a participation in the life

[169] Childress, 'Porching.'

[170] Cf. Brumley, 'Dilemma.'

and ministry of Jesus, who lived a fully human[171] life in the power of the Spirit. We live out, Ray Anderson summarises, 'the continuation of Christ's own ministry of revelation and reconciliation.'[172] The contours of our ministry are shaped by Jesus, because our ministry shares in his, and he continues to share and minister through the church in the power of the Spirit. The question is not only "what would Jesus do?" but 'what is Jesus doing?'[173] Or, 'where is Jesus in this situation and what am I to do as minister?'[174]

James Torrance labels perspectives on ministry which proceed from imitation alone ('we do it because Jesus taught us to do it and left us an example of how to do it') a form of unitarianism.[175] Instead, he emphasises the importance of a more incarnational-trinitarian approach, that worship is 'the gift of participating through the Spirit in the incarnate Son's communion with the Father.'[176] This is also an ongoing ministerial reality: it 'means participating in what he [Jesus] is continuing to do for us in the presence of the Father.'[177] Torrance summarises that this appropriately conveys what it means to have life in the Spirit and *koinonia* which, Torrance argues, can be translated as participation.[178] Therefore, as an approach to ministry, we look through the lens of *participatio Christi,* which incorporates elements of *imitatio Christi* without omitting the trinitarian and more integrated nature of ministry. We centre our reflection around the person and work of Jesus in the following chapters not only as an example of lived-out authority and friendship for us to emulate, but as a description of the very friendship-lordship ministry in which pastors are themselves invited to share in through the work of the Spirit.[179] As David Torrance summarises, 'any serious consideration of ministry must begin with consideration of Jesus Christ's ministry… Ministry in the Church is first and foremost the ministry of the Triune God.'[180]

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[171] Cf. Langmead, *Word,* 29-34; Pannenburg, *Jesus,* 40.

[172] Anderson, *Shape,* 54.

[173] Root, *Christopraxis,* 104.

[174] Anderson, *Shape,* 56.

[175] Torrance, *Worship*, 20.

[176] Torrance, *Worship*, 20. Cf. Speidell, *Human,* 40.

[177] Torrance, *Worship*, 21.

[178] Torrance, *Worship*, 20.

[179] Wilkes, *Jesus,* 182-183.

[180] Torrance, 'Sharing,' 72.

Another more pragmatic reason we prefer *participatio Christi* to *imitatio Christi:* Andrew Purves notes that a 'vague imitation of Jesus [is] doomed to failure because we are not messianic.'[181] For example, since Jesus is understood as Lord, it would be inappropriate to therefore interpret the authority of the pastor as a copy of the authority of Christ, when the pastor cannot be Lord. Rather, since 'the church's ministry is a participation of [Christ's] ministry,'[182] we can instead recognise that pastoral authority is an expression of Christ's, and therefore pastoral authority will be derivate rather than absolute. The implications of this will be further explored in Part III.

There are number of different terms employed for this sharing in the life and ministry of Jesus, including language of union with Christ, participation, identification, and incorporation. Each of these terms has subtle differences; union (or oneness), for example, tends more often to refer to the status of the relationship between Christ and the believers as they are bound together, whereas participation more often refers to the activity of partaking in the events of that relationship.[183] This is how we also employ the terms.[184] As far as is possible, this paper also seeks to reflect theologically within biblical categories, and especially, for reasons which will become clear, Johannine categories, in order to remove additional complexities raised by more dogmatic language.[185]

Finally, a note on how we speak of the "incarnate" and the "incarnational". Through participation or union with Christ, believers are 'conformed to the one who became incarnate.'[186] This is not, Lynch clarifies, to imitate the act of incarnation as much as it to share in Christ the incarnate person.[187] Since the church participates in Christ, and it is in the person of the incarnate Christ that the ministry of redemption and reconciliation take place, any

[181] Purves, *Reconstructing,* 151.

[182] Purves, *Reconstructing,* 151.

[183] Bowsher, *Life,* 7.

[184] The subtleties and nuances in 'union-participation-identification-incorporation' (Bowsher, *Life,* 153) language have been laid out and expounded especially clearly by Constantine Campbell in his *Paul and Union with Christ* (413).

[185] This project avoids, for example, language of theosis since it is permeated with assumptions and used in a variety of different contexts. Cf. Macaskill, *Union,* 27.

[186] Lynch, *Ecclesial,* 45.

[187] Lynch, *Ecclesial,* 45.

ministry apart from *participatio Christi* is anthropocentric, rather than Christocentric.[188] As a result, Lynch summarises that 'anything other than Spirit-enabled participation in the continuing ministry of the Incarnate Christ disintegrates into nothing more than a Pelagian application of a set of moral principles derived from Jesus's life.'[189] This also gives context to how this paper uses the terms "the incarnate" and "the incarnational", the former referring to the person of Jesus,[190] and the latter to the paradigm of participation in the incarnate person. Incarnational friendship, as we will speak of it, within our method of *participatio Christi,* does not refer to the imitation of certain principles or behaviours modelled in the incarnation, but to a participation in and union with the incarnate person himself.

[188] Lynch, *Ecclesial,* 45-46.

[189] Lynch, *Ecclesial,* 46.

[190] We will also refer to the "incarnate friendship" when referring to the friendship Jesus has extended, and "incarnational friendship" when referring to our participation in the incarnate friendship. Cf. section II.II.4; II.IV.

Part II: Formulating a Friendship-Lordship Christology

In exploring the sociological and ecclesial realities surrounding my experience we have discovered, among other things, that friendship and lordship are deeply contextual terms that need further clarification insofar as they relate to the person of Jesus. That is to say, interpreting the friendship and lordship of Jesus by imputing contemporary Western understandings of the concepts leads to inevitable inaccuracies. Therefore, this part of our study seeks to assemble a more theologically robust friendship-lordship Christology, considering how the terms should be characterised and how they might relate to one another in the person of Jesus. To begin, we will survey a range of different perspectives of how the friendship and lordship of Christ relate, illustrating the need for further clarity. As we seek to form our own understanding, we will turn to an in-depth study of a key New Testament text which has relevance for the friendship and lordship of Christ, before drawing out various themes present in friendship-lordship Christology and evaluating how they relate to one another. By the end of this section, we seek to establish a clear understanding of how the friendship and lordship of Jesus are characterised, and how they relate to or inform one another. From there, we will then in Part III consider the implications of this theological reflection for pastoral theology.

II.I A Christological Survey

Where some Christological tensions have been thoroughly explored in modern theological literature, such as that of Jesus being both priest and sacrifice,[1] or servant-king,[2] the juxtaposition of Jesus as both friend and Lord has lacked much direct engagement. As a result, there are a wide array of different underlying assumptions on the issue which often stand in conflict with one another, which also serves to highlight the importance of our study.

[1] Cf. Denaux, 'Jesus,' 108-122; O'Collins and Jones, *Jesus,* for a comprehensive overview.

[2] This has been especially closely explored in practical theological literature concerning servant leadership. Cf. Jones, 'Jesus,' 278; Wilkes, *Jesus,* 182-183.

II.I.1 An Implicit Displacement

One approach consists of a portrayal of Christ's character in which elements often associated with friendship are emphasised in such a way that elements generally associated with lordship sit in the backdrop.

Craig Nessan's article 'On Friendship in Jesus Christ' might be said to adopt an approach which points in this direction by interpreting the affections of Jesus as displacing or at least overriding the emphasis on obedience. Nessan remarks in his article in reference to John 15:12-17, that 'at the invitation of Jesus… we understand ourselves as his friends' and, therefore, 'no longer should we view ourselves as servants of God.'[3] We follow Jesus' example of love,[4] but that is the language closest to Christ's lordship anywhere in the article. As an alternative, Nessan focuses on how 'Jesus receives me in my vulnerability and woundedness and embraces me "just as I am",' and how 'Jesus Christ activates the kindness of God.'[5] The friendship of Jesus, at the very least, pushes his lordship out of view. In popular level literature, such as Hoover's *Messy Beautiful Friendship* and Boucher-Pye's *Transforming Love,* relationality between Jesus and his followers is all about intimacy, companionship, and typically Jesus' role as comforter, often with little to no mention of obedience to authority.[6] Though Jesus' lordship is certainly not denied, neither is it developed, and is largely set aside.[7] Some writers have engaged with approaches that speak of Jesus as 'boyfriend' or 'valentine'.[8]

[3] Nessan, 'Friendship,' 53.

[4] Nessan, 'Friendship,' 53.

[5] Nessan, 'Friendship,' 53.

[6] 'Through Jesus, there is nothing left between God and us that hinders our intimacy as friends – no wrath, no disappointment, no ritual, no condemnation' (Hoover, *Messy,* 36). Aspects that might be classically associated with lordship, such as repentance or obedience, are not in view. The closest reference to such a perspective might be the passing comment that Jesus is not simply our 'peer' (36), but this idea remains largely undeveloped. In Boucher-Pye's *Transforming Love,* there is little to no mention of aspects of the Christian transformation she is addressing that typically proceed from an understanding of Christ's lordship, such as repentance and obedience. Instead, the emphasis is placed only on growing through the receiving of love (Cf. Boucher-Pye, *Transforming,* 22). Jesus is addressed as 'Lord' throughout the book almost exclusively within the context of prayers to 'Lord Jesus'; beyond the title, however, the term itself is given little meaning.

[7] O'Day comments that 'in popular image, Jesus as friend is sentimentalised', 'O'Day, 'Jesus,' 144.

[8] Cf. Sprinkle, 'Jesus'; Murphy, 'Being'; Jonas, 'Jesus'; Saunders, 'Jesus.'

The far contrast to this method is the alternative of elevating attributes typically associated with lordship over those associated with friendship. Jesus' love and warmth is a background concept, with an emphasis on his holiness, righteousness, and wrath in the foreground. This approach is particularly central in the Reformed tradition. John Calvin, for example, makes no mention at all of affections or companionship in his comments on Jesus' naming of the disciples as friends.[9] Instead, his focus is more on the consequences of sinning against a lord, rather than the missed chance of knowing Jesus as one's personal friend.[10] This has continued through into the contemporary Reformed literature. A prominent Reformed pastor, in writing of Jesus' own depiction of the gospel, writes of Jesus' 'call to repentance'[11] and of 'certainty of judgement,'[12] and concludes his section on Jesus' explaining of the gospel with a chapter on 'the lordship of Christ,'[13] while Jesus' naming of his disciples of friends is not once mentioned in the book. R C Sproul's teaching series on the names of Jesus speaks of his role as messiah and Lord, but never as friend.[14]

II.I.2 Umbrella Methods

A more nuanced perspective might be found in the works of Augustine who does not treat either the friendship or lordship of Christ as displacing the other. Instead, he gives one priority over the other. He writes thus on the condescension of Christ to name his followers friends: 'the condescension, as I have termed it, is this, that the Lord condescends to call those His friends whom He knows to be his servants.'[15] In this sense, Christ's lordship and the disciples' servanthood chronologically precede his friendship. Augustine goes on to wrestle with how Jesus seems to displace his lordship with friendship in John 15:15, whilst also upholding his lordship in how he gives his disciples commands in the surrounding verses. In the end, he insists that in some sense, though it is not clear how, the 'good servant', by which he means

[9] Calvin, *John,* 117.
[10] Calvin, *John,* 117. Cf. Calvin, *Institutes,* II.VIII.2, III.XIV.6.
[11] MacArthur, *Gospel,* 175-184.
[12] MacArthur, *Gospel,* 210-218.
[13] MacArthur, *Gospel,* 226-233.
[14] Sproul, 'Names.'
[15] Augustine, *John,* Tractate 85.1.

the faithful Christian, is 'both servant and friend.'[16] He concludes that once one knows Christ as Lord, and fears him, not with the type of fear that love drives out, but with a clean and holy fear, the Christian can also become a friend of Jesus.[17] Thus knowing Christ as Lord is the prerequisite through which one might attain friendship with him.

The friendship of Jesus has also been offered as something of a compound term which holds together various different modes of Christ's being. Jürgen Moltmann, for example, sees the *munus triplex* of Jesus as prophet, priest, and king held together in the image of Jesus as friend.[18] In this sense, the friendship of Jesus is the umbrella term, and so underneath or within that overarching principle are held together his nature as prophet, priest, and king. As a prophet, Jesus embodies friendship for sinners. As high priest, Jesus participates in a salvific self-sacrifice to save his friends. And finally, as king, Jesus frees his people from slavery to make them friends with God.[19] In this ordering, the lordship of Christ is at its core an expression of friendship. Christ is first a friend, and then other aspects of his nature, such as his lordship, can flow from this. As with Augustine, Jesus is fully lord and fully friend. Augustine, however, places chronological primacy on Jesus' lordship, where Moltmann places essential primacy on Jesus' friendship.

II.I.3 Isolated Attributes

Another approach is to see friendship and lordship as two different modes of Christ's personhood. Diana Bass' *Freeing Jesus* offers six persons of Jesus: friend, teacher, saviour, lord, way, and presence. These have been ordered, Bass writes, according to the order in which she came to know each Jesus.[20] She writes that although she knows six Jesuses, others may know eight, or ten.[21] In doing so, she seems to implicitly treat Jesus as friend and Jesus as lord as distinct persons.[22] Speaking of Jesus as friend in isolation from lordship, she writes of Jesus' friendship as one in which he 'is still on the playground, wanting to be our friend,' with no

[16] Augustine, *John,* Tractate 85.2.
[17] Augustine, *John,* Tractate 85.3.
[18] Moltmann, *Church,* 114-121. See also: Asselt, 'Human,' 185-186.
[19] Moltmann, 'Open,' 29-42.
[20] Bass, *Freeing,* XXV-XXVII.
[21] Bass, *Freeing,* XXV-XXVII.
[22] Bass, *Freeing,* 14-16.

mention in the chapter of his authority and obedience.[23] Three chapters later, Bass introduces Jesus as Lord and focusing on elements of Christ's lordship, paints a quite different picture to his identity as friend. Jesus as friend and Jesus as Lord, even by the structure of the book, are established and set up as different modes of Jesus which do not interact. Jesus is, as in Moltmann and Augustine, fully friend and lord but, in Bass' depiction, in an isolated and distinctly modal manner.

Dane Ortlund, who draws heavily from the Puritans, is much clearer in elevating Jesus' lordship and friendship simultaneously. He writes of 'enjoying the friendship of Christ' in distinctly relational terms.[24] Nevertheless, Ortlund is also aware of over-sentimentalising Jesus, and keen to caution against 'overly domesticat[ing] Jesus.'[25] He reminds readers that Christ is also 'our ruler, our authority, the one to whom all allegiance and obedience are reverently due,'[26] referencing Richard Sibbes' reflection that 'as [Jesus] is our friend, so he is our king,'[27] in order to guard against elevating Christ's friendship over his lordship. However, he does not consider how such a tension might be navigated or how/whether the friendship or lordship of Christ might relate to one another.[28] Ortlund asserts that both are true without bringing them into conversation. In this approach, where the two attributes are not in conflict, neither could they be any sense complementary. The friendship of Christ is full and true, but has little to do with his lordship whilst his lordship is full and true but has little to do with his friendship.

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[23] Bass, *Freeing*, 12.

[24] Ortlund, *Gentle,* 114.

[25] Ortlund, *Gentle,* 117.

[26] Ortlund, *Gentle,* 119.

[27] Sibbes also elevates the virtues of dependability and loyalty in Jesus' friendship, in accordance with traditional friendship values. Sibbes, *Bowels,* 2:37.

[28] The same can be observed in Donahue and Kent's *Jesus: Sacred Friend* which speaks of Jesus as 'sacred friend' and 'supreme conquerer' without considering how these concepts might interact or how such a tension might affect one's relationship with him (6). This can also be observed in children's Christian literature. Cf. McBirney, *Jesus,* 15.

II.II The Friends of Christ and John 15

So far, we have briefly surveyed a number of ways the friendship and lordship of Christ have been depicted in historical and contemporary Christian literature and have seen that there are a variety of different assumptions and approaches to how the friendship and lordship of Christ do or do not fit together. There is therefore a need for greater clarity. In this direction, we now turn to a key New Testament text to formulate a more coherent friendship-lordship Christology. Jesus' most extensive treatment of friendship is found in John 15:1-17, which also makes meaningful engagement with elements of his lordship and will be the subject of this section.[29]

II.II.1 Setting the Scene

John 15:1-17 takes place within John's farewell discourse. The discourse is framed by a number of pericopes centred around Jesus' exhortations to the disciples to prepare them for ministry before his departure, offering 'one long exhortation to stay the course and encouragement that their efforts will be matched by the Trinitarian God himself.'[30] In the passage preceding John 15, this can be seen through the promise of mutual indwelling of Jesus and his disciples by the Spirit. To empower the disciples in their ongoing Christian lives and ministry, Jesus twice assures them that he will be with them by his Spirit (14:16, 26) and that when they receive the Spirit, 'you will realise that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you' (14:20). In the passage that follows, Jesus expands on this image of mutual indwelling through the metaphor of the vine and the branches and his declaration of the disciples as his friends in 15:1-17.[31] At the end of the chapter, Jesus again discusses the Holy Spirit, noting that the Spirit by which he will be in and with the disciples will be sent by himself from the Father (15:26). Jesus' naming of his disciples as friends is thus situated within a narrative whereby Jesus is

[29] We mostly interpret Jesus' lordship through the lens of friendship because, as we will see, where Jesus' friendship carries implications for his lordship, the same cannot be said for his lordship with regards to friendship.

[30] Klink, *John,* 646.

[31] Keener, *John,* 988.

preparing his disciples for his departure but reassuring them that he will be with them through the Spirit and mutual indwelling.[32]

In 15:1-8, Jesus speaks of his relationship with his disciples through the imagery of the vine and the branches. In 15:9-11, he speaks more specifically on love. Then, in 15:12-17, Jesus speaks of his relationship with his disciples in the language of friendship, and most plainly in 15:13-15. This passage has, however, been broken up by commentators into subunits which treat overly separately what has otherwise been perceived as one collective literary unit.[33] By the time Jesus' friendship sayings in 15:13-15 are being considered, the wider context and earlier vine narrative from earlier subunits seem easily forgotten by commentators.[34] Here, we treat 15:1-17 as one collective message about friendship in the vine. That is to say, Jesus' naming of his disciples as friends is at least a necessary part of and perhaps a climax to the wider vine narrative. The whole 15:1-17 passage draws together themes of friendship.[35] Furthermore, images of the vine, though perhaps appearing to cease at 15:8, in fact continue

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[32] The friendship sayings of Jesus are thus forward-facing as a post-resurrection reality as Jesus prepares his disciples to live and minister after his coming death, resurrection, and ascension. These friendship themes can be observed in post-resurrection literature concerning the nature and life of the church. 3 John, in particular, refers to Christian communities as friends (3 John 14). James develops ideas surrounding friendship with God and the world (James 2:23, 4:4), and Acts thrice makes references to friendships among the believers (10:24, 19:31, 27:3). Beyond this, there are echoes of friendship in Thessalonians and Philippians, both of which have been considered letters of friendship (cf. Green, *Thessalonians,* 73, 81, 151, 168-174, 356; Fee, *Philippians,* 56, 58, 104; Fowl, *Philippians,* 207-217).

[33] Keener, *John,* 988.

[34] Klink insists that 'the subject matter and themes' of vv.1-8 continue to be 'at work' (655), but when considering the friendship sayings of Jesus in 15:13-15, Klink makes no reference to the wider subject matters or themes of the vine narrative. Klink, *John,* 655-657. The same can be said for Ramsey Michaels, *John,* 800, 809; and Craig Keener, *John,* 998. On the rare occasion a link is identified between friendship and the vine narrative, it remains undeveloped. Cf. Bowsher, *Life,* 109; Ford, *John,* 295-301; Koester, *Symbolism,* 2003.

[35] The mutual indwelling between Jesus and the believer in the vine, which has long been understood as "union with Christ", whereby Christ and the believer are bound together in a spiritual union, and the believer is conformed into the character of Jesus as they dwell in one another's presence, strongly echoes the ancient Graeco-Roman friendship paradigm of "soul sharing". Aristotle and Cicero, for instance, emphasise mutual presence, life, experiences, and personal conformity as indicative of true friendship. Cf. White, *Christian,* 26; Barringer, 'Homeboy,' 168; Culy, *Echoes,* 52.

in, through, and past the friendship sayings.[36] Therefore, we see friendship as a vine life paradigm, and as we will see, this will affect how friendship is characterised with regards to questions of friendship and lordship.

II.II.2 Characterising Incarnate Friendship: Cruciformity, Intimacy, and Authority

Jesus' explicit naming of his disciples as friends comes with his naming of the greatest form of love: to lay down one's life for one's friends (15:13). Though Jesus does not explicitly connect 15:13 with his own death, it is implied firstly from verse 12, and secondly from how 15:13 echoes Jesus' earlier saying that he, as the Good Shepherd, lays down his life for the sheep (10:11-15). Etymologically, *philos* (translated friend) carried the meaning of 'beloved,'[37] and therefore there is a sense in which 'the one for whom a person would give his life is, by definition, his friend.'[38] It has often been noted that Jesus' elevation of self-sacrifice as the greatest form of love represents what was already the prevailing understanding in Greek philosophy,[39] and echoes the teaching of both Aristotle and Plato.[40] Jesus, however, in giving his own life demonstrates the extent of friendship-love the philosophers only talked about. As we seek to establish how the friendship of Jesus ought to be characterised, then, we might firstly say that the friendship of Jesus is cruciform. The cross is the 'measure' of Jesus' friendship-love,[41] showing a friendship that is also to be considered other-person-centred. Jesus' friendship-love is expressed in the self-giving love which seeks the other's good.

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[36] Following the explicit vine imagery in 15:1-8, the language of joy in 15:11 carried associations with the vine. Although the passage speaks widely of metaphorical fruit, the literal and agricultural fruit of the vine is wine, often depicted as a symbol of joy in the Old Testament (e.g Ps. 4:7, 104:15; Ecc. 2:3, 9:7, 10:19; Isa. 16:10, 24:11; Jer. 48:33; Joel 1:12; Zech. 10:7). Furthermore, after the explicit friendship sayings in 15:13-15, fruit language appears in verse 16, which again indicates a link with the vine imagery. The temporary suspension of the vine terminology in 15:13-15 allows for a more specific explanation of the relationship which goes beyond what the agricultural language could provide. Rodney Whitacre makes this point of 15:9-11 (Whitacre, *John,* 371).

[37] Carmichael, *Friendship,* 8.

[38] Klink, *John,* 657.

[39] Lincoln, *John,* 406; Michaels, *John,* 812; Keener, *John,* 1004-1011

[40] Cf. Aristotle, Nicomachean, IX.8.1169a21-23; Plato, *Symposium,* 179b; Beasley-Murray, *John,* 274.

[41] Lynch, *Ecclesial,* 131.

Secondly Jesus' friendship is characterised in intimacy. Verse 15 illustrates not only the extent of the friendship-love but also its character and shape. In particular, Jesus explains that he no longer calls his disciples slaves (*doulos*),[42] but friends, since he has shared with them all that was revealed to him from the Father. This disclosure, which was not afforded to slaves, illustrates the affection[43] and intimacy of the friendship as Jesus shares 'secrets' with his disciples.[44] It furthermore reflects what was considered a hallmark sign of true friendship named παῤῥησία (*parrēsia*)[45] – speaking frankly, openly and boldly. *Parrēsia* was often contrasted with flattery, a sign of false friendship.[46] Highly valued among the ancients, Diogenes allegedly named *parrēsia* the most beautiful thing in the world.[47] Although the term *parrēsia* is not used in 15:15, it appears nine times throughout the gospel of John, more than in any other New Testament book,[48] and is reflected in John 15:15 as Jesus speaks 'openly' to the disciples,[49] therefore illustrating the true and intimate nature of their friendship. Indeed, Cicero notes that such *parrēsia* is only possible within the context of true friendship,[50] and a

[42] It is noteworthy that when Jesus declares he will no longer name his disciples slaves (*doulos*), he has not before in the gospel of John previously addressed them by such a term directly, though it is implicit in John 13, when Jesus recognises his lordship over them (13:13) and parallels his lordship status with that of a master over servants (13:16).

[43] Dods, *John,* 195.

[44] Chrysostom, *John,* 77.

[45] Fredrickson, 'Friends,' 167-9; O'Day, 'Jesus,' 147, 152-4; Eng, 'Call,' 58; Tinker, 'Friends,' 463; Carmichael, *Friendship,* 23; Lynch, *Ecclesial,* 132. It is worth noting that we are referring to *parrēsia* as the term was used after the fall of Athenian democracy (322 BCE) when *parrēsia* moved more clearly from being a societal concept to a personal duty and virtue. Cf. Konstan, 'Friendship,' 9-11.

[46] This contrast is especially clear in Plutarch's *How to Tell a Flatterer from a Friend* in which he pitches the concepts of flattery and true friendship against one another. One of the key distinguishing factors is speaking openly (*parrēsia*). For example, where the true friend speaks openly and offers 'counsel and advice' the 'flatterer takes his place on the side of the emotional and irrational.' Plutarch, *Flatterer,* 61. For a brief outline and structure of Plutarch's essay on flattery and friendship, see: Engberg-Pedersen, 'Plutarch,' 62-63. For more on the classification of a flatterer, see Glad, 'Frank,' 26. Plato also criticises false *parrēsia.* Plato, *Republic,* VIII.557a-b.

[47] Klassen, 'ΠΑΡΡΗΣΙΑ,' 233.

[48] John 7:4, 13, 26, 10:24, 11:14, 54, 16:25, 29, 18:20.

[49] O'Day, 'Jesus,' 155; Lynch, *Ecclesial,* 131-132.

[50] Cicero, *De Amicitia,* 22. Cicero has been highly influential in how the Church has thought about friendship. Cf. McDonie, *Friendship,* 13, 42.

true friendship is reflected in intimacy.[51] To speak openly and reveal personal revelation (or secrets) expresses a vulnerability[52] which creates intimacy, and here Jesus shares his Father's secrets with his friends. *Parrēsia* steps out courageously to speak truth even in dangerous circumstances, and includes 'even admitting the truth about oneself.'[53]

This expression of *parrēsia* supplements the other-person-centredness of cruciformity, because *parrēsia* did not exist simply for the purpose of intimacy, but to seek the other's good by speaking truthfully and openly. When the false friend – the flatterer – avoided providing bad news, telling the other only what they wanted to hear, they illustrated that they sought their only own good and were therefore an insincere friend.[54] The true friend, by contrast, when they spoke boldly and truthfully, even to communicate hard truths, showed that they sincerely sought the other's good.[55] In speaking with *parrēsia,* Jesus embodies the same friendship motif seen at the cross: centralising the other's good.

A third characteristic of Jesus' friendship is spelled out in verse 14; Jesus' friends are those who obey him. We ought not to say that Jesus' friendship is conditional on obedience,[56] but rather that obedience indicates the reception of friendship. Commentators are often eager to safeguard against the view that obedience precedes friendship, but little evidence can be offered from 15:13-15 itself.[57] It is the earlier vine imagery that adds the crucial context illustrating that obedience is reflective of friendship, rather than being a precondition. Earlier in the passage, Jesus is described as the True Vine and the disciples as the branches (vv1,5). The disciples have already been made clean by Jesus (v3), they are 'in' Christ (v2), and Jesus

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[51] Cicero, *De Officiis,* 1.17.55.

[52] For more on vulnerability in Jesus' friendship: Cuddeback-Gedeon, 'Becoming,' 173.

[53] Flynn, 'Foucault,' 103. Cf. 102-118.

[54] Cf. Culy, *Echoes,* 54-55; Konstan, 'Friendship,' 10.

[55] This friendship dynamic of *parrēsia* was particularly observable in patron-client friendships when the patron needed to trust the advice of their clients, and where flattery and being told what they wanted to hear could prove destructive Cf. Culy, *Echoes,* 54-55; Konstan, 'Friendship,' 10. Parrēsia is also therefore not inherently intimate, as patron-client relationships scarcely were, but it is intimate when used to reveal, not only political or economic affairs, but personal knowledge about oneself.

[56] This view was expressed by Ambrose of Milan. Cf. Carmichael, *Friendship,* 49.

[57] Morris labels 15:14 a "test" of discipleship (Morris, *John,* 599). Ridderbos similarly speaks of the obedience as being the evidence of a true friendship with Jesus (Riderbos, *John,* 520). Neither, however, appeal to the 15:13-15 passage to justify this perspective.

dwells in him, and he in them (v4). It is in light of this initial work of Christ that the disciples are then expected to go and bear fruit (v5). Therefore, it is more consistent with the flow of the passage to interpret the calling of obedience as an acknowledgement and response to the Vine grafting in the branches, rather than achieving engraftment.[58] To be a friend of Jesus, then, is to live a life of obedience, not as a slave (15:15), but as one responding to the friendship Jesus has already extended.[59]

So far we can see from John 15 that Jesus' friendship can be characterised in a number of ways. Firstly, in its cruciformity through which the shape and extent of Jesus' other-person-centred friendship-love is illustrated. Secondly, the intimacy of the friendship can be seen through Jesus' disclosure of the mysteries of God – an intimacy not afforded to slaves, but friends, for the purpose of seeking the disciples' good. Thirdly, Jesus' friendship is characterised through his superior authority as his followers respond to his friendship with obedience. Fourthly, we should also say that Christ's friendship is characterised by mutuality. This claim, however, has been the centre of some controversy.

II.II.3 Characterising Incarnate Friendship: Mutuality with Authority in the Vine

Since Jesus' friends live lives of obedience, it has been argued that their relationship cannot be described as mutual. Donald Carson in particular has emphasised that although Jesus names his disciples' friends, he never says he is their friend.[60] This is appropriate, he argues, since Jesus' friendship is qualified by obedience (15:14) and therefore 'mutual reciprocal friendship of the modern variety is not in view.'[61] Murray Harris summarises that 'although Jesus the Lord calls his obedient disciples *his* friends, they are not thereby authorized to call him their *friend*.'[62] The place of authority and obedience in the incarnate friendship, then, precludes or at least restricts the extent to which the friendship can be described as mutual. However, this makes little sense in light of the wider vine narrative, which emphasises Jesus's relationship with his disciples as one of both superior authority and mutual intimacy.

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[58] Cf. Furnish, *Love,* 141.

[59] Farley, *John,* 272-273.

[60] Carson, *John,* 522.

[61] Carson, *John,* 522.

[62] Harris, *Slave,* 145.

The vine narrative opens with a declaration of Jesus' superior authority over his friend-branches. 15:1 begins with Jesus' seventh "I am" statement from John's gospel and self-designation as True Vine, which likely raised connotations of warning and incoming destruction, in accordance with the term's employment in the Old Testament. Israel was commonly depicted through vine imagery (Ps 80:8-16, Isa 27:2-6, Jer 2:21, Ezek 15:2-6, 17:5-10, 19:10-14), and often for the purposes of rebuke and judgement (Ezek 15:2-6, 19:10-14, Isa 5:1-2). In accordance with this pattern, the disciples are told that if they, as the branches, cease to bear fruit then they are to be cut off, while those who do bear fruit are pruned that they may bear more. In Jesus' self-designation as the True Vine, he forcefully contrasts himself with Israel as a false, or 'mere' Israel.[63] He also positions himself, as the True Vine, at the intermediary point between the farmer (God) and the disciples (the branches), thereby emphasising both the dependency of the disciples upon himself for relating to God, and also his own power as the one through whom God reaches his people. It is Christ as the True Vine who initiates the friendship (15:16), grafts the branches in, and has the authority to cut them off.

This emphasis on Jesus' superior authority does not, however, undermine his extension of mutual intimacy; the friendship is both mutual and asymmetrical. The disciples are reminded that the branches are *in* Christ with language that denotes, Campbell argues, a close sense of 'personal relatedness.'[64] That is, a close personal and mutual union which also closely mirrors the Greek friendship theme of soul sharing.[65] The Vine and the branches are to pursue a mutual presence and "union" in one another.[66] Verse 15:4 illustrates that there is a shared

[63] Klink speaks of Jesus as superseding Israel (Klink, *John,* 650-651), where Keener is keen to not 'overstate' the contrast. He suggests 'true' here may not be contrasted with 'false', but with 'mere' (Keener, *John,* 993). See also: Lincoln, *John,* 402; Morris, *John,* 593.

[64] Campbell, *Paul*, 73.

[65] Cf. footnote 34.

[66] This reflects, Klink argues, 'what the church has long defined by several theological terms, perhaps primarily "union with Christ".' Klink, *John,* 653. Cf. Morris, *John,* 595. This understanding of friendship with Christ as a union of souls, a concept which is not limited to John 15, but has also been studied in Hebrews (Ribbens, 'Partakers,' 281-301) and 1 Peter (Christensen, 'Reborn,' 339-354), has gone on to be a prominent theme in Christian spiritual theology. Popularised as early as in the works of Augustine (Augustine, *Confessions,* 4.6.11), through to Aquinas (friend as 'alter ego': Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae,* I-II.28.1-2) it also went on to become a prominent theme

relational expectation for both parties (Jesus and the friend) to actively pursue one another's presence and union; although some English translations of this verse, such as the NIV, have 'abide' or 'remain' being repeated – e.g. "remain in me, and I will remain in you" – the Greek text carries only one verb which applies to both clauses. Therefore, the verb applies equally to both the disciple and Christ, who are bound under a mutual duty or 'responsibility'[67] to abide in one another. This duty is expressed as an imperative, and its aorist form means Jesus commands not a passive remaining, but an active decision and act of the will to participate in an ongoing mutual remaining.[68] Therefore, the Vine-friendship is centrally and actively mutual, and as Keener summarises, this theology of mutual abiding 'dominat[es]' the passage.[69] Christ's superior authority in no way undermines that the friendship he extends is also one of mutuality.

Carson himself has emphasised this centrality of mutuality in the vine narrative,[70] and has also made a point of mentioning how 'the imagery of the vine continues to be in full view.'[71] It is all the more odd, then, for him to then neglect the theme entirely once Jesus explicitly addresses his disciples as friends. Carson and Harris' argument that the friendship of Jesus is unilateral on the basis that it requires our obedience seems to throw out the baby with the bathwater: the text emphasises both our obedience to Christ *and* his extension of mutual relationship.

II.II.4 Characterising Incarnate Friendship: Missional and Corporate

The mutuality of Jesus' friendship in the Vine highlights a fifth characteristic of the friendship: Jesus' friendship is missional, as he and his friends share the same *telos* of producing fruit for God's glory (15:8). The mutuality in the relationship is not only for the inward sake of pure relationality, but for a purpose which points beyond itself in the mutual pursuit of producing

in Protestant spiritual theology. Cf. Lindman, 'Union,' 680-700; Cho, 'Tuckney,' 291-310; Edwards, 'Flavel,' 33-58; Mock, 'Union,' 106-129; Garcia, *Union.*

[67] John Hull centralises this focus of the responsibility of the disciples as being the central idea of the whole 15:1-17 passage, as can be seen by the 'responsibility of the disciples' subtitle. Hull, *Luke - John,* 337.

[68] Morris, *John,* 595. Cf. Boice, *John,* 254.

[69] Keener, *John,* 998. Cf. Galloway, *Called,* 246.

[70] Carson, *John,* 516-517.

[71] Carson, *John,* 517.

fruit which can only come from their 'in-one-another' relationship.[72] That is, 'the branches can only produce by their participation *in* the vine, and the vine produces fruit *through* the branches.'[73] The mutual friendship 'is not an end in itself, but exists to serve a large purpose.'[74] Jesus makes the missional context of his friendship clear in 15:16 when he says that he chose his friends in order that they might go and bear fruit. Given the focus on love throughout this part of the passage (15:9-13), with a secondary focus on joy (15:11), it should be said that God is glorified (1) through the love and joy that is produced from the mutual friendship between Jesus and his disciples, and (2) which is then shared between the friends of Jesus as they "love one another as I have loved you" (15:12).

This brings us to the sixth and final characteristic of Jesus' friendship: Jesus' friendship is corporate. To participate in the incarnate friendship has not only vertical dimensions, between Jesus and the individual, but horizontal dimensions, as friendship with Jesus produces friendship with others (15:12).[75] In-one-another friendship with Christ naturally produces a shared friendship-love within the community of friends.[76] Furthermore, since the outward extension of friendship to the community is an act of obedience to Christ's command (15:12), so too do the friends of Jesus then remain in his love (15:9-10) and nurture their mutual indwelling, creating a cycle: (A) abiding in Jesus, (B) obeying Jesus' commands, (C) loving one another, (D) further abiding in Jesus. There is thus a circularity in the friendship which is not only between Jesus and the individual friend, but Jesus and the friend within the community of friends.[77] Therefore, to participate in Christ's friendship is to participate in corporate Christian friendship.[78]

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[72] 'In-one-anotherness' is a term employed by Clive Bowsher throughout his study to represent a distinctly Johannine or exegetical-theological wording for 'the oneness or "union" of Christ.' Cf. Bowsher, *Life,* 3.

[73] Klink, *John,* 651; Ridderbos, *John,* 517; Lincoln, *John* 405; Morris, *John,* 597.

[74] Wadell, 'Place,' 212; Bell, 'Biblical,' 381.

[75] This is what this project will speak of as *incarnational* friendship – the vertical and horizontal friendships that follow from our participation in the incarnate friendship; that is, friendship with Jesus. Cf. Wells, *Incarnational,* 98.

[76] God in Christ is, as has often been emphasised in Church history, the source of true friendship, which finds its origin in him. Cf. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae,* II-II.23.1; Augustine, *Confessions*, 4.4, 8.3; Aelred, *Spiritual*, 1:1,8, 2:20-21.

[77] Fitzgerald, 'Christian,' 284-286

[78] Hauerwas and Pinches, *Christians,* 81.

II.II.5 Conclusion

Through our study of the incarnate friendship as illustrated in John 15:1-17, we have observed that Jesus' friendship is characterised in (1) cruciformity, illustrating the extent of the other-person-centred friendship-love Jesus has for his followers, (2) intimacy through *parrēsia*, (3) the obedience of his friends, (4) mutuality, in that there is a relational reciprocity and shared spiritual union between Jesus and his friends, (5) mission, in that Jesus' friendship is directed towards producing fruit for the glory of God, and (6) community, as Jesus' friendship produces friendship with others.

Especially relevant to questions of authority, Jesus frames friendship as an illustration of sharing in the vine life, which is about being grafted into, and remaining in, a mutual relationship with him in a way which paradoxically and simultaneously elevates his superior authority. With regards to our earlier survey, the incarnate friendship expressed in John 15 leaves no space for models which pitch the friendship and lordship of Christ against one another, or which speak of them as exclusive realities. To do so undermines the necessary connection Christ himself ascribes to them in the vine life. To be *in* Christ is, in some sense, to both and at once be in a mutual relationship with him while remaining in obedience to his superior authority.

In this section, a number of themes have been raised, such as that of cruciformity, mutuality, and union, which have relevance for issues of authority. Now, we will study these themes in further detail, seeing how Jesus engages with them in his first century context, in order to develop a more sophisticated and clearer understanding of the kind of friendship-lordship reality Jesus embodies in order to deal more specifically with questions of authority.

II.III Reflecting on Incarnate Friendship Themes

Considering themes that typify the incarnate friendship within their ancient context will be essential since Jesus is engaging with friendship within a social-cultural environment with varying frameworks and long-held convictions on the matter; friendship was a central *topos* of the ancient world from as early as the 8th Century BCE in the friendship of Achilleas and

Patroclus in Homer's *Iliad,* through to and beyond the time of Christ.[79] By the first century, there were a number of different forms and understandings of friendship. Klink summaries that friendship could refer to everything from 'a relationship of dependence or [of] equality, or impersonal alliances or personal bonds of affection.'[80]

This has raised the question as to whether Jesus may be adopting language from, or contrasting with, various understandings of friendship prominent in the ancient world. For example, some writers have argued that Jesus' friendship language primarily reflects the Greek friendship themes, which are often characterised through and elevate the centrality of mutuality and equality.[81] Others, by contrast, have argued that Jesus is more likely drawing upon 'the language of Roman patronage', which arose in the Hellenistic period,[82] and would be more interested in emphasising the subordination of the disciples.[83] Therefore, whether and how Jesus engages with ancient models of friendship and lordship has significance for the shape of the friendship Jesus extends to his followers.

Although writers have often argued that Jesus' treatment of friendship falls into one of two camps, this section will argue that such a dichotomised perspective is overly reductionist and fails to appropriately convey the scope of the incarnate friendship. Rather than drawing upon or exemplifying any form of ancient friendship and their central themes, we will see that Jesus recharacterises and reshapes those themes, redefining them in relation to one another, and in doing so brings forth a new form of friendship and authority.[84]

II.III.1 Mutuality and Greek Friendship Themes

There is an abundance of friendship literature in the classical Greek world, and friendship philosophy developed over the course of centuries. Amongst the many thinkers and writers of the Classical period, however, it was Aristotle who gave friendship its most influential

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[79] Ford, *Redeemer,* 76; Batten, *Friendship,* 13-15.

[80] Klink, *John,* 657.

[81] Keener, *John,* 1006-1011; Ford, *Redeemer,* 86. Lynch, *Ecclesial,* 133.

[82] Although benefactor-beneficiary language was present in Greek thought prior to the Hellenistic era, it is to be distinguished from the patron-client language which arose from the Roman context. Although assumed synonymous, they differ insofar as they relate to the Roman state. Cf. Batten, *Friendship,* 57-58, 76.

[83] Eng, 'Call,' 55; Rzepka, 'Jesus,' 509.

[84] As laid out in section I.II.2, this paper sees lordship as a form of authority.

attention.[85] Dedicating two books to friendship in his *Nicomachean Ethics,* Aristotle labelled friendship 'one of the most indispensable requirements of life.'[86] A similar view was also articulated by Socrates who labelled it the greatest of all blessings, and that which 'binds together the beautiful and good among mankind.'[87] Being itself a virtue – or at least intrinsically connected with virtue – Aristotle considered friendship a necessary element of 'the good life',[88] and also the crucial concept upon which the whole city state depended.[89] Cicero went as far as to write that 'of all the bonds of fellowship, there is none more noble, none more powerful than when good men of congenial character are joined in intimate friendship.'[90]

Due to the extensive focus on friendship in Aristotle's writings, it is commonly noted that he, as well as other Greek writers, had a significant impact on the early Christian understandings of friendship.[91] It is not only Christian theologians, however, that 'have discussed love and friendship against a cultural background formed partly by Scripture [and] partly by the major Greek and Latin writers.'[92] As we saw in section II.II.2, Jesus himself in John 15:13 seems to have almost directly quoted the ancient Greek thinkers. Therefore, ancient Greek discussions of friendship are simply too noisy and influential to be left out of any major conversation concerning friendship ideals, especially when formulating an understanding of Jesus' friendship.[93]

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[85] Aristotle's systematic and extensive treatment on Friendship might be paralleled only by Cicero in BCE writings, but Aristotle is the more influential thinker in Graeco-Roman culture.

[86] Aristotle, *Nicomachean,* VIII.1.1155a5.

[87] Socrates in: Xenophon, *The Memorabilla,* 2.6.17.

[88] Aristotle, *Nicomachean,* VIII.1.1155a4-5. Barringer, 'Homeboy,' 170.

[89] O'Day, 'Jesus,' 146; Rzepka, 'Jesus,' 505.

[90] Cicero, *De Officiis,* 1.17.55. Cf. Plutarch's similar elevation of friendship: Plutarch, *Flatterer,* 49.

[91] Ford, *Redeemer,* 76. Konstan, 'Friendship,' 9. White, *Friendship*, 56-58.

[92] Carmichael, *Friendship,* 7.

[93] We do not have the space to summarise the extensive writings of each of the ancient Greek thinkers on friendship. For a more in-depth overview of friendship in the works of Aristotle, who is considered the most 'systematic' ancient thinker on friendship (Batten, *Friendship,* 24) see: White, *Friendship,* 25-26; Carmichael, *Friendship,* 15-23; Sammut, *Friendship,* 9-15, 49-50; Ford, *Redeemer,* 73-74; Batten, *Friendship,* 24-26, 61, 70.

Greek friendship placed a high emphasis on mutuality: 'ideal friendship was… evident in the mutual love and kindly affection that friends tangibly demonstrated for one another.'[94] Ford, Tenney, and Ryliškytė similarly note the emphasis in Greek friendships on the sharing of love and affections, and on desiring good for the other in mutual friendships.[95] In this sharing of friendship-love, two friends would find themselves bound together, that even their very souls were shared. Cicero wrote that in 'ideal friendship… several are united into one… [and] united by the ties of an enduring intimacy.'[96] This unity goes on to produce an alignment of character, as the two are conformed into one another, growing in likeness through a 'comprehensive bond.'[97] This closely reflects the mutual indwelling of Jesus and his friends,[98] which is also characterised by mutual goodwill and aimed towards a mutual *telos.*

In light of the emphasis on mutuality and cruciformity in the incarnate friendship, Keener and Kruse have argued that Greek[99] friendship ideals seem to be in view when Jesus names his disciples friends.[100] However, the more we press into such parallels and similarities, the more the fundamental distinctions between Jesus' friendship and the Greek friendship ideals come to the surface. Most prominently, in the Greek view, mutual friendship demanded equality, whereas this is not so in friendship with Jesus.

As in contemporary friendship, Meilaender summarises Aristotle's ideal friendship as follows: it is when 'those who are *equal* choose one another as friends, not merely for the sake of pleasure or advantage, but because of the other's character'.[101] Ideal friendship[102] is expressed through (1) a reciprocal or mutual love, (2) preferentiality or particularity, and (3) civic friendship,[103] but in each category must be between equals to qualify as ideal.[104] One

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[94] Culy, *Echoes,* 51-52.

[95] Ford, *Redeemer,* 86; Tenney, *John,* 153; Ryliškytė, 'Conversation,' 388.

[96] Cicero, *De Officiis,* 1.17.56.

[97] Cicero, *De Officiis,* 1.16.51.

[98] Barrett, *John,* 474.

[99] Or, in the Hellenstic period, Graeco-Roman.

[100] Keener, *John,* 1014; Kruse, *John,* 316.

[101] (Emphasis mine). Meilaender, *Friendship,* 18.

[102] Aristotle did categorise three forms of friendship, based on utility, pleasure, and virtue. We here explore only the latter since he deems it the ideal of the three. C.f Tinker, 'Friends,' 459; Ford, *Redeemer,* 84; Konstan, 'Friendship,' 15; Sammut, *Friendship,* 49-50; Batten, *Friendship,* 25.

[103] Nessan, 'Friendship,' 51.

[104] Batten, *Friendship,* 25. Ford, *Redeemer,* 84.

reason Aristotle gives for this is that unequal friendships produce dynamics in which one party benefits more than the other.[105] The greater man, Aristotle writes, thinks he ought to gain more, because more should be assigned to the greater man. The lesser man, by contrast, believes the greater man has a duty to care for the needs of himself, as the lesser.[106] As such, while unequal friendships are possible, since they cannot bring about true mutuality, they are not ideal.[107] Sammut summarises that 'Aristotle insists that true friendship is not possible without equality.'[108] More specifically, true friendship demanded mutuality,[109] and true mutuality could not exist without equality.[110] Keener summarises that the 'Greek image of friendship… demanded equality.'[111]

There is a significant shift in Greek thought, then, when Jesus as the True Vine extends mutual friendship to the branches, who are his subordinates. Through friendship in the vine life, Jesus both and at once extends his mutuality and his superior authority. In so doing, Jesus adopts the Greek emphasis on mutuality while simultaneously rejecting its defining presuppositions. While the incarnate friendship language may call to mind Greek friendship themes, Jesus' exposition of friendship as sharing in the vine life, and therefore having friends who live in obedience to him, remodels the defining features of mutuality at a fundamental

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[105] Aristotle, *Nicomachean,* VIII.14.1163a.25-33.

[106] Aristotle, *Nicomachean,* VIII.14.1163a.25-33.

[107] Aristotle, *Nicomachean,* VIII.14.1163a.25-33.

[108] Sammut, *Friendship,* 10. Cf. Batten, *Friendship,* 25, 26.

[109] Carmichael, *Friendship,* 11.

[110] Other Greek writers came to the same conclusion as Aristotle, though the reasoning sometimes differed. Cf. Ford, *Redeemer,* 79. Carmichael, *Friendship,* 17.

[111] Keener, *John,* 1008. A potential exception to this paradigm might be found in the works of Cicero, who saw that in true friendship a superior should make themselves low and one with their subordinates, 'standing on a form of equality.' And from this act of self-condescension or exaltation of the other proceeds 'the intimacy existing between friends.' However, this example can only be pushed so far since, as has often been overlooked, Cicero's friendship theory is situated within the context of climbing ranks in the military-political sphere. Although appearing distinctly "incarnational" on preliminary observation, it is instead grounded in models of seeking success, and Cicero understood that friendships should be suspended if more important military opportunities or duties were to arise. Cf. Cicero, *De Amicitia,* 69.179-73.171. Furthermore, where it may be the case that by Cicero's period inequality is less of a boundary than it had been in Aristotle's day (Culy, *Echoes,* 57) it would be going too far to suggest unequal friendships could be constitutive of the soul-sharing variety.

level. In particular, the mutuality of the incarnate friendship is necessarily connected to that which it otherwise most principally precludes: a distinction of authority.[112]

The central distinction here is not primarily the emphasis on equality, since it might be said that in the incarnation Jesus does also create a form of derivative equality.[113] Culy writes that Jesus extends 'some semblance of "equality" to his followers,' not least in his washing of their feet in John 13, becoming in some sense both their superior and their equal.[114] Rather, the distinction is most clearly seen in how Jesus extends a true mutual friendship from a position of superior authority. His authority over his followers does not serve as a barrier to friendship with them.

Therefore, to say that Jesus either does or does not adopt Greek friendship themes is to miss that Jesus not only incorporates themes of mutuality but reshapes and redefines them. The links to Greek thought in the incarnate friendship do not elevate the emphasis on mutuality over the emphasis on authority, because the mutuality Jesus extends presupposes his superiority. Mutuality in the context of vine life is shaped in, through, and does not forget Christ's superiority. Does Jesus extend a mutual friendship to his disciples? The answer is yes, but it is mutuality of a novel form shaped and defined in a way appropriate to and in relation to his role as their Lord.

II.III.2 Authority and Romans Patron-Client Relationships

We now explore this theme of Jesus' superior authority in further depth. Just as some suggested the central focus of Christ's friendship is mutuality, others have suggested the central focus is the distinction of authority.[115] In particular, it has been argued that the centrality of authority can be seen through how Jesus' friendship reflects language of Roman

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[112] Cf. section II.II.3.

[113] Though being our superior, it might be said that in the incarnation Jesus stands on a form of equality with his people, being 'made like them, fully human in every way' (Heb. 2:17). The book of Hebrews best captures the contrast between Jesus being both superior, while also creating a form of equality in the incarnation. Cf. Holmes, 'Death,' 245-246; Hooker, 'Christ,' 207; Marshall, 'Soteriology,' 259-260; Webster, 'One,' 82-92; Bauckham, 'Divinity,' 17-18, 26, 32-33. Attridge, with particular relevance to the following subsection, engages with whether Hebrews depicts Christ as patron. Attridge, 'God,' 102-103.

[114] Culy, *Echoes,* 149, 156-157, 175.

[115] Cf. section II.III.

patronage. If Jesus' friendship reflects that of Roman patron-client relationships, then it might be said that although the extension of mutuality has a role in the incarnate friendship, its central and defining characteristic is Christ's superior authority, as the True Vine to whom his friends obey. Batten defines patron-client relationships as follows:

> Patron-client relationships were generally long-term liaisons between unequals; that is, between a wealthy patron and one or more poorer clients who would provide services, and especially honours, in exchange for land, food, work, protection, or whatever it was that the patron could provide.[116]

Using friendship language to describe this form of relationship became especially prominent around the New Testament period.[117] It has been argued that by the first century the use of friendship language as a partnership of equals had been displaced by the unequal political-economic relationships between patrons and clients.[118] As a result, thinkers often consider whether Jesus' treatment of friendship mirrors this new dominant mode of speaking of friendship.[119] If so, then Jesus' labelling of his disciples as friends is principally a statement about authority and subordination more than anything else.

That Jesus' friendship reflects Roman patron-client friendships has been argued most extensively by Daniel Eng, who insists that Jesus' naming of his disciples as friends is principally about establishing their position of subordination.[120] Patronal relationships typically involved three main elements: inequality, reciprocity, and relational commitment.[121] There are a number of ways in which Jesus' friendship can be associated with such characteristics. Firstly, Eng argues that Jesus' self-identification in John 13:13,16 as teacher, lord, and master illustrates the former of these three qualifiers.[122] Secondly, the friends of Jesus

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[116] Batten, *Friendship,* 75.

[117] Batten, *Friendship,* 80.

[118] Carmichael, *Friendship,* 23.

[119] Cf. Eng, 'Call,' 55-69; Ford, *Redeemer,* 80; Lynch, *Ecclesial,* 133; Keener, *John,* 1006, 1014; Lincoln, *John,* 406; Kruse, *John,* 320; Rzepka, 'Jesus,' 509; Samut, *Friendship,* 72.

[120] Eng, 'Call,' 55.

[121] Eng, 'Call,' 56.

[122] Eng, 'Call,' 58-59.

are expected to obey out of social expectation rather than the law of slavery.[123] Thirdly, Jesus' relationship with the disciples reflects his role as a broker, as was expected of a first century patron; he acts as mediator to give his disciples access to the Father.[124] Additionally, it has been noted by numerous writers that John 15 depicts Jesus as something of a royal patron, with his friendship being comparable to friendship with a king in a way which echoes patron-client relationships.[125] This seems especially evident in John 15:16, where Jesus emphasises his role in personally appointing and selecting his friends in a fashion similar to how an ancient ruler might choose his men.[126]

Lastly, Eng claims the patron-client reading of John 15 makes sense of Jesus' arguably obscure comment in John 15:13.[127] Miller reflects how 'now and then someone one might have been willing to die for a choice and prized friend; but Jesus died for a world of enemies.'[128] Why, then, does Jesus say the greatest love is to lay down one's life, not for one's enemies, but for one's friends? Other writers, such as Ridderbos and Morris, rightly acknowledge this peculiarity: one would assume that dying for one's enemies is more virtuous than dying for one's friends.[129] This oddity has typically been explained away fairly dismissively by noting that Jesus is speaking only 'in the midst of friends and… to friends.'[130] Although possible, this theory lacks much substance or evidence beyond the observation that most of their discourse is within the context of 'mutual relations among the disciples.'[131] Even then, however, one would still expect Jesus to elevate the virtue of laying down one's life for one's enemies over that of friends when he is equipping his disciples to live faithfully, and as extensions of himself, when his own practice of love involved not only dying for friends, but also for enemies. Eng offers a more substantial explanation by reading John 15 through the lens of the

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[123] Eng, 'Call,' 60.

[124] Eng, 'Call,' 62.

[125] Rzepka, 'Jesus,' 509; Keener, *John,* 1006-1007; Eng, 'Call,' 63.

[126] Examples of the king's men being addressed as friends can be seen in the LXX translation of Esther whereby the rulers and officials are translated as the friends of the king: *philois* in Esther 1:3 and 2:18; *philon* in 3:1 and 6:9.

[127] Eng, 'Call,' 67.

[128] Miller, *Personal,* 61.

[129] Ridderbos, *John,* 520; Morris, *John,* 599.

[130] Morris, *John,* 599.

[131] Ridderbos, *John,* 520.

patron-client relationship.[132] If Jesus is speaking to his friends as clients, then he elevates the virtue of dying, not only for one's friends, but for one's subordinates. The Greeks elevated the virtue of dying for one's friends – who are by the Greek definitions also one's equals.[133] Jesus, by contrast, transcends this model by dying, not only for his equals, but his friends as his subordinates. Eng summarises that 'to lay down one's life for subordinates would indeed be the greatest love.'[134]

Therefore, there are a range of parallels between Jesus' treatment of friendship and the Roman dynamic of patron-client relationships, and reading the cruciform friendship of Jesus through the lens of patron-client language also offers a meaningful and credible contribution to how John 15:13 might be better understood. Nevertheless, it is overly reductionist to describe the friendship of Jesus as being entirely patron-client.

Jesus' extension of intimacy – his sharing of the secrets of the Father with his disciples – would be wholly inappropriate for his role as broker. Indeed, Kruse argues that this element of disclosure and 'sharing of confidences' is more characteristic of ancient ideas of mutual friendship, rather than patron-client friendships.[135] Keener notes that this personal and intimate friendship, though not being impossible, is certainly uncharacteristic of Roman patron-client friendship.[136] Josephine Ford argues that the incarnation itself, Christ's making himself low to become one with his creation, evidences that 'Jesus comes not as a patron to clients, but as a friend,'[137] and to emphasise Jesus only as patron misses 'the very point of the incarnation.'[138] This is not to deny Jesus' authoritative role in the text ('he is superior and should receive the honour') but to overstate the patron-client language risks minimising the

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[132] Eng, 'Call,' 67.

[133] Aristotle, *Nicomachean,* IX.8.1169a21-23; Plato, *Symposium,* 179b.

[134] Eng, 'Call,' 68. Martin Luther's commentary on John also reflects on the greatness of Christ's friendship-love in 15:13-14 by adopting a superior-subordinate contrast. Cf. Luther, *Works 24,* 251.

[135] Kruse, *John,* 316.

[136] Keener, *John,* 1007. Harold Attridge makes a similar observation of indications of patronage in the epistle to the Hebrews: 'the imagery of patronage, which Hebrews does indeed deploy, does not bear the whole weight of its reflections on God.' Attridge, 'God,' 103.

[137] Ford, *Redeemer,* 80.

[138] Ford, *Redeemer,* 86.

language present that is not indicative of patron-client relationships; that is, the mutual intimacy and affection Jesus shares with his disciples, and his self-giving love.[139]

It is not the *mutuality* between Jesus and his followers that is incompatible with the patron-client language, insofar as mutuality might be understood as a form of reciprocated relationship or experience, since the relationship between patrons and client was one which was intrinsically reciprocal.[140] Patron-client relationships involved shared relational expectations. Rather, it is the expression of that mutuality in intimacy[141] which transcends what the patron-client dynamic could offer, particularly in the incarnate spiritual union. Sammut offers a uniquely balanced summary which best expresses this dynamic:

> While obedience is a component of friendship between Jesus and the disciples, their friendship cannot be reduced solely to a relationship of obedience… The mutual responsibilities of Jesus and his disciples are consistent with the patronage approach… [yet] there are striking clues which point beyond mere patronage to a relationship of the most intimate nature.[142]

The patronal context, for example, gives light to the fact Jesus lays down his life for his subordinates, but fails to capture the dynamic of Jesus laying down his life for those he loves, and with whom he has a personal and intimate relationship. This can also be seen in Jesus' extension of *parrēsia*. In patronal friendships, *parrēsia* was extended for the political and economic benefit of the other.[143] In Jesus' friendship, *parrēsia* is extended in a far more intimate fashion: seeking the good of the other, not economically or politically, but spiritually through the revelation of God. Therefore, where Jesus' authority must be emphasised, it should not be emphasised apart from his extension of mutual, intimate friendship-love.

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[139] Ford, *Redeemer,* 86.

[140] Stegemann & Stegemann, *Jesus,* 34. It should be noted, however, that the reciprocity present in patron-client relationship was typically of an unequal and abusive nature (Batten, *Friendship,* 80) and for the purpose of economic, political, or material benefit (Eng, 'Call,' 56).

[141] Mutual intimacy is an often-emphasised characteristic of friendship with Jesus in popular-level writings. See, for example, Vandeur, *Jesus,* 46.

[142] Sammut, *Friendship,* 72.

[143] Culy, *Echoes,* 54-55; Konstan, 'Friendship,' 10.

II.III.3 Lordship and Cruciformity

We have seen how the lordship/authority of Christ exists within, is necessarily connected with, and shapes the incarnate friendship through our study of John 15:14 and our examination of Greek mutual friendship paradigms. However, whereas we have so far considered Christ's authority through the lens of his friendship, in this section we temporarily suspend this method to explore the theme of lordship in and of itself. In effect, this section seeks to address the same issue as the section above – to consider the relationship between authority and mutuality in how Jesus relates to his followers – but begins from the alternative starting point, looking at Jesus' lordship, and considering the place and effect of Jesus' friendship within that sphere.

The phrase "Jesus is Lord" was one of the earliest and most central proclamations of the early Church and was a foundational element of their new Christian worldview.[144] Unfortunately, some lament that theological interest in the lordship of Christ is wavering and the subject is becoming increasingly neglected,[145] yet there remain a variety of different ongoing confusions and debates in the matter.[146] Here, we set aside many of those ongoing debates to focus in on what it means to speak of Jesus as Lord of the church in specific relation to his friendship.

First, we should clarify what it means to speak of Jesus as "Lord". The term appears extensively in ancient Greek literature, and generally refers to 'one who is in a position of authority'[147] and 'power'.[148] The term is employed in a number of different fashions in the New Testament. It can refer to the authority of a human master over a slave (Ephesians 6:5), a husband over a wife (1 Peter 3:6), or a general term of respect for one's superior (John 12:21).[149] More significantly, the term is also used as the translation of *ʾādôn* or "Lord" and even YHWH when the Old Testament is quoted in the New Testament (e.g. Luke 1:9)[150] and in the LXX,

[144] Hatfield, 'Lordship,' 16; Gresham, 'Lordship,' 65; Wright, *Resurrection,* 553, 577, 583; Ritt, 'Lordship,' 709; Kloha, 'Lordship,' 275.

[145] Ritt, 'Lordship,' 709, 729.

[146] Cf. Bloesch, 'Lordship,' 26.

[147] Bauer, s.v. κύριος, 576-579.

[148] Montanari, *Brill,* s.v. κύριος, 1197-1198.

[149] Lo, in *Lexham,* s.v. 'Diety'.

[150] Lo, in *Lexham,* s.v. 'Diety'.

where *kyrios* is first applied to God.[151] It is for this reason that New Testament dictionaries do not only emphasise the terms' synonymity with "sir", since it can carry such a meaning, but also its communication of 'supernatural master over all', [152] 'supreme in authority', [153] or 'Divine Beings [who] are absolute rulers (kings) of the whole world.'[154]

In the New Testament, Jesus' identity as "Lord" is not limited to the former more trivial usages of the term, but also the latter since the New Testament writers seem to equate YHWH as *kyrios* with Christ as *kyrios*.[155] Hatfield and Wright note how Paul references Joel 3:32, a text directly referring to YHWH as Lord, and interprets it as also referring to the lordship of Christ in Romans 10:13.[156] Dunn reflects on how similar reflections have been made of Rom. 14:11; 1 Cor. 1:21, 2:16, 10:26; 2 Cor. 10:17; 2 Tim 2:19.[157] Wright expands:

> When the early Christians called Jesus *kyrios,* one of the overtones that word quickly acquired, astonishing and even shocking though this must have been, was that text in the Greek Bible which used *kyrios* to translate the divine name YHWH were now used to denote Jesus himself… In Philippians 2.10 Paul quotes Isaiah 45:23, a fiercely monotheistic text which declares that to YHWH and YHWH only (the Septuagint of course having the word *kyrios* for YHWH) every knee shall bow and every tongue

[151] Bromiley, *Theological,* 486.

[152] Swanson, *Dictionary,* ent.3261.

[153] Strong, *Dictionary,* 44.2962.

[154] Scouter, *Lexicon,* 142.

[155] There is no title more commonly ascribed to Jesus in the book of Acts than that of κύριος. Dunn, ''ΚΥΡΙΟΣ,' 241. For a comprehensive survey of the usage of κύριος in Acts see Dunn, 'ΚΥΡΙΟΣ,' 245-248.

[156] Hatfield, 'Lordship, 20. Wright, *Resurrection,* 571.

[157] Dunn, 'Why "Incarnation"?' 414 n42. Dunn is cautious to go as far as to conclude that the New Testament writers are 'fully identifying Christ with Yahweh' since, he argues, this perspective fails to meaningfully engage with texts which also assert the authority of God over Jesus in the New Testament (e.g. Rom. 15:6). Cf. Dunn, 'Why "Incarnation"?' 414. I would instead suggest that such texts have more to do with the working out of Trinitarian theology. Regardless of how this is worked out, it should be said that Paul is at the very least paralleling Jesus and YHWH, if not equating them. In this sense, the point that the Lordship of Christ is treated as comparative with the Lordship of YHWH remains.

> shall swear; and Paul declares that this will come true when every knee and tongue do homage to Jesus. 'Jesus, Messiah, is *kyrios*.'[158]

Therefore, for Jesus to be named Lord compares, parallels, and even equates the scale of his authority to that of God the Father himself. It is for this reason that many contemporary authors, when speaking of Christ's lordship, draw an immediate and necessary link to the demand for obedience on behalf of Jesus' followers.[159] Our study of Jesus as friend has pointed towards his superior authority as Lord. In observing Jesus as *kyrios,* we see the nature and extent of that authority and power spelled out more explicitly and in greater clarity.[160]

Therefore, the lordship of Christ serves to illustrate the extent of his authority. Where Christ's friendship also illustrates his lordship, it might be said that Christ's designation as Lord does not self-evidently express an element of friendship, focusing instead on his cosmic authority and deity. However, Christ's friendship does come into view when the nature and expression of Christ's lordship is revealed in its first century context, particularly as it is contrasted with the lordship of Caesar.

In the ancient world, *kyrios* was a title adopted by the Roman emperor, passed down through the Caesars, and becoming a normative title for the emperor in the New Testament period.[161] The association of the term was that 'the emperor of Rome was the "divine lord" before whom all bowed in recognition of his authority.'[162] Therefore, the acknowledgement and confession of Jesus as divine lord is an implicit usurping of Caesar's lordship,[163] and it is

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[158] Wright, *Resurrection,* 571. For more on the place of this in John's gospel see: Dunn, 'John,' 357-358.

[159] Cf. Hatfield, 'Lordship,' 18. Miles, 'Lordship,' 43, 45. Messmer, 'Faith,' 281. Jacobsen, 'Lordship,' 27. Ritt, 'Lordship,' 717, 726. Trull, 'Lordship,' 35. WCC, 'Lordship,' 438.1.4.

[160] For the New Testament people, especially in the Jewish communities, this authority was bound up with Christ's messiahship. Although Christ may not fit the messianic expectation, his nature as messiah is recognised and validated in and through his bodily resurrection. In the Jewish understanding, the messiah is lord, not only of Israel, but of the whole world. Therefore, the messiahship of Christ is what grounds his lordship: (a) Jesus is the messiah, (b) The messiah is lord of the world, (c) therefore, Jesus is lord of the world. Cf. Wright, *New,* 307-320; *Jesus,* 481-486; *Resurrection*, 565; Dunn, 'ΚΥΡΙΟΣ,' 242. Hatfield, 'Lordship,' 19-20

[161] Hatfield, 'Lordship,' 17.

[162] Trull, 'Lordship,' 35.

[163] Miles, 'Lordship,' 48; Wright, *Resurrection,* 568.

in this contrast with Caesar that the subversive nature of Jesus' lordship becomes evident. In particular, Christ's incarnate lordship is characterised through friendship in a way which sets it apart from the lordship of Caesar. Where Caesar sat above his kingdom as its superior in self-exaltation, Jesus' full exaltation as Lord comes only after and through his extension of mutual friendship climaxing at the cross. Caesar's lordship and authority is seen in having Christ crucified, but Jesus' lordship and messiahship is paradoxically illustrated through his being crucified, the expression of true friendship highlighted in John 15:13, and also through his making himself one with his kingdom. That the lordship of Christ comes by way of the cross – itself expression of friendship-love – illustrates a novel form of lordship characterised through cruciformity.[164]

Although climaxing at the cross, Jesus' incarnate ministry more widely illustrates an expression of authority characterised through friendship. Unlike Caesar, Christ's lordship is demonstrated through his making himself low and one with his kingdom.[165] This condescension of oneness with his subordinates might be described as a self-emptying or kenotic reality (Philippians 2:7). This reality begins, not at the cross, but at the incarnation,[166] since the very act of incarnation is kenotic.[167] Christ thus embodies a friendship-ministry paradigm that finds its genesis in his incarnation and climaxes at the cross. Liberation theologian Sobrino emphasises how, in contrast to Caesar, Jesus as Lord denounces power which creates division and abusive power dynamics.[168] Instead, his lordship 'is expressed in his kingly service of the lowly.'[169] A commonly employed example of Jesus' self-condescending ministry is through the narrative of Jesus' washing of the disciple's feet in John 13. Culy expands: 'in the footwashing pericope, Jesus, the superior, takes on the role of a slave,

[164] Balthasar, *Man,* 318; Ritt, 'Lordship,' 714. Hooker similarly reflects on how 'this glory [of Christ] is achieved only through death.' Hooker, 'Christ,' 199.

[165] Grounds, 'Unlikely,' 27. This holding together of Christ's lordship and his also becoming one with his kingdom is also a central theme in the theology of the epistle to the Hebrews. Cf. Bauckham, 'Divinity,' 18-19; Holmes, 'Death,' 245-246; Webster, 'One,' 90; Hooker, 'Christ,' 207; Marshall, 'Soteriology,' 259.

[166] Or perhaps even in the trinitarian being of God. Cf. Anderson, *Historical,* 160-167.

[167] Anderson, *Shape,* 113.

[168] Sobrino, *Christology,* 53.

[169] Ritt, 'Lordship,' 714.

vividly bridging the gap between himself and his disciples by lowering himself.'[170] He goes on to conclude that the footwashing, as a self-condescending ministry to his disciples for the sake of their relationship (John 13:8), is an act of intimate ideal friendship.[171]

The friendship-love act of the cross, then, might be seen as an expression and climax of Christ's wider self-emptying ministry. To summarise, lordship was associated with having and exercising power over others, and in the first century context, this was particularly exhibited and exemplified in Caesar's reign over his kingdom. However, when Jesus is declared Lord, a new paradoxical form of lordship is inaugurated as he makes himself one with his subjects and loves them to the extent of the cross in an ultimate act of friendship-love. Thus, we can say that Christ's lordship is recharacterised through friendship, and it is only after and through the kenotic cruciform-friendship expression that Christ receives full exaltation as Lord.

This is not to say that Jesus' recharacterisation of lordship through friendship undermines his authority since, as we have seen, though he may in one sense make himself one with his people, Jesus' friends remain those who obey him (15:14). Nevertheless, Jesus' lordship takes the form of service because he chooses, in spite of his superior office, to take on a self-emptying ministry such as is seen in the act of incarnation itself, the washing of feet, and climaxing at the cross as expressions of friendship-love.[172]

II.IV From The Incarnate to the Incarnational

In Part I, we observed how friendship and authority/lordship have become increasingly understood as tensive realities with mutually exclusive values. We saw this alleged tension reflected, both within ecclesial circles regarding pastoral ministry,[173] and in popular-level and

[170] Culy, *Echoes,* 142.

[171] Culy, *Echoes,* 143.

[172] The voluntary *dishonour* of the cross is also a novel expression of friendship; although Greeks emphasised the virtue of self-sacrifice in friendship, this virtue is often situated in the context of self-honour (Aristotle, *Nicomachean,* IV.3.1124a6-7, 1124a20-21, 1125b3-4) as can be seen in Aristotle's *megalopsychos,* whom Justin Barringer argues represents the Greek ideal friend. Barringer, 'Homeboy,' 159.

[173] Cf. section I.III.2.

theological literature regarding friendship-lordship Christology.[174] We therefore observed a need for greater clarity.

To this end, we have sought to develop a theologically robust friendship-lordship Christology. We have seen that to pitch the friendship and authority of Christ against one another, to elevate one over the other, or to hold them in isolation, fails to make sense of the far more holistic, integrated and interconnected friendship-lordship Christology depicted through the friendship-in-the-Vine narrative. In the person of Jesus, friendship and authority are reshaped in relation to one another, especially through the cross, and it is their very interconnectedness that sets the incarnate friendship apart. In the image of the Withering Vine, or the Cruciform Lord, a new model of friendship-lordship is inaugurated, whereby authority is always tempered with and characterised by friendship, and where friendship with Jesus is always shaped by his superior authority.

In the following part, we explore the relevance of this for pastoral theology as people who share in Christ's ongoing life and ministry in the world through the Spirit. As the 15:1-17 passage makes clear, all who are in mutual relationship with Jesus by the Spirit, and who obey his commands, are considered friends of Jesus. The pastor, therefore, before being a pastor, is first a friend of Jesus. To this we now turn.

[174] Cf. section II.I.

Part III: Pragmatic Issues in Pastoral Friendship and Authority

My experience of the friendship and lordship of Christ as tensive realities was confirmed and expanded in a reading of the sociological literature. Lordship is increasingly understood as an unjust authority-power of inequality, and friendship as a casual relationship of mutual enjoyment between equals. In the incarnate friendship, however, we observed a more integrated relationship between the two. Christ's lordship-authority is shaped through his cruciform, other-person-centred, intimate, mutual friendship. Furthermore, his friendship is characterised by his superior authority over the disciples and their obedience to him, not as slaves to a master, but as friends to the Friend. We thus observe a clear disjunction between friendship-lordship Christology and the contemporary Western understandings of the terms. In light of this data, the goal of this third part of our study is to formulate an incarnational model of pastoral ministry, that is to say, an understanding of pastoral ministry which is shaped by and situated in the minister's participation in the incarnate person of Christ through the power of the Spirit. What is the relevance of friendship-lordship Christology for pastoral theology?

We begin with its implications for the nature of pastoral authority in terms of ontological and functional authority. After, we consider various ways in which pastoral authority within this paradigm can be expressed. Lastly, we turn to specific pragmatic issues in extending friendship from a position of pastoral authority.

III.I The Nature of Pastoral Authority

In Part I we observed a greater move toward a more democratic form of church governance, connected with contemporary friendship paradigms which centralise equality. However, despite egalitarian trajectories, there always remains a degree of power imbalance insofar as the office of pastor comprises authority, that is, some form of authorised power.[1] There is thus an observable perceived tension between the ideal of friendship between equals and the necessity of authority in the pastoral office.

[1] Austin, *Authority*, 20.

In the incarnate friendship, however, we have observed that this alleged tension may present a false dichotomy when viewed through the lens of Christological participation. Instead, incarnational authority does not exclude friendship, and incarnational friendship does not inherently prohibit distinctions of authority. The nature and shape of pastoral friendship has yet to be explored in depth, but we must say that at the very least that there must be some sense in which the pastor is "friend". As we have already seen, the Christian pastor, as with all Christians, participates in friendship with Christ, which constitutes friendship within the community.[2] In sections III.I-II we discern an understanding and expression of pastoral authority consistent with incarnational friendship, and in section III.III, an expression of pastoral friendship consistent with the pastor's office of authority.

III.I.1 Ontological Authority

In the vine life,[3] to speak of authority in the pastoral office has to do with function rather than ontology. All Christians share equally in Christ, and therefore in his authority and friendship, and also share equally in the friendship characteristic of obedience under Christ, situated ontologically as branches under the one Vine, who is in authority over all. Essentially, therefore, the pastor and congregant have equal status, and incarnational friendship in authority affirms the shared branch-identify among the friends of Christ.

Accordingly, Christopher Beeley notes the following: 'Just as Christ has empowered all believers to participate in his own life and calling, so too has he empowered the leaders of the church to share in his own work of pastoral ministry.'[4] In this sense, the authority of the pastor is a functional reality of the ecclesial sphere and cannot be seen as indicating ontological superiority.[5] Each friend of Jesus embodies incarnational authority in the context of their own calling, and in the office of pastor, this context is ecclesiological. Should the pastor find

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[2] Roy Kearsley speaks of the church as the body of those 'sharing a common participation in the Spirit.' Kearsley, *Church,* 13.

[3] As discussed in part II, friendship and participation in the vine are essentially synonymous. However, it is in the vine imagery that spiritual union and shared branch-to-the-Vine identity is most clearly emphasised.

[4] Beeley, *Leading,* 21.

[5] Cf. Gombis, *Power,* 51-53 for more on shared ontological equality between minister and congregant.

themselves in the waiting room of a doctor who is, for example, a congregant, the pastor would be themselves under the functional authority of the congregant. Pastoral authority is derivative and contextual,[6] maintaining the ontological equality of vine-life friendship within the Jesus community, and incarnational pastoral authority cannot indicate otherwise.

Incarnational friendship therefore confronts ecclesiologies which portray the pastoral office as denoting essential superiority. Referring back to Part I, to 'rank' the spirituality of the congregation according to their respective office,[7] with pastors portraying themselves as a 'separate class'[8] with 'sacred power,'[9] as has so often been seen in church history fails to embrace the collective equality of incarnational friendship. There are numerous respects to church dynamics which make pastoral superiority an easy assumption, not least in delineated spaces: the pastor often preaches from a pulpit or raised stage which can communicate superiority.[10] Although a raised stage may be suitable for pragmatic purposes (i.e so everyone can see the preacher), the incarnational pastor must be aware of any potential connotations regarding essential superiority and equality. In response, the pastor, as one within the community of friends,[11] must take pragmatic steps to decrease the extent to which their office could infer superiority. In the case of the elevated stage, the pastor could be intentional in inviting congregants to lead prayers, notices, and the Bible reading from the same raised stage. When the pastor is not up the front they might seat themselves, not on the front row, but a few rows back, locating themselves within the space of the congregation.

Fundamentally, the pastor, as a friend of Jesus, has a duty to communicate ontological equality; that they are one in the community. This will involve a test of self-awareness. Dorothy Emmet applies a test of self-awareness to moderating one's charismatic power,[12] but we should apply the same test here to the duty to communicate essential equality. More specifically, this will demand that the pastor 'reflects-in-action,'[13] being present and attentive

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[6] Ineson, *Ambition,* 123.

[7] Carroll, *Authority,* 55-56.

[8] Cooke, *Ministry,* 265-266.

[9] Dulles, *Models,* 169.

[10] Stortz, *PastorPower,* 29-31.

[11] There is, Kearsley clarifies, the universal church as *koinonia,* and the local 'community of the *koinonia*.' Kearsley, *Church,* 14, 17-20.

[12] Emmet, *Function,* 233-236.

[13] Schön, *Reflective,* 68.

to where power is in the room, and specific to this issue, to whether there is any illusion of an inequality of being. A pastor might consider asking certain trusted elders for their wisdom in these matters, inviting an accountability which itself emphasises a form of equality.[14] The pastor must be willing to make pragmatic changes where necessary to communicate their participation in the community of friends.

The changes will be contextual, but by way of example, Gombis argues that the pastor should clarify their shared identity as sinner with congregation, drawing upon the practice of the apostle Paul.[15] Stortz helpfully expands on Emmet's suggestions of generosity and a degree of humour: a pastor who is willing to laugh at themselves and not take themselves too seriously illustrates that they are not "above" the congregation, but one with them.[16] We will expand on some of these matters in further detail shortly. For now, we should say that incarnational friendship in pastoral ministry is intentional in centralising ontological equality and shared branch-identity under the one Vine-Friend.

III.I.2. Functional Authority

In spite of a shared equality of being, the pastoral office remains one of functional authority, though it must be authority with a friendship-shaped function. In this direction, Victor Austin depicts authority as a necessary means of facilitating freedom. He notes that where entirely democratic forms of authority might be possible in small contexts (such as in a duet), more directed forms of authority are needed as a group develops in complexity (such as in a symphony).[17] In social contexts of greater complexity, directive authority provides more freedom – in the symphony, the conductor enables the trombonist to play more effectively and completely than they would otherwise.[18] Thus, 'authority enhances the freedom to

[14] Elliot Dorff elaborates on how mutual accountability enables mutual flourishing, noting with colourful language that pastoral authority without accountability can lead to dynamics where 'followers' or, for our sake, congregants, 'become infants [and] the leaders become Gods.' Dorff, 'Jewish,' 17-18.

[15] Gombis, *Power,* 51-53.

[16] Stortz, *PastorPower,* 88-93. Henri Nouwen expands that the pastor is 'not "up there", far away or secretly hidden, but in the midst of his people, with the utmost visibility.' Nouwen, *Wounded,* 40.

[17] Austin, *Authority,* 16-18.

[18] Austin, *Authority,* 19.

participate in corporate action.'[19] The use of participation language is noteworthy; pastoral authority, though in some sense providing restrictions in the form of boundaries, a negative freedom, in another sense is able to provide a positive freedom, "freedom to" participate in the corporate friendship. The pastor thus has an authority which can be used to enable and facilitate deeper participation in Christ within the community, which is incarnational friendship.

Austin notes that authority has an 'essential function of willing the matter of the common good.'[20] That is, a common good which centralises both the individual and the community.[21] Although Yves Simon offers his own exposition of what constitutes the common good,[22] we have already defined it in the vine life as being primarily seen in facilitating a communal deeper participation in Jesus which is aimed towards the glory of God. Fundamentally, Simon argues that 'authority is needed because it is desirable that particular goods [in our case, deepening participation in Jesus] should be taken care of by particular agents.'[23] Austin summarises this more succinctly: 'authority exists in order that human persons may flourish.'[24] This interpretation of authority is thoroughly consistent with our reading of incarnational pastoral friendship; Stortz more explicitly affirms that pastoral authority specifically as friendship 'moves towards the vision and implementation of the common good.'[25]

The possibility of locating authority in friendship accords with French and Raven's distinguishing of coercive power and authority power.[26] Incarnational friendship is never the former and, in the vine life, is compatible with the latter. Here, however, our search is not only for positive authority contrary to negative authority, but specifically for incarnationally shaped friendship-authority. Authority shaped by friendship seeks the good of the other,

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[19] Austin, *Authority,* 19. For a fuller discussion of how 'the human good requires that there be authorities', which is then applied to ecclesial contexts, see Austin, *Authority,* 38, 99-100.

[20] Austin, *Authority,* 28.

[21] Simon, *General,* 73, 79.

[22] Simon discusses this in a distinctly socio-political context in his *Philosophy of Democratic Government.* See in particular pages: 19-21, 26-27, 30.

[23] Simon, *General,* 78.

[24] Austin, *Authority,* 29.

[25] Stortz, *PastorPower,* 108.

[26] French and Raven, 'Bases,' 153.

embodies a mutual pursuit of God's glory, and reflects the mutual intimate cruciform friendship-love seen in the vine life.

In the vine life, the common good of incarnational friendship is both found in itself – a deepening participation in Christ and within the friendship community – and in the collective common goal that is bearing fruit for God's glory. Stortz notes that friends both '*have*… [and] *hold* in common certain things,' including common 'interests,' 'characteristics,' and 'commitments.'[27] These can be seen in incarnational friendship through the mutual seeking of the other's good, and the shared *telos* of producing fruit for God's glory. Naturally, these two objectives are necessarily linked, as the producing of fruit for God's glory comes through the deepening friendship participation that centralises the other's good. In dialogue with Austin's proposal which supports our incarnational friendship paradigms, we might propose a *telos* of pastoral authority consistent with our study: responsibility for facilitating incarnational[28] friendship within and beyond[29] the community.

We now turn to consider various expressions of authority-power in order to formulate a more comprehensive and pragmatic understanding of what pastoral authority looks like when shaped by incarnational friendship. We will see that our approach to incarnational friendship reshapes understandings of authority-power, while also proposing another category of authority-power.

III.II The Expression of Pastoral Authority

Martha Stortz's *PastorPower* identifies three expressions of power: power over, power within, and power with, the latter of which she equates to friendship.[30] It is because of Stortz's direct engagement with friendship and the pragmatic issues surrounding it that we here explore her

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[27] Stortz, *PastorPower*, 113.

[28] As we saw in Part II, incarnational friendship is that which proceeds from the reception of the incarnate friendship – that is the friendship of Jesus. Incarnational friendship is thus the friendship with Jesus that extends to others, creating a simultaneously vertical and horizontal other-person-centred friendship-love of mutual intimacy and cruciformity situated under the authority of Jesus.

[29] Beyond, since incarnational friendship participates in Christian mission. Cf. section II.II.4.

[30] Stortz, *PastorPower*, 98, 117.

own articulated expressions of pastoral power.[31] We first consider each of these in turn as they relate to different practical expressions of pastoral authority, contrasting and comparing the concepts with what we learned of incarnational pastoral friendship.

III.II.1 Pastoral Authority and "Power Over"

"Power over" refers to a top-down power which can be exercised both in authority or otherwise.[32] When unchecked, it is an oppressive power, calling to mind issues to tyranny and abuse,[33] and centred around the domination of others.[34] As we have seen, language of lordship, and even of authority, is increasingly perceived in this fashion and ascribed these connotations. However, "power over" is not always negative; parent-child dynamics, and the power humans are given over creation, can be observed as forms of "power over" which are not inherently oppressive.[35] It is instead a neutral concept, and can be observed as a necessary and consistent element of pastoral ministry, not least in cases when congregants approach their pastor for wisdom and counsel.[36] The question then is not whether a pastor can exercise "power over", since this is inevitable and in some sense intrinsic to the office.[37] Instead, the question is in what sense "power over" can be shaped in incarnational friendship.

Stortz, although noting the necessity of "power over" in the pastoral office, distinguishes it from friendship power on the basis that "power over" assumes an imbalance of authority, whereas 'friendship demands equality'.[38] Stortz here outlines an explicit dichotomy between the aspects of the pastoral office which demand actions of authority, and the pastor's ability

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[31] Roy Kearsley, for instance, also engages with the power-over and power-with categories explored by Stortz, and explores the nature and expression of power within the context of the church. He does not, however, engage with friendship language. A dialogue with Stortz, given her engagement specifically with friendship-power, allows us to focus on the relationship between friendship and power with greater precision. Cf. Kearsley, *Church,* 85-111.

[32] Stortz, *PastorPower,* 50-51.

[33] Stortz, *PastorPower,* 51.

[34] Avis, *Authority,* 39. Avis adds that the domineering leader can react in an 'aggressive and condemnatory [manner] towards those who violate his values and beliefs,' 40.

[35] Stortz, *PastorPower,* 50.

[36] Pollefeyt, 'Intimacy,' 102.

[37] Cf. Kearsley, *Church,* 108.

[38] Stortz, *PastorPower,* 118. Although Stortz mainly uses language of "power" insofar as it relates to the authorised power of pastoral office we may speak of it as authority.

to participate in friendship in the congregation. However, as we have seen, incarnational friendship does not support this interpretation, as Christ's authority over his disciples does not prevent his being their friend. Rather, friendship and authority in the incarnate friendship shape and characterise one another. Instead, we should say that there is a mode through which the necessary top-down authority actions can be characterised through friendship.

In this direction, philosopher Nancy Hartstock notes that top-down power can be re-shaped from "power over" to 'power to,' in a way which shifts the focus from the power to dominate to the capacity to liberate.[39] This approach, in elevating individual duties, is a more appropriate interpretation of pastoral authority as friendship participation. When top-down authority is exercised in the pastoral office, such as in offering counsel (which will include speaking difficult truths with frankness [*parrēsia*] – an act of friendship) the object is not to dominate, but to seek the other's spiritual good. Thus, top-down power can be exercised for other-person-centred purposes which, as Lingenfelter notes, illustrates the priority of the other in and of themselves, over the desire to gain control over the other.[40] Where "power over" language highlights what one can do for the *self*, "power to" allows more space for incarnational friendship and highlights what one can do for *the other*. Top-down authority, regardless of how it might be tempered, is not intrinsically incompatible with friendship when it is necessary and seeks the other's good, and sees the other not as a means to an end, but as an end in themselves.

Lingenfelter emphasises an attitude of 'responsible-to' over 'responsible-for' in a contrast which is not dissimilar to that of "power to" and "power over," but makes the other-person-centredness more explicit.[41] Authority which is centred around a "responsible-to" approach sees congregants not as agents to be controlled, but as people worthy of service. It centralises the nurturing of relationship towards goals which are shared, focusing on a mutual objective over questions of power and control.[42] This is not to say that authority is abdicated, and indeed it must still, in certain circumstances, be exercised in top-down fashion, but the shape and expression of the top-down authority is shifted as congregants are not essentially subjects of

[39] Hartstock, *Money*, 257.

[40] Lingenfelter, *Leading*, 111.

[41] Lingenfelter, *Leading*, 132-137.

[42] Lingenfelter, *Leading*, 132-137.

authority but 'brothers and sisters in Christ as participants together in covenant community.'[43] As Leslie Pollard notes, 'Christ… turned the concept of dominance leadership on its head forever.'[44] Incarnational authority thus rejects approaches which function by 'seeking dominance over others.'[45] "Power over" in pastoral friendship can never be domineering. Instead, in centralising the wellbeing, dignity, and personhood of the other, top-down authority is expressed only when it is deemed both necessary[46] *and* for the good of the other,[47] and always in the form of friendship-love. It is only expressed when necessary because the attitude of incarnational friendship is one of cruciformity, which sits uncomfortably with "power over", instead preferring where possible "power with" and "power under", as will be discussed shortly. Nevertheless, when "power over" is expressed only insofar as is necessary for the fulfilment of pastoral responsibilities and is aimed at the common good, it should be seen as an expression of incarnational pastoral friendship.

III.II.2 Pastoral Authority and "Power Within"

"Power within" describes the influence one person can exercise over others by virtue of their own charm and charisma. Unlike top-down power in the pastoral office, charismatic power, or "power within"[48] is a personal authority, rather than a positional authority.[49] Though not being itself positional, it characterises the expression of authority from the pastoral office.

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[43] Lingenfelter, *Leading,* 137.

[44] Pollard, 'Paul,' 318.

[45] Patterson, 'Reflection,' 359.

[46] Augustine, when reflecting on his episcopal office, wrote that 'we have been set before you, yet we are servants; we "preside" - but only if we are "profitable".' (Augustine, *Sermon,* 340a.1.2.) We might say similarly that pastoral authority embodies "power over" only when it is necessary and collectively beneficial.

[47] There will be instances where there appears to be a tension between the communal good and an individual's good. To this, there is no easy or obvious solution. Lynch argues that 'in fact, the ultimate good of each [individual] and of the wider relational matrix of friends coincides' – that is deeper participation in Christian friendship – 'though sometimes this will not *appear* true. Sometimes it will appear to mean loss to one.' She goes on to reflect on how it can be difficult to sustain this understanding 'in a culture which prefers to measure friendship by other shorter-term and less costly goods.' Lynch, *Ecclesial,* 203.

[48] The two are treated as synonyms by Stortz. Cf. Stortz, *PastorPower,* 76.

[49] Some have questioned the degree to which charismatic power can be considered an "authority" on the basis that it is not associated with an externally legitimated position

As with "power over", "power within" can be used in positive or negative respects: it can be a power to inspire, or it can be a 'hypnotic power… to dominate people.'[50] Centred around relationality,[51] "power within" in the pastorate has the ability to build relational expectations cast 'less in terms of duty and obligation, more in terms of affection and loyalty.'[52] In the ecclesial sphere, Stortz identifies a number of issues, one of which being that the voice of the one with charisma can become confused with the voice of the Spirit in an almost 'hypnotic' sense.[53] The pastor, exhibiting power in charm, can themselves to some extent take the place of God.

Incarnational friendship, by contrast, centralises the shared obedience of the friends under God, and sees as a *telos* the mutual and shared duty of producing fruit for God's glory. Therefore, for pastoral friendship to be incarnational, the pastor must be especially clear that they are one of the friends of Jesus, and not the Friend themselves, sitting alongside the congregation in a shared mission. Incarnational friendship points away from the self and brings to the forefront Christ and the shared mission. Richard Wood writes that 'the duty of the pastor is to keep the church focused on mission,'[54] and, therefore, not on themselves. Incarnational "power within" thus employs charismatic power to empower others; pastoral friendship in the vine is that which empowers branches to bear fruit.[55] Pastors who dominate squash other branches, and in so doing ironically cease to produce fruit themselves. The whole community benefits and thrives when the community of friends live in incarnational friendship, which is the responsibility of the pastor to facilitate, and which can be encouraged through a proper use of "power within." Though "power within" is not itself a friendship paradigm, it is a power that pastors may possess which can be directed towards a friendship

(Lingenfelter, *Leading,* 76-80). However, it is externally legitimated through the trust placed on the subject by the group. It is therefore a personal authority (Carroll, *Authority,* 46-47).

[50] Emmet, *Function*, 233-234.

[51] Though not necessarily mutual relationship. One may relate to charismatic leaders whom they do not know personally.

[52] Stortz, *PastorPower,* 86.

[53] Stortz, *PastorPower,* 95.

[54] Wood, 'Christ,' 208-221.

[55] Epperly, 'Revelation,' 34-35.

telos through 'empowering' others 'for the purpose of achieving common goals and shared vision.'[56]

For "power within" to be thus employed, however, it must be carefully managed. How can the pastor be sure they are exercising "power within" that is incarnational? Dorothy Emmet offers checks for guarding against dangerous expressions of charismatic power, which she names 'blind devoted obedience.'[57] Fundamentally, though the checks have been categorised into the three categories of self-knowledge, humour, and generosity by Martha Stortz,[58] they fundamentally all sit under the one umbrella of humility.[59] In embodying humility, the pastor can be aware both of their true status within the community of friends and of how they are being perceived by the congregation. With humility-tempered humour, particularly towards themselves, the pastor does not take themselves too seriously and lives as one within the community of friends. With generosity, the pastor can see and be willing to use the gifts of others, avoiding the 'temptation in charismatic leadership… to be the only one with the gifts.'[60] As Clifford Jones notes, it takes humility from the pastor 'to share authority and responsibility,'[61] which in turn empowers the other. Thus, friendship-shaped pastoral authority, when it comes to "power within", employs charismatic power to cement the pastor as one within the community of friends under the supreme authority of the one Friend. Such an approach not only centralises the good of the other by facilitating a dynamic which points attention away from the self and to Christ, but also, as Wood points out, allows the church to focus on mission – in the vine life, producing fruit for God – rather than on the pastor. The pastor can be said to be embodying a "power within" of incarnational friendship when the pastor's character inspires, empowers, and nurtures the church in friendship.

Having now considered how "power over" and "power within" can both be expressed in pastoral friendship-authority, we now consider what Stortz herself names "power with", that is friendship power.[62]

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[56] Irving and Strauss, *Leadership,* 1.

[57] Emmet, *Function,* 236.

[58] Stortz, *PastorPower,* 113.

[59] Cf. Luhn, 'Humility,' 73-76.

[60] Stortz, *PastorPower,* 92.

[61] Jones, 'Jesus,' 285.

[62] Stortz, *PastorPower,* 111.

III.II.3 Pastoral Authority and "Power With"

In Stortz's view, "power within" exercised in the right form (to empower others) is indicative of friendship, and naturally produces a 'power with'.[63] That is, the pastors who exercise power shaped through incarnational friendship 'create "power with"… [as they] call out and name the power which [the group] all share in common.'[64] The pastor thus uses their authority to equip others to discover their own authority, as they too share in some sense in Christ's authority as they participate in him. Though the pastor bears responsibility for oversight as the one with ecclesial authority, they use their authority to equip others in what is a mutual common goal (occasionally, as we have seen, through power-over and power-within), therefore embodying incarnational friendship traits of mutuality and ontological equality under the one Vine. In one sense, what Stortz names "power with" sounds like incarnational pastoral authority as we have already defined it, and Stortz accordingly names it friendship power.

However, Stortz, in dialogue with Nancy Hartstock, identifies what she perceives to be some of the problems with her depiction of friendship-shaped authority, namely that "power with" (which often comes from a resistance against "power over") ends up producing a structureless collectivism through which nothing is achieved.[65] Too much friendship-power, or "power with", is a vice, because it is formless. Demanding absolutely equality,[66] it lacks the structure and direction to achieve. That is to say, because friendship lacks authoritative direction, it becomes unguided and ineffective. However, as we have already seen, the notion that "power over" is tensive with friendship is a view generated without Christological consideration. In the ecclesial sphere, where pastoral authority is shaped by Christological participation, pastoral friendship does not reject the functional authority structures which make the formation and direction of complex social contexts more manageable. In the vine life, top-down authority and charismatic power are not categories isolated or contrary to

[63] Stortz, *PastorPower,* 106. "Power over" can also be used to this end.

[64] Stortz, *PastorPower,* 106. "With" language is often used to characterise collaborate forms of ministry. Cf. Wells, *Incarnational,* 9-10.

[65] Cf. Hartstock, *Money,* 2.

[66] 'Friends are people who are equal in power, in status, in professional rank.' Stortz, *PastorPower,* 114.

friendship. Incarnational friendship does not explicitly oppose them, but reshapes and contextualises them.

For example, a pastor can take the initiative to call together a midweek meeting with congregants which will be directed towards helping them identify their gifts and their place in the life of the church. The pastor, in announcing the meeting, practises "power within" by inspiring the congregation in the opportunity and importance of the meeting, and encouraging their attendance. They also practise a degree of "power over" in being the one to call the meeting and determine its purpose. However, because the meeting is centred around empowering the community of friends, facilitating their deeper participation in Jesus, and therefore the wider 'wellbeing of the church,'[67] the pastor's extension of "power over" and "power within" are directed towards what Stortz labels friendship power.[68] The pastor exercises a "power to" facilitate incarnational friendship in the community. In this sense, the pastor, uses their ecclesial authority, which is a form of inequality, to empower others, paradoxically also creating a form of equality. The friends discover their own authority and power in the ecclesial context as the pastor shares their own.[69]

III.II.4 Pastoral Authority and "Power Under"

In addition to how friendship reshapes power over, within, and with, we might also propose another form of friendship-power, that is, power under. This paradoxical expression is not synonymous with powerlessness, which might broadly be defined as the inability to effect change.[70] Instead, "power under" employs authority in order to elevate others over the self. This is not pursued through the abdication of authority but through using authority to facilitate a *cruciform* culture which begins with the self. That it so say, cruciform authority elevates the needs of others over the self, 'embod[ies] the crucifixion of Jesus Christ,'[71] and proceeds from the shared friendship-love within the community of friends.

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[67] Beeley, *Leading,* 15.

[68] There are obviously overlaps in our understanding of "power to" and "power with"; the language of the former places greater emphasis on pastoral responsibility, where the language of the latter places greater emphasis on the sharing of pastoral power.

[69] Wilkes, *Jesus,* 182-183; Jones, 'Jesus,' 285.

[70] Cf. Locke, *Human,* 111; Lukes, *Power,* 74; Reynaert, 'Web,' 4-14; Langberg, *Redeeming,* 4-5.

[71] Gombis, *Power,* 61.

Cruciform ministry does not situate itself only alongside the other as "power with," but also under the other. This is the clearest meeting point between incarnational pastoral friendship-authority and what is often named servant-leadership, whereby Jesus brings about an exaltation of the lowly through the humility of the self.[72] Cruciformity is often expressed as a 'sacrificial servant leadership' paradigm,[73] but in the vine life we see that it is also an expression of incarnational friendship-love. As Christ's cruciform act does not undermine his authority over the disciples, incarnational pastoral ministry does not relinquish authority in its cruciformity but situates authority in cruciform friendship-love.

Stanley Patterson notes that Jesus' 'desire [is] to lay aside his titles of position… and take up the relationship of a friend.'[74] In some respects, this is true, but we ought to be careful of the extent to which we speak of Jesus setting aside his title of position, because in friendship he does remain an authority, which Patterson does also recognise.[75] Rather, in the cruciform friendship expression, Jesus employs his authority for the purpose for self-giving love.

Although oftentimes practically synonymous with "power with", cruciform "power under" is to be distinguished in its emphasis. The former centralises the empowerment of others, calling to mind bringing others up in the sharing of power. The latter centralises the humility of the self, and the power found in weakness. Gombis offers some practical examples of cruciform ministry, which include being addressed by one's first name rather than by "Pastor" or "Rev.", and the intentional use of "we" language rather than "you" language when preaching,[76] which might also be seen as examples of "power with". Certainly, there is overlap. However, cruciform-friendship ministry is seen when the pastor elevates the needs of the friends above their own, and especially when at cost to personal self.

This is certainly tensive with "power over", but not contradictory of it. Augustine of Hippo wrestled with this tension, and summarised his conclusion thus: writing of his episcopal office, he writes, 'we have been set before you, yet we are servants; we "preside" - but only if we are "profitable"… The one who presides over the people ought to understand

[72] Howell Jr. and Don, *Servants,* 189-204.

[73] Agosto, *Servant,* 91.

[74] Patterson, 'Reflection,' 359.

[75] Patterson, 'Reflection,' 359-361.

[76] Gombis, *Power,* 114.

before he begins that he is the servant of many.'[77] The pastor thus sits in a "power over" and "power under" tension, which do not necessarily contradict, but provide context to one another.[78] Both are exercised within the friendship paradigm in mind of seeking the good of the other and facilitating deeper participation in Jesus.

III.III Pragmatic Issues in Pastoral Friendship

So far, we have observed how pastoral authority can be shaped through incarnational friendship. Friendship does not undermine pastoral authority, but reshapes its possible expressions. Even top-down authority can be seen as an incarnational friendship expression when extended where necessary for the wellbeing of the church. Friendship in the vine life remodels power "over", "within", "with", and also introduces a power "under". Since friendship does not oppose authority, it does not seek to remove such expressions of authority from the pastorate, instead reshaping and remodelling them in Christ. Each becomes tempered with the humility and seeking of the good of the other seen in the incarnate friendship through Jesus' embodiment of *parrēsia* and cruciform friendship-love.

We now explore some issues relating particularly to friendship, expanding on the characteristics of incarnational friendship not yet explored, especially mutuality and intimacy. We have seen that since the pastor is one within the community of friends of Jesus, pastoral authority must be shaped by incarnational friendship. In Part III, then, we have considered in what respects incarnational friendship shapes the nature and expression of authority in the pastoral office. In this section, we turn to explore in what ways the authority of the pastor can and should shape the form of friendship extended between pastor and congregant, engaging with the specific and pragmatic issues often raised concerning pastoral friendship. Most notably, we here explore the often-raised questions of particularity, intimacy, and boundaries.

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[77] Augstine, *Sermon,* 340a.1, 2.

[78] Anita Koeshall speaks of 'self-emptying' leadership as creating a form of 'dynamic asymmetry.' Koeshall, *Toward,* 268.

III.III.1 Questions of Particularity

A central problem of pastoral friendships raised in Part I was that of personal-mutual friendships which are inappropriate to the pastoral office because they lean towards, Stortz argues, 'particular friendships'.[79] Such dynamics are to be discouraged, she argues, because they give 'way to an exclusionary spirit,' adding that they were 'discouraged precisely because they fractured the community along the lines of who was chosen or was not.'[80] She thus contrasts friendship, depicted as exclusive, with charity, which is inclusive.[81] This line of thought has been spelled out more forcefully in the work of Kierkegaard, who wrote that where friendship is particularism, true Christian love is 'the opposite of preference.'[82] The very category of "friend", he argues, creates the category of "non-friend", which produces an exclusivity incompatible with the universality of neighbour/agape love.[83] It is on this basis that some have argued, as we saw in Part I, that pastors should not be considered friends.[84] Friendship is exclusive, which is inappropriate for pastors who must show equal care and attention to the whole flock.

On the other hand, it has been argued that maintaining friendship with many (i.e. a whole congregation) is not possible, because having many friends makes for unsubstantial friendships, which then are hardly to be considered friendships at all. Plutarch argues: 'just as rivers whose waters are divided among branches and channels flow weak and thin, so affection, naturally strong in a soul, if portioned out among many persons become utterly enfeebled.'[85] Therefore, he summarises that 'a strong mutual friendship with many persons is impossible.'[86] Friendship thus seems to become a double-edged sword: personal friendships

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[79] Stortz, *PastorPower,* 118. Stortz considers this the prime weakness of pastoral friendship, a model about which she otherwise speaks positively.

[80] Stortz, *PastorPower,* 118.

[81] Stortz, *PastorPower,* 118.

[82] Kierkegaard, *Works,* 58.

[83] Kierkegaard, *Works,* 58.. Paul Wadell summarises that for Kierkegaard, 'agape and philia exist in such extreme tension that they can never co-exist,' Wadell, *Friendship,* 75; Cf. Nygren, *Agape,* 63; Krishek, 'Two,' 596-616.

[84] Bloede, *Effective,* 166-167.

[85] Plutarch, *Many Friends,* 93D-93F.

[86] Plutarch, *Many Friends,* 93D-93F. Friendship with too many was associated with flattery – a form of false friendship – partly because having many friends was seen as incompatible with the virtue of close bonds of loyalty in true friendship. Cf. Glad 'Frank,' 26. Konstan, 'Friendship,' 17.

seem inappropriate, especially for those with pastoral authority, due to their exclusivism. However, being friends with the whole congregation, though appearing more compatible with pastoral authority insofar as it avoids favouritism, also in effect becomes a form of non-friendship void of substance.

However, as we have also seen, it seems inappropriate for a pastor to resist friendship when the incarnational life is one of communal friendship, and so long as the pastor is one in whom Christ dwells,[87] they are considered one within the community of friends. The question, then, is not whether the pastor should be friends with the congregation, but how and in what sense friendship can be appropriate. It should be noted that both the above concerns operate in categories of friendship which do not align with our understanding of incarnational friendship which, in the Spirit, is both particular/personal and universal.[88] It is notable that although Jesus had personal and individual friends in various circles,[89] in the vine life Jesus' friends become all those who obey him, in whom he abides by the Spirit,[90] and for whom he lays down his life. The presence and work of the Spirit thus makes available a mutual friendship which is personal without being exclusive, and since participation in the incarnate friendship is what constitutes the community of friends, the friendships in which the pastor shares are of the same Spirit-friendships. The basis of the friendship between the pastor and congregant is the basis of the friendship between the whole church – local and universal – which is the mutual binding in the Spirit of Christ's friendship. The pastor, then, to share in Jesus, must share in a friendship with the whole church characterised in mutuality, cruciformity, and shared obedience under Christ.[91]

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[87] As we have already seen, mutual indwelling presupposes obedience to Christ.

[88] That is, at least, universally available, and universal among those in the Spirit. Cf. Kearsley, *Church,* 13-14.

[89] With the gospel of John as the key source text of our theological reflection, the example that comes to mind is the friend who is "the one whom Jesus loved" (John 13:23; 19:26; 20:2; 21:7, 20). Furthermore, in the vine narrative, Jesus is addressing his inner circle of disciples.

[90] Cf. Brown, *John,* 882. The apostle Paul also seeks to address how Jesus' friendship had 'the capacity of holding together the particularity of Jesus with his universal significance' in 2 Corinthians (Fredrickson, 'Christ's,' 164). Notably, Paul appeals to sharing in one another's suffering, drawing upon cruciformity (Fredrickson, 'Christ's,' 165-166).

[91] It is therefore also inappropriate to synonymise particularity and exclusivism, as Stortz and Kierkegaard seem to do; instead, to participate in the incarnate friendship is to be particularly inclusive – being bonded to the whole community through friendship by the Spirit. This answer

Therefore, to say that the pastor cannot practise friendship because its exclusivity is inappropriate to pastoral authority, or that the pastor being friends with too many would make it unsubstantial, assumes an overly anthropological understanding of friendship which lacks pneumatological emphasis. In the vine life, the whole Jesus community is bound together in the *koinonia* of genuine friendship by the Spirit. There is no need to separate between the pastor being a friend, and the pastor being friendly, as Influence Magazine sought to do.[92]

Nevertheless, to speak of incarnational friendship with all through the Spirit sounds a rather abstract answer when our exploration raises some quite specific pragmatic issues. A central concern we observed was that forming deeper and more intimate mutual friendships with some congregants over others can prove problematic. Deeper friendship with some over others seems inevitable given the pastor's relational finitude. It was suggested that intimate friendships can compromise the distance that may be needed to have difficult pastoral conversations, and because others in the congregation can feel excluded.[93] Therefore, the more pressing and practical question becomes, more specifically, how can the pastor participate in incarnational friendship, when the incarnate friendship is also one of *intimacy*?

III.III.2 The Expression of Mutual Intimacy

We should note that the intimacy expressed by Jesus in the vine life is not abstract or arbitrary but is of two particular forms: in spiritual union and in *parrēsia*. In the first instance, intimacy in incarnational pastoral friendship is found, not in the overstepping of boundaries (which we will consider) but in the shared union in Christ between the pastor and congregant in spiritual friendship. In the second example, intimacy can be expressed in the form of sharing intimate personal knowledge and, in the context of the incarnate friendship, divine revelation. Thus, intimacy in friendship need not be all-encompassing to be considered incarnational. Instead, intimate friendship recognises spiritual union with the other and steps out in vulnerability to

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can, however, appear somewhat abstract since the very practical reality of the relational finitude of the pastor must be considered, which is considered in the following section.

[92] Influence Magazine, 'Should'.

[93] Louis Bloede offers one example: in an intimate friendship one shares their stresses and frustrations with the other, but for a pastor, their frustrations may have to do with other congregants. Bloede, *Effective,* 166-167.

share personal knowledge and testify to divine revelation, which is also a mutual intimacy, as the pastor and congregant grow in knowledge of one another and of God.[94]

Embodying *parrēsia* in pastoral incarnational friendship facilitates a dynamic whereby pastor and congregant can speak to one another with mutual 'frankness' and 'outspokenness'.[95] This means both a willingness to receive the challenges and corrections of the other, and a willingness to share one's own self.[96] Such a relational dynamic demands a degree of mutual humility and trust, an often-emphasised characteristic of friendship.[97] Intimacy further develops as both parties share and receive one another in vulnerability, since self-revelation demands vulnerability.[98] This facilitates what Whipp names the pastoral duty to enter more deeply into 'human frailty.'[99] This expression of mutual *parrēsia* also creates some form of equality between the pastor and congregant, who are able to show vulnerability, build trust, and speak to one another in a friendship expression in a form typically assumed to be in opposition with a position of authority. Lingenfelter adds that there must be space for leaders to be challenged in a form consistent with the biblical mandate to love one another,[100] which calls to mind to the other-person-centred outspokenness of *parrēsia*. Incarnational friendship as *parrēsia* thus brings about a deeply intimate friendship through frankness of speech within the community.

A friendship of *parrēsia* between pastor and congregant may, as we saw in section I.III, raise concerns of crossing the line of appropriate intimacy. It is often raised that the pastor must establish certain boundaries to avoid an inappropriate level of intimacy with congregants[101] which can carry a number of risks, not least in making possible abuses of

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[94] There are also other ways in which pastor-congregant friendship can be considered mutual, such as in the mutual goal of the branches to produce fruit through the one Vine. Kearsley writes that 'commitment to a circle of friendship such as that of the Jesus way, is really a kind of mutual sharing in each other's destinies.' Kearsley, *Church,* 121.

[95] Lidell et al, *Lexicon,* 1344.

[96] Aelred, *Spiritual,* 3.83-84.

[97] Rawlins, *Friendship,* 271.

[98] Lynch, *Ecclesial,* 182.

[99] Whipp, *Pastoral,* 193.

[100] Lingenfelter, *Leading,* 148.

[101] Schmitz, *Staying,* 129; Jones and Armstrong, *Resurrecting,* 75.

power.[102] Nevertheless, some degree of sharing personal knowledge, an act of intimacy, is a basic friendship expectation,[103] including in spiritual friendship contexts,[104] and indeed seen in the incarnate friendship. Since the pastor must be considered friend in the vine life, some degree of intimacy in the form of *parrēsia* is necessary for ministry to be incarnational. The question then cannot be "can intimacy be extended in pastoral friendship?" but "how can intimacy be made appropriate in light of the issues raised, not least favouritism, or the potential inability to carry out pastoral responsibilities?"[105] To this we now turn.

III.III.3 The Extent of Mutual Intimacy

Rawlins notes that friendships involve expressiveness, that is, 'revealing personal thoughts and feelings and commenting on the messages and actions of one's friend.'[106] However, this then 'create[s] the necessary conditions for closedness… disclosing private concerns reveals areas of personal vulnerability' which can 'uncover areas of great sensitivity.'[107] Thus, pastor-congregant friendships can easily develop into levels of intimacy deeper than what might be considered desirable. As a natural protection, Rawlins notes that 'friends develop protective practices. Each friend tries to curb self-disclosures that render him or her too vulnerable.'[108] He therefore observes a dialectic of expressiveness and protectiveness.[109] In other words, a natural line may form according to what each party considers appropriate. However, since the level of protectiveness exhibited is determined by the individual according to their own comfort in extending intimacy, the degree to which intimacy is extended by the pastor can be situated anywhere along the expressiveness-protectiveness scale. Some may express a high protectiveness practice with low expressiveness, therefore appearing cold and distant. Others may express a low protectiveness practice with high expressiveness, therefore being willing to express an inappropriate level of vulnerability or intimacy from the pastoral office,

[102] Lynch, *Ecclesial,* 205.
[103] Dunbar, *Friends,* 26.
[104] Aelred, *Spiritual,* 3.83-84.
[105] Cf. Bradley, 'Servant,' 43-54.
[106] Rawlins, *Friendship,* 22.
[107] Rawlins, *Friendship,* 22.
[108] Rawlins, *Friendship,* 22.
[109] Rawlins, *Friendship,* 22.

wherever that line might be drawn.[110] The nature of the expressiveness-protectiveness dialect also does not consider the effects on third parties needed when guarding from issues of favouritism. In the pastoral sphere, a metric or measure is needed by which the nature and extent of appropriate intimacy can be contextualised, and this can be found in the incarnate friendship through the *telos* of *parrēsia,* namely, mutual goodwill.

As we have seen, *parrēsia,* as speaking openly and boldly, sometimes as personal revelation, is not only an end in itself but a means to an end, which is the seeking of the good of the other (as opposed to the flatterer, who seeks their own good).[111] Patrons considered clients "friends" when they extended *parrēsia* because it illustrated that they were willing to speak difficult truths for the patron's own good, rather than what they wanted to hear, and therefore illustrating their relational intentions: they could be considered trustworthy and persons of integrity.[112] Incarnational friendship thus shares, not only in the intimacy of *parrēsia,* but in the object of *parrēsia*, that is the good of the other. In this case, in personal intimate friendship with congregants, or sharing personal knowledge, is appropriate only insofar as it does not compromise the good of the other, or indeed the community, because Jesus' friendship in *parrēsia* is other-person-centred. Intimacy which compromises the wellbeing of the group can no longer be considered incarnational friendship as it ceases to participate in *parrēsia.* Accordingly, Lynch argues that the standard or context for mutual correction is the seeking of the other's good.[113] Intimacy is thus tuned and aimed towards that higher *telos* which is mutual goodwill.[114]

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[110] John Chrysostom, for example, speaks of the intimacy of Jesus' sharing of 'secrets' with his disciples 'appear[ing] to be the strongest proof of friendship' (Chrysostom, *John,* 77). However, in the pastoral office, the intimacy of pastors sharing close personal secrets with certain congregants may appear inappropriate.

[111] This can be seen most clearly through the works of Plutarch, *Flatterer,* 49b; *Many Friends,* 93d-94b. Cf. Culy, *Echoes,* 54-55; Konstan, 'Friendship', 10; Glad, 'Frank', 26; Klassen, 'ΠΑΡΡΗΣΙΑ,' 228-243; Sammut, *Friendship,* 57, 71; Batten, *Friendship,* 41, 80-81.

[112] Culy, *Echoes,* 54-55; Konstan, 'Friendship,' 10.

[113] Lynch, *Ecclesial,* 183.

[114] This interpretation further accords with cruciform-love being established as the basis of the friendship within the community (15:12-13). Christ's other-person-centred friendship-love can be observed at its truest and most complete extent in cruciformity where Jesus lays down his life for his friends.

Therefore, where pastors may have a disposition towards more intimate friendships with certain congregants, for the pastor to truly embody incarnational friendship, they must seek the wellbeing of the group, and this sets an "upper band" to intimate friendships. When favouritism takes place, for instance, the wellbeing of the group is compromised. Therefore, the other-person-centredness of the incarnate friendship seen in *parrēsia* and cruciformity brings forth a context within which intimacy must be situated – seeking the wellbeing of the individual and group. A dialectic in pastoral incarnational friendships is to be found between mutual intimacy and mutual goodwill; both are legitimate forms and expressions of incarnational friendship and are to be pursued insofar as the other is not compromised.

Conclusion

This thesis began with my experience of authority and friendship seeming diametrically opposed, especially as they related to the person of Jesus. The logic of such an interpretation was shown to accord with the picture painted by sociological literature of contemporary Western conceptions of these categories. Due to various socio-cultural factors, friendship has become increasing watered-down in popular understanding to a casual relationship of mutual affection; the virtues of solidarity, dependability, and commitment, which were once intrinsic to the term, have fallen into the background. Similarly, language of power and of legitimate power – that is authority – have become increasingly loaded with associations of abuse and inequality. This is also the case for lordship – a term which, though referring to the authority-power of Christ, is also highly associated with an increasingly resented political system.

Despite authority being a necessary function of a flourishing society, its all-too-often misuse has left it incompatible with contemporary understandings of friendship. In contemporary understanding, imbalances of authority appear to stand in contradiction to the degree of mutuality and equality needed for friendship. The effects of such approaches can be observed in popular-level and pastoral theological literature, which often depicts the authoritarian role of the pastor as incompatible with friendship. Since such perspectives appeared overly influenced by contemporary Western understanding, we observed a need to reclaim and re-evaluate how authority and friendship are to be properly understood in pastoral theology.

Since pastoral ministry should be understood as a participation in and continuation of Christ's ongoing ministry in the world in the power of the Spirit, we determined to locate the meaning of true authority and friendship in the person and work of Jesus. To this end, we turned to John 15:1-17 as the most extensive treatment of Jesus' friendship in the New Testament which also speaks to his lordship-authority, and how his friendship and lordship interact. We saw that Jesus' friendship is characterised in a cruciform and other-person-centred mutual intimacy. It is additionally missional and corporate, as friendship with Jesus constitutes friendship with one another in the community of friends of Jesus. Especially significant for the alleged friendship-authority tension, we saw that Jesus' friends are those who obey his superior authority while simultaneously remaining in a friendship of mutual

intimacy. Therefore, in the person of Jesus, we saw that friendship and authority do not stand in opposition as contemporary Western culture often assumes.

Moreover, as we observed the friendship and lordship of Jesus in first century context, we saw that to elevate either Jesus' authority or friendship over the other fails to make sense of the more integrated friendship-lordship Christology found in the Vine. Jesus' friendship is always shaped and tempered in a way which is appropriate to his position as their superior authority, and his superior authority always shaped through his extension of mutual friendship.

From here, we were able to construct a new understanding of pastoral authority and friendship shaped by our participation in Jesus. Since the pastor is one within the community of friends of Jesus, pastoral authority must always be shaped by friendship. A legitimate pastoral authority, therefore, while being itself a distinction of functional authority, can never communicate ontological inequality, as the friends of Jesus have a shared-branch identity under the one Vine. Incarnational friendship illustrates, not only the essence and function of authority, but how friendship can truly be embodied in the pastoral office. In opposition to common assumption, we have seen through our theological reflection that the extension of pastoral friendship is not intrinsically incompatible with expressions of "power over". Instead, we saw that power can be expressed in numerous fashions in the pastoral office in ways which can legitimately be described as expressions of friendship. Pastoral friendship does not reject "power over", "power within", or "power with" but reshapes them in a way which is directed towards the seeking of the other's good. The distinctions of authority-power are not removed, but reshaped, as incarnational friendship power is used to empower others. Additionally, we introduced a fourth expression of power, that is "power under", expanding upon the cruciformity of incarnational friendship, which sits in tension with "power over" in the pastoral office.

Lastly, we engaged with the specific and pragmatic issues raised concerning friendship in positions of pastoral authority and responsibility. Since the pastor is one within the community of friends, we did not approach such matters with an approach of "in light of these issues, can the pastor be a friend?", but "since the pastor is a friend, how can we manage these issues?" In response to various concerns regarding the place of friendship in pastoral authority, such as that of inappropriate levels of intimacy, favouritism or the need for

boundaries in ministry, we saw that the implementation of appropriate boundaries to manage these pastoral matters are not a hindrance but a further facilitation of incarnational friendship as they seek the mutual flourishing of the community. Pastoral authority flourishes when it recognises and more deeply participates in incarnational Christian friendship.

Undoubtedly, this study has limitations and there is ample space for additional research. We have focused on both friendship and lordship/authority from a contemporary Western, and largely British perspective. There is further work to be done concerning the possibility and importance of interpreting pastoral authority through the lens of friendship in other socio-cultural contexts and through empirical research. Regarding this project's theological sources, this thesis has developed an understanding of friendship-lordship Christology almost exclusively around John 15:1-17. There may be other meaningful contributions to be found elsewhere from other New Testament texts and theological sources. There is also space for further work concerning the navigation of numerous pragmatic issues, such as the perceived tension between the individual and communal good, and questions of cross-sex friendships. A hope for this thesis is to open the door to further study in these areas.

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